

# **Don't Say I Never Told You**

**A guide to life from an ageing father to his millennial daughters**

## **Series 3**

**This series contains chapters and E-templates on:**

- Winning work habits
- Forging a career worth having
- Tips for the millennial manager

**By Pat Storm**

# Introduction

Girls, over my life I always sought counsel from my parents. It is very rewarding to see that you are doing the same with your mother and I, long may it continue. However, the sudden death of a friend, who was younger and fitter than me, has been a reminder that there is no guarantee I will be around. So, just in case, here are some of the things that might be useful to you on your journey. Whilst this three-part series was written with you in mind, I hope it is also useful to any of your peers who happen to come across it.

Throughout the three-part series, I have designed checklists and evaluation tools to help you get started. These E-templates are available to all readers free of charge.

## **Varied and I hope interesting topics**

I hope there are topics here that hit you 'left field', that push you in a direction that changes your life for the better. I have no idea which ones will resonate the most with you so I am simply firing a shotgun in your general direction and hopefully some pellets will surely hit the target.

**The first series** warms up with chapters on 'family and friends' and 'winning personal habits' before moving onto the heavier stuff of 'personal development'. Content includes:

- The six types of friends
- How to find good flatmates
- Being more effective with your time
- How to face tough times
- How to complete your life's purpose (your Ikigai) and your treasure map so your life has a direction you have actively chosen
- How to handle your personal baggage
- How to ascertain your natural talents

**The second series** covers 'your other half', 'you and your money', and 'health and well-being'. Content includes:

- Finding Wally - tips to help you find a life partner worth keeping
- Guidelines when weighing up 'Should I stay or should I go' from a relationship
- How to separate without funding the legal profession
- The twenty tips when buying your first home
- Tips to secure your financial future
- How to avoid buying a 'lemon' of a car
- You and your mental health
- Simple things to do to increase your survival odds when driving

**The third series – this series-** covers 'winning work habits', 'forging a career worth having', and 'some tips for millennial managers'. Content includes:

- Embracing abandonment
- Creating strong and healthy work relationships
- Handling office drama and a 'bully of a boss'
- Develop a safe haven, a respite from stress
- Making sure your career is as secure as a hedgehog
- Steps to help you find the right job and avoid being conned
- What to check when intending to make a major career change
- Tips to spending less time in unproductive meetings
- Tips to improve workflow and reduce waste

## **Caveat**

Girls, the advice contained in this book has come from a variety of sources. From discussions I had with your grandparents, attending self-development courses, making mistakes and absorbing information from those much wiser than me.

I have not always followed the advice laid out here. I don't see a problem in that. Do you? For this book is not about me, it is about you and your future.

## **Note of thanks to the reviewers**

Girls, besides your valuable contribution, this book has also been reviewed by millennials amongst our family friends. I am immensely grateful to all of you for your help in shaping the content. I hope you recognise your contributions.

## **About the author**

Pat Storm is the pen name for an author who was educated at Liverpool University where he studied Commerce. He spent his working life solving complex business problems and has published nine business books for an American publisher. He has written over 100 articles covering management and life issues and realised that his daughters would never see them. As a COVID 19 project he planned this book, using new and existing content, formatting it to be more palatable to his daughters and their peers. He lives with his wife and their cat (Tigger). His millennial daughters fledged early, are fiercely independent although ring for advice when the 'shit hits the fan'. They make him immensely proud.

## **Comments**

Throughout the book I have included the comments made by my daughters and the other millennials who help shape this narrative.

*Who the hell is Pat Storm, Dad?*

*I found this book very clear and practical. Really good meander through different themes, places, experiences and resources.*

*Good humour and connections with us millennials, endearing parts and sections where you want to roll your eyes and go "Oh Dad".*

*Has companion pieces that are a great way to navigate through the book when you're looking for particular advice.*

## **Contents**

### **Winning Work Habits**

1.	If it's not working - abandon it .....	6
2.	Controlling the wild beast — your email .....	9
3.	Once a week take two hours out to shape your future .....	12
4.	Make sure all your work has quality assurance checks .....	13
5.	Creating a strong and healthy relationship with your boss.....	16
6.	How to get respect from colleagues.....	19
7.	Propel your career with "killer" presentations.....	22
8.	Become an expert on the applications you use .....	25
9.	Have a cluster of mentors behind you.....	27
10.	Giving recognition freely.....	30
11.	Beware of becoming a workaholic .....	33
12.	Handling office drama .....	35
13.	How to handle a 'bully of a boss'.....	38
14.	Avoid becoming a self-taught millennial .....	40
15.	Get into managing people ASAP - it is worth the pain.....	42
16.	Develop a safe haven.....	45

### **Forging a Career Worth Having**

17.	Make sure your career is as secure as a hedgehog.....	47
18.	Finding a great job .....	50
19.	Choosing the right competing job offer .....	53
20.	The key bases to cover in your career .....	55
21.	Am I in the right career? .....	58
22.	Think how you want to be remembered .....	64

### **Tips For the Millennial Manager**

23.	Become a disciple of Peter Drucker .....	67
24.	Use Kanban boards to communicate project progress.....	69
25.	Reduce waste by 'Post-it' re-engineering your main processes.....	71
26.	Thirty rules for a "killer" presentation .....	75
27.	Learn how to sell and lead change .....	78
28.	Interviewing techniques when doing research .....	80
29.	Embrace SCRUM meetings on all projects.....	84
30.	Invest time to explore "Action Meetings".....	85
31.	Other ways to save time in meetings.....	87
32.	Improve your decision-making ability .....	89

# Winning Work Habits

Here is a collection of work habits and they are grouped together where possible. This is an area where I have some authority. I have written countless articles, over the years, for numerous journals and even wrote a management book, "The Leading-edge Manager's Guide to Success – Strategies and Better Practices."

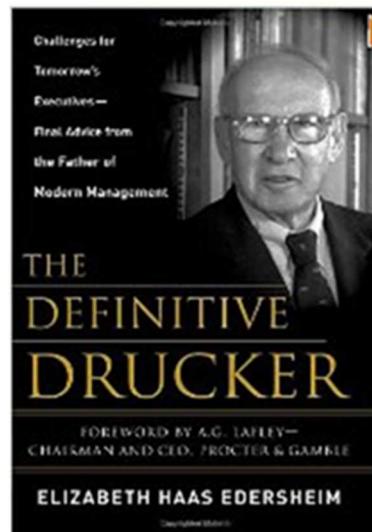
- If it's not working - abandon it
- Controlling the wild beast — your email
- Once a week take two hours out to shape your future
- Make sure all your work has quality assurance checks
- Creating a strong and healthy relationship with your boss
- How to get respect from colleagues
- Propel your career with "killer" presentations
- Become an expert on the applications you use
- Have a cluster of mentors behind you
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- How to handle a bully of a boss
- Avoid becoming a self-taught millennial
- Get into managing people ASAP - it is worth the pain
- Develop a safe haven

## 1. If it's not working - abandon it

Dear girls, in your career your organisation or your business may not be making progress because the old and outdated processes are still alive and well.

I discovered Peter Drucker in my forties. Better late than never. The "The definitive Drucker" is the best management book I have read. Trust me when I say I have read a few more than you. It will guide you for the rest of your working life. It is that good.

I consider abandonment as one of the most important gifts bestowed on us by Peter Drucker. It is unusual that such a profound concept should have been left unnourished by so many writers who followed in his footsteps. Amongst the overgrown and chaotic jumble within an organisation Drucker saw a clear pathway to freedom, innovation and productivity through the adoption of regular and systematic abandonment.



Drucker knew more than anyone, that human beings never like to admit a mistake or own up to failure. To avoid facing the truth we hope circumstances will somehow conspire to make a 'silk purse out of a sow's ear'.

Drucker said: "*The first step in a growth policy is not to decide where and how to grow. It is to decide what to abandon. In order to grow, a business must have a systematic policy to get rid of the outgrown, the obsolete, and the unproductive.*"

He also said: "*Don't tell me what you're doing, tell me what you've stopped doing.*"

He saw abandonment as fundamental as breathing, a natural passing of old to new. Examples of abandonment he talked about include:

- Cash cows of the past (which were no longer generating the income to justify their continued existence)
- Rectifying recruitment mistakes (no matter how good your recruitment process is, you will make mistakes and these staff need to be moved on)
- Unsuccessful projects
- Systems that are not delivering
- Processes that we have maintained out of habit and sentimentality.

**Abandonment at work:** Establish an abandonment day, every month, yes, every month and get all teams to table at least one abandonment and the rest of the organisation has 24 hours to argue why it should not go. Measuring the extent of abandonment will help focus management's attention on this important area.

**Abandonment at home:** Have an abandonment day once a quarter. You will feel revived.

1. Things to abandon at work	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Meetings that you chair because you chaired them last week, last fortnight, last month. There is no real benefit.</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

▪ Weekly one-to-one meetings with your staff (make them fortnightly.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
▪ Meetings you attend where they go nowhere SLOWLY	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
▪ Clutter around your workplace – a cluttered desk leads to a cluttered mind	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
▪ Processes that are done because they were done before, but nobody knows the reason why	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
▪ Business records older than seven years – the time limit for the tax authorities	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
▪ Rectifying recruitment mistakes (see separate section)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>2. Things to abandon at home</b>	
▪ Your boyfriend if you are no longer compatible and you have tried (see Where is Wally– finding a life partner)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
▪ Stuff in your cupboards that are still in the boxes they arrived in (old school or university exercise books – you may never look at them)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
▪ Some equipment from old hobbies which you have decided not to use anymore.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
▪ Poor quality clothes that were a mistake in the first place.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
▪ A car that has a poor safety rating	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
▪ Junk in your cupboards that you have not used for over two years	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
▪ Everything in your pantry that is past its expiry date	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
▪ Old exercise machines that make you feel guilty – sell them to another sucker.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

## Companion pieces in other chapters

Become a disciple of Peter Drucker

### Comments

*I am going to read the book.*

*In my work we are always adding new procedures without deleting any.  
I might send a copy of 'The Definitive Drucker' to head office.*

*Will read Dad. Should I abandon paying for our lunches?*

## **2. Controlling the wild beast — your email**

Your email may be eating into your productivity. Here are some Golden Rules when managing your emails.

In any working week many of us are spending up to 20% of our time reviewing and processing emails. In many cases workflow is simply being pushed around the organisation for no tangible gain.

Here are some rules to save you time.

### **Rule 1: Never open emails before 10:30 a.m.**

In the good old days, we would handle mail at 10:30 a.m. when the mail finally arrived from the mailroom. We thus started the day with scoring a goal—undertaking a service delivery activity. Now the first thing we do is open the email, and suddenly one hour has evaporated. Some of us have not disabled the email alert, so we get interrupted every time a new email arrives.

Only look at emails two or three times a day when you have freed up enough time, so you can action them in the moment, rather than handle the same email two or three times. Remember the adage “Handle a piece of paper once”, this applies also to emails. That means read, action, delete, read, action, delete until the box is empty.

If something is very important, you will get a phone call. This technique will help you get more 1.5-hour blocks of concentrated time in your day. If you do receive the odd urgent email, you could, as a friend of mine does, scan for these at 8:30 a.m. My friend, however, had the control only to handle these urgent emails and then moved on with the day, leaving the replies to the bulk of the emails too later in the day. For me, even looking at the in-box before 10:30 a.m. is too risky as curiosity wins every time.

### **Rule 2: Never send emails late at night or at the weekends**

There is nothing wrong in having an idea late at night or on the weekend and putting it into an email. The key is to schedule the “send” anytime between 8.00 a.m. to 9 a.m. on the next business day. If you would not ring that staff person at 11 p.m. then do not press send. If you do ring staff out of office hours, then you need therapy.

In France, they have made it illegal to send work emails over the weekend. The law requires companies with more than 50 employees to establish hours when staff should not send or answer emails. The goals of the law include making sure employees are fairly paid for work and preventing burnout by protecting private time.

As French legislator Benoit Hamon indicated, the law is an answer to the travails of employees who “leave the office, but they do not leave their work. They remain attached by a kind of electronic leash—like a dog.”

### **Rule 3: The five-sentence rule for every email**

Treat all email responses like text messages and limit them to something you can count easily: five sentences. With only five sentences, the writer is forced to ensure that all terms, conditions, and papers are attached to the email. This has the added benefit of ensuring that all important documents are saved separately.

## **Rule 4: Have an attention-grabbing header**

Make the header the main message of the email. For example: Freeing up more time—reengineering of \_\_\_\_\_. Never recycle the header you received in previous correspondence. Make the header more meaningful. If you cannot think of a good email header, maybe you should not send the email.

## **Rule 5: Embrace “inbox zero”**

The “inbox zero” technique has been around for a while. It means that you never have 2,000 emails in your inbox as some sort of primitive to do list. You only have unsorted and unactioned emails that have arrived in the last few hours. This is how it can work:

### Setup

- Delete everything over say \_\_\_ months. You will need to recover some emails later, so what.
- Stop organizing your email. - In the physical world, devoting time to organizing documents into folders makes a lot of sense—In the virtual world of email the fastest way to find an old email is almost always by searching—Familiarize yourself with your email app’s advanced search features and let the App do your heavy lifting.

I recently met Matthew, a highly successful CFO, and he has a “to do” folder broken out by the days in the week. If an email is about next Monday’s meeting, he puts it in next Monday’s folder. Before Monday comes around, he knows what emails he needs to look and what action he needs to take.

- Spend time blocking those annoying senders by setting up rules. Your aim should be to reduce your emails by between 70-90%. Unsubscribe from every list-based email you get—unless you really, truly need it or benefit from receiving it. For recurring messages that you may need create filters that automatically place them in folders for that once a fortnight/month review.

## **Rule 6: Delete one-in-four of the newly arrived emails**

Target deleting one-in-four of the newly arrived emails using the “Reading pane” option where you can see the content of each email without opening them. Only when you are deleting emails that you need subsequently to be resent to you are you deleting too much.

## **Rule 7: Only send an email to those people whom you are prepared to phone**

Before giving birth to a chain email, or simply “passing the parcel”. Think, would a phone call be quicker. Or word the email so that the reader is not expected to respond back. Remember emails are not to be confused with ACTION. An email never got a project completed. It is the actual work carried out by someone that is the key to getting things done.

Promote yourself by your endeavors, not by your use of broadcast emails. Avoid sending broadcast emails unless you are prepared to call up each person to advise them that there is a key document that they need to read.

Far too often, the content of emails, while amusing, is not appropriate. Be careful about being the bearer of silly jokes. Today many people seem to want to be remembered by their joke telling. Now, don’t get me wrong, I love a joke, but when

the same people send a couple a week, you do wonder what they do all day. Remember, perception rules everything. You do not want to be perceived as a person whose prime focus is to entertain, such as Ricky Gervais in the original *The Office*. You want to be appreciated in more positive terms.

### **Rule 8: Master your Email application's tools section**

The experts have been busy improving the ways we can handle emails. The applications you use for emails will have many features you have never opened. Many readers have mastered word and spreadsheet applications, yet they know least about the one application they use the most. Master the new features; it will take a 30-minute session with an expert. You need to know and master:

- How to turn off the email arrival automatic notifiers
- How to use filters to sort and prioritize
- How to get newsletters automatically sent straight to a folder that you access twice weekly
- How to set up auto-responders to acknowledge and advise response time

### **Rule 9: Beware of sending a rebuff email**

For complex responses, complaints, rebuffs, and the like, draft the email and store it overnight, as you may well have second thoughts. It is a good idea to send these draft emails to your mentor. Many a career has been dented by a poorly thought-out email written in anger.

### **Rule 10: Monkey-on-the-back emails**

Many people are using the email system to pass their workload on to others. In many cases, people contact known experts and ask for their help without having done any research themselves. In other words, they are passing the monkey on their back to the expert.

A colleague of mine, who was an internationally recognized expert, advised me that the best way is to politely thank the sender for the email and then say, "Please call when convenient to discuss." Based on his experience, this gets rid of 95 percent of the requests.

## **Comments**

*Loved the five-sentence rule*

*As soon as I walk out the door from work, I do not look at emails until the start of the next day. At around 8 am I scan for major issues in the email headers or emails from important senders and then process the remaining emails, as you suggested, mid-morning.*

*Dad, I will action the 'zero inbox' and 'deleting one-in-four emails'.*

### **3. Once a week take two hours out to shape your future**



Girls, it is lovely to be busy and have the day go quickly. However, unless you have been doing the right thing you may as well have been walking the dogs or climbing that cliff face.

Post COVID 19, when you are back in the thick of it always have a morning, every week set aside for thinking about and progressing the future. The future for your team and organisation, and of course, your future.

Far too many of us are caught firefighting all the time. Never getting enough time to plan to make the future, a better place.

I used to do this on a Friday morning hence I called it Blue Sky Friday.

#### **Suggested rules for a Blue-Sky Friday**

The rules I adopt for a Blue-Sky Friday session are:

- To focus on the “important but not yet urgent tasks,” The report that needs writing, the presentation that needs careful preparation, the research into new system etc.
- No answering phone calls, texts, emails
- No time spent on Facebook, Linked-in, or other addictive social media
- To make strategic phone calls to organize site visits to see new systems, staff training, organizing one-to one with staff
- To write important emails

#### **Companion pieces in other chapters**

If it's not working - abandon it

Become a time master

#### **Comments**

*Every Tuesday I remove myself from the business, after opening issues are handled, and review the last weeks business and plan for next few weeks.*

*Dad, I now use every Friday to set out my next week's 'To Do's' in my four-quadrant planner.*

## **12. Handling office drama**

Girls you have already had a few office dramas affect you and there will be many more to come. However, don't think that you are alone with this, it affects us all. Often the answer is to deal with them upfront and directly without allowing them to fester. What you want and deserve is a positive work environment where you can maintain a high level of productivity.

### **You seldom get to choose your co-workers**

Not only can you expect this issue of non-compatibility it just may be helpful. As I have mentioned in an earlier piece embrace dissident and your sandpaper mentors. If you work with people whom you are in total agreement with it is highly likely that the decisions you make will be done with only half the picture in view.

### **You suspect someone is working against you**

If there was only one organisation in the world this might be a problem. In reality you will, in three years' time or less, never see each other again. Your paths will have diverged. Learn from them what they are good at and then avoid them as much as possible, disregarding the challenge as superfluous.

### **A co-worker or superior makes an inappropriate physical advance**

You need to act quickly. Either tell the perpetrator, in a one-to-one, that you aren't interested, that you feel uncomfortable, and that you want his or her behavior to stop or write/type a brief note without your or their name on it and hand it to them to read and walk out of the room.

Make sure you communicate that you will file an official complaint if the behavior continues. This will almost always do the trick. If it is your boss who's doing it, consult with HR immediately.

### **Avoid being involved in nasty office gossip**

Invariably notorious office gossips are people with not much on. Associating yourself with them will damage your career in several ways:

- You will be tarred with the same brush – resulting in a loss of respect.
- It will disrupt your work and your productivity.
- Alienate you from the target of the gossip who, may well become a decision maker in the organisation.

### **The Christmas party has ruined a career or two**

Never mix high levels of alcohol while being present with your colleagues. It takes months to repair or maybe it's not repairable. Don't ever think letting loose during social events can't hurt. People have been fired after embarrassing Christmas party incidents. If you can't hold your alcohol, simply don't drink alcohol at the office party.

### **Never share a secret with a work colleague**

Girls what is the definition of a secret? You tell one person at a time. Only tell those secrets you want to become public knowledge. If your supervisor is unloading a secret, respond with "Please do not continue as it is not appropriate for me to know any more." If the secret gets out, you can be unfairly blamed.

## **Date someone in the office if you are prepared to leave the organisation if it goes bad or gets serious**

Because you spend a lot of time at work it is common to meet someone that you get involved with. Be professional about it and hold off on the PDAs until after work. If your relationship is getting serious only allow this to happen if you agree that one of you is happy to get a job elsewhere. If both of you do not see that as an option, the relationship is simply not worth the drama that will ensue.

## **A family drama has occurred in your or a work colleagues' life**

There is nothing people like to gossip about more than a family drama. If it is you who are suffering, expect colleague after colleague to come-up and offer their sympathy, further aggravating the wound / loss. It will be appropriate to tell your boss and HR so you can get support during this difficult period and they, due to the severity, may reassign your job to give you time off.

Work can be a useful distraction from the self-pity and navel gazing that often happens at this time. The feeling of loss is a natural reaction and one that needs to be processed but certainly not allowed to fester for too long.

## **Unresolved argument with a co-worker**

Even if you are right, simply apologize. It is just as important to keep your boss happy as it is to be able to work well with your co-workers. Look at the situation as often the argument is quite meaningless. Having a sense of humor is a must at work. You should be able to look at many situations and realize that they do not deserve to be taken too seriously.

## **A colleague or supervisor is doing something wrong, and you want to complain**

When something in the workplace is awry, sometimes your first instinct is to take your complaint to the top of the chain of command. Corporate hierarchy is the name of the game with most companies, so if you skip too many levels, you may end up aggravating many who work above you.

Make complaints only to your direct supervisor, and address your complaint as a "concern," especially if the wrongdoing does not directly involve you. If it is your supervisor who is at fault, then talk only to his direct supervisor.

## **Companion pieces in other chapters**

Have a cluster of mentors behind you

### **Comments**

*Every year the office Xmas party is the main topic of conversation on talk back radio. I have never heard of a story that ended up in promotion.*

*One staff member was so drunk at an out of work event, where there was a free tab. They were not only sick but lost control of their bowels in the function room. Bring the proceeding to a complete halt. These functions are now non-existent. The message is clear if you cannot hold your drink avoid these functions like the plague.*

*Dad, a rule I have now because of the numerous dramas of the past is as follows: "Only get involved to seek resolution if you believe it will be still around in a few years' time. Otherwise, treat it as a matter of little importance not worthy of your valuable time.*

*After work I was complaining that I was not getting support with my workload. It went back to my manager and turned into something completely different.*

## **13. How to handle a 'bully of a boss'**

Girls I estimate that up to 20% of managers are some form of a bully. Often this occurs because they themselves are being bullied. Stretch sales targets are often a breeding ground for this to happen. It is essential to do your due diligence during the interview process, so you avoid them and their toxic organisation.

Whilst I have escaped this, both of your suffered and so did I indirectly. Let's make sure this never happens again by taking these steps.

It is worth remembering that you can never change someone else's behavior. Only they can. The best source of help if you are being bullied is your mentor who will have handled this situation before.

If you have tried everything and life at work is miserable you owe it to yourself to find an alternative position within the organisation and lastly in another organisation. No matter how bad it is never resign as you will find the euphoria of being at home while others are suffering at work is short lived and career damaging. Always look for a new job in a position of power, i.e., whilst in employment.

<b>The signs of a bullying boss checklist</b>	
Has your boss put you or other people down?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does your boss yell, curse, lose his or her temper?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does your boss make personal comments about people?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do they have a force field of fear around them?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does your boss question your adequacy and your commitment?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does your boss intrude into your privacy (looks at your emails, gets in your personal space)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does your boss set unrealistic deadlines that are bound to cause failure?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is your boss impeding your success?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is your boss spreading rumors about you?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Has your boss isolated you at work?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Has your boss been promoted because of their technical expertise rather than their people skills?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is your boss using extroverted behavior to hide their incompetence?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

### **How to deal to a bullying boss**

- Hold immediate discussions with your mentor best suited to give you career advice.
- You need to organize your exit strategy. Invariably the bullying boss has created carnage in the organisation but is kept on because they deliver results. They will seldom change so:
- If you work in a large organisation use your internal network to find a possible transfer opportunity. Do some jobs for that potential new boss to develop some rapport as that will be useful when you talk to HR.
- If in an organisation with less than 150 people, it is best to start searching outside the organisation.
- Prepare a case against them. If you leave without this, then the bully never learns. At some point the information will be used against the bully. Track

back to prior employees and ask them to write down their experiences. You will always be able to find at least five casualties for an office bully. Print out all emails that can be used in evidence and set up two files. One you keep, the other you give to HR.

- Remember the problem is not you it is them. Have a sense of pity towards them. They are the employees with emotional damage.
- When you feel strong confront them in front of others. Even if you are leaving and have another job lined up you can ask HR to sit in on a meeting with them. This process will empower you providing you are feeling strong and have a supportive HR team.
- Aim to deliver your best work and stay on target with your main projects. Keep good documentation of all your successes.
- Seek a coach to help you with your self-esteem as it would have taken a battering. You may feel emotionally drained, depressed and anxious. Remember in the end you will be stronger from this experience.

## **How the C-Suite should handle a bully**

Girls, for your information this is how the C-Suite should handle a bully. If they don't you are working in the wrong organisation.

Organisational psychologist Dr Laurence Stybel recommends that the organisation approaches the problem manager and make it clear that his/her management weaknesses now outweigh the strengths they have long displayed. Several desired behavioral changes are then spelt out in a positive way such as, "If you make these changes, you'll have a reputation as someone who is considerate."

The manager is given 90 days to shape up--or else move on.

## **Companion pieces in other chapters**

Finding a great job

Choosing the right competing job offer

Have a cluster of mentors behind you

## **Comments**

*Very relevant to me as the timing is perfect, unfortunately.*

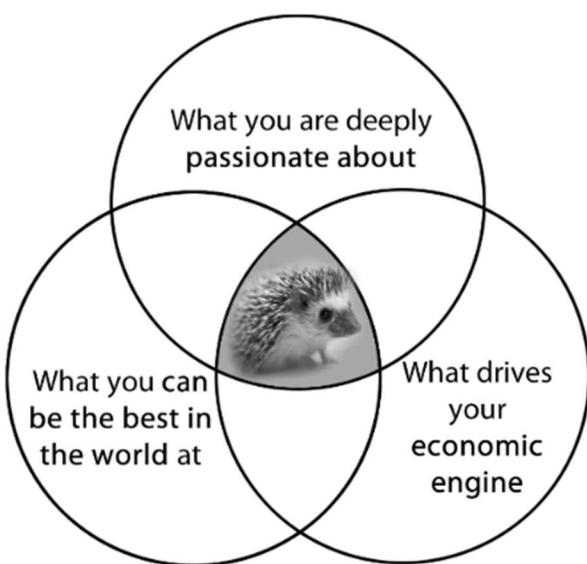
*Unfortunately, my first job out of university involved a bully of a boss. It takes a lot of strength to walk away and accept that it was not your fault. After leaving it took me four months and three sessions with a life coach to come right. After hearing that my ex-boss was now bullying my replacement gave me the strength to put in a complaint. The process was not easy, but I had put a spotlight on her behavior.*

## 17. Make sure your career is as secure as a hedgehog

The reason why I refer to a hedgehog is that it a hedgehog cannot be attacked once it is has curled into its protective ball.

We all want a career that is save from the tentacles of economic downturns. COVID 19 has really pointed this out clearly to us all. We need a protective layer that the downturn cannot penetrate.

It took me until I was in my mid-forties to discover my hedgehog. The place where my three circles collide. Where I am untouchable. It was, of course, \_\_\_\_\_. Had I realized its significance I would have been a bit quicker writing the best seller book. It took seven years. From 2000-2007. A risky thing as someone else could have seen the gap. However, luck was on my side. I developed two other streams, one successfully and one not.



**The circle in the left tells us to focus on an area where we can be a world expert.** This is easier than you think. You just need to focus on an area that no one else is. Take a telescope and look from the wrong end, from the large lens to small lens. Focus on things you are good at, look for a field specific to your experiences, where you have already made progress. Make sure it's free from numerous competing experts, then get your 10,000 hours, a benchmark for being an expert, into that space as soon as possible. I have published more books, written more articles and spoken in more countries than anyone else on the topic.

It however did not work in leadership. Yes, I did make a breakthrough. I did write about it but it. I am passionate about it but, there are too many better-established experts in the field. I now have wound down my involvement in this space. It was a diversion.

**The circle at the top involves identifying your passion.** Where your passion and your expertise collide is an agreeable place to be – work and play merge.

**The circle to the right reminds us there needs to be a demand:** It is simple common sense to focus on something others will pay for. You can be the world champion at tiddlywink's and be passionate about it (I would think you were nuts), but there is no economic engine.

<b>The hedgehog checklist</b>	
<b>How to find your niche</b>	Write your notes here
<b>List the skills you have</b>	
Skill 1: (e.g., communicate well)	
Skill 2: (e.g., team leader / team player)	
Skill 3: (e.g., able to develop rapport with different people)	
Skill 4: (e.g., advanced computer programming and competent with many systems)	
Skill 5 (e.g., problem solver)	
Skill 6	
<b>List the experiences you have had</b>	
Experience 1: (e.g., tutoring at University)	
Experience 2: (e.g., varied work experiences)	
Experience 3: (e.g., managing an IT system for a small company)	
Experience 4:	
Experience 5:	
<b>What are you passionate about?</b>	
Passionate about 1: (e.g., Learning new methods, systems tools)	
Passionate about 2 (e.g., Music)	
Passionate about 3 (e.g., Building a commercial mobile application)	
<b>What are your potential hedgehogs?</b>	
Drill down to a smaller area until you cannot find a world expert. There are no books on the subject within top 300,000 books on Amazon.	
Avoid focusing on a field where your customer is "Joe Public" they are fickle and have tight purse strings. Targeting a corporate is a much softer and easier target.	

Check that people will need the expertise that you can offer them – it will make their business work better	
Hedgehog #1: (e.g., Mobile App development)	
Hedgehog #2: (e.g., University Professor)	
Hedgehog #3:	
<b>Get started on your hedgehog</b>	
Start reading all you can -a minimum would be 10 hours a week on the topic	
Start formulating your ideas	
You now want to clock up the 10,000 hours that will make you the undeniable expert. Even at 3,000 hours of study, if you have found a niche, you will likely be one of the most knowledgeable people in the world on a particular subject. A scary thought.	
Start writing articles for journals. Tell them you are a writer and expert and thus need to be paid. Only suckers write for free or if you are at the beginning of your writing career.	
Start writing your book. When at this stage email me at patstormauthor@gmail.com and I will send you material to help you write articles for journals.	

## Comments

*It is something we all strive to discover. Reading this was an 'outside of the box' moment and I narrowing down my search for my hedgehog as I write this.*

*Dad, you did not see the light until your mid-forties. Give me a break. I do want to have a career that is a hedgehog I am convinced.*

## **18. Finding a great job**

In today's world your first job often is the first one offered. You do not have that luxury to choose between offers first up. However, girls you are now in a job and the key to your future lies in avoiding a poor career move because you were conned by promises.

### **You are looking to move on from your initial job**

Unless the first job is a disaster, it is advantageous to be with them for at least 18 months with three years being the sweet spot. After scoring some goals we need to make sure that the next organisation is going to be a better fit or be part of the next step in your proposed career path.

<b>Finding a better job checklist</b>	Is it covered?
Is this move intended to gain some blue-chip (large and well-run organisation) experience?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you asked the person you are replacing, "I am in the process of applying for a job with _____ I understand that you have worked for them in the past is that correct? If I was offered the position should I take it?"	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are you going to work under an inspirational CEO?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Will you have staff reporting to you?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Can you envisage working in the new organisation for at least three to five years?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the work life balance in the organisation a good fit with you? You will need to have some casual conversations with the staff in the organisation before you answer this question.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the new organisation offer international job opportunities?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you been provided information about the proposed staff you are about to inherit?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the new position make the best use of your current talents?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is there an honest set of values and ethics within the new organisation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is your proposed rate of pay in the top quartile for your position and experience?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Will you be offered well designed training and development opportunities?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

### **Degree of values fit**

There are business sectors where the values are best suited to the wilds of the Serengeti. Working in these environments, while financial rewarding, is full of people who have a poor set of values. In every sector there are some standout performers. Search these out.

Far too often organizations are too large for integrity to be unchallenged. The number of layers you have in an organisation can undermine integrity and the values. Building silos and enabling and supporting broken management practices to thrive.

I now believe that dysfunction will become prevalent when an organisation has more than five layers of management. If we have each manager having, on average, between seven to 10 direct reports, we come up with a maximum for an organisation of between 2,500-7,000 employees. Over which I would argue there will be a lack of integrity and performance.

## **The 150 staff level – the sweet spot for an organisation**

Bill Gore, of GORE-TEX fame, have an interesting rule on their management structure. Through trial and error, they have devised a model of office design, whereby if the office grows to exceed 150 employees, they will start another office elsewhere until it hits 150 employees, and then start elsewhere again.

148 is the magical number called 'Dunbar's Number,' often rounded up to 150. It is attributed to British evolutionary anthropologist Robin Dunbar, who has stated that 150 people is the 'point beyond which members of any social group lose their ability to function effectively in social relationships.'

Dunbar focused his research largely on the success of GORE-TEX, but he also found similar results in other communities such as Native American tribes, historic military units and Amish communities. In the ancient Roman Army, a Roman Legion of approximately 5,000 soldiers was split into 10 cohorts each with four units of 120 soldiers.

## **The key people to talk to**

Never, I mean never, take a job without talking to your predecessor. I did once, and I must have taken months off my life through the stress it created. I was conned into the job. Even the job description was hidden from me.

Here is how I would do it now:

- Ask the interviewer the name of the predecessor
- Then ask if it would be okay to ring them
- On a walk about speak to one of their colleagues who will know where they are at present
- Failing that ring the reception, when you are at home, and ask for the predecessor. Pretend you are a friend, giving a fake name. They might give you a clue where to start.
- With their full name, a visit to LinkedIn should do the trick

To get an accurate feel of the organization's culture and an assessment on your future manager, as a minimum, contact the following:

- Talk to your predecessor even if they are in Bolivia
- Using LinkedIn talk to others who have worked and left the organisation.
- Find out about the staff turnover in the department.

## **How to avoid being sucked in by a compulsive liar**

Whilst I am a positive individual one realizes there are a whole raft of managers who see recruiting as just an exercise to tick-off. They want a bum on the seat right now. To achieve this, they will lie about the job, make false promises and mess with your career to meet their short-term need.

They are so good at giving a positive impression that recruiting is a breeze for them, and we are the cannon fodder.

Your only safeguard is your homework. Using LinkedIn, you should be able to find someone to talk to who has worked under them. You want to hear, "Oh, you are so lucky, s/he is a great manager."

## **Comments**

*Let's be frank here. Every interviewer dresses up the job. They put a certain lens on it and it is up to you to see through it and work out the reality.*

*Dad, I love my work and will be very careful about attractive offers with false promises.*

## 19. Choosing the right competing job offer

Girls, as you move up the career ladder and gain valuable experience there will be situations where you have competing offers as organizations are scrambling to secure your talents.

### When comparing job offers-do your homework

Always remember that the interviewer will have over sold the job. You need to make sure the next organization is going to be a better fit, or at least part of your proposed career journey.

The checklist below may need re-categorization to suit your current situation.

Comparing competing job offers checklist	Rank jobs (1= greatest fit, 2= next best fit)		
	Current job	Offer #1	Offer #2
<b><u>Really important</u></b>			
Which position fits best with your Ikigai (your life's purpose)?			
Which position fits your five-year goal aspirations best?			
Which position will make the best use of your strengths?			
Which position offers the best career opportunities?			
Which job has the best boss? Make sure you have checked out the bosses with someone who is now outside the organisation, so you can do an accurate comparison to your current boss.			
Which job has the more competent staff reporting to your position? Make sure you have checked this out with someone who is now outside the organisation, so you can do an accurate comparison to your current team.			
Which position offers the best work culture?			
How does the job fit with your partner's career?			
How do the 'work life balances' compare?			
<b><u>Nice to have</u></b>			
How do the rates of pay compare?			
Which job has the best C-Suite? Make sure you have checked this out with someone who is now outside the organisation, so you can do an accurate comparison to the executive team in your current organisation.			
Which organisation has the more inspiring CEO?			
Which job has the best commute time?			
Which job has the most attractive office environment?			
Which job has the best employer pension contribution?			
Which job has the best holiday entitlement?			

## **23. Become a disciple of Peter Drucker**

Girls, in your career you will face many issues and you can bet that Peter Drucker has already thought about it and offered some brilliant advice.

Peter Drucker (1909-2005) is often called the father of modern management. I consider him to be the Leonardo de Vinci of management, his work will be better understood and more widely read 400 years from now. Just like Leonardo's work was.

Peter in the year of his death asked Elizabeth Haas Edersheim, a well known journalist and author to interview him and summarize his life's work. All 32 books. The result is a masterpiece called, "The Definitive Drucker."

To help you I have extracted examples of his wisdom that are relevant to you right now.

### **Focus on your noncustomers (desirable potential customers).**

Which of your noncustomers should you be doing business with? Only Drucker could coin a phrase, 'noncustomers', yet it gets right to the heart of the fundamental issue. Every private sector government and not-for-profit organisation is missing customers it should be servicing. With government and not-for-profit sectors where members of the public, who should receive a service, are either unaware or too proud to ask for help. By constantly focusing on non-customers, a sales team can find these customers and look after their needs.

### **Do not give new staff new assignments**

When an organisation wants a new system implemented it is very tempting to hire someone who has expertise, as a consultant or as a permanent appointment. Drucker pointed out that they do not stand a chance, as staff who are concerned about the change will do their utmost to destabilize the project. He referred to these jobs as 'widow makers', jobs where the incumbent did not have a chance to succeed.

Remember this advice when you are headhunted by a recruiter. You may just be walking towards the guillotine.

Insist that your organisation always appoints an in-house person to run projects. Someone who is well respected in the organisation, who has a pile of IOUs which they can use when favors are required. Staff will support the new initiative more readily when it is led by such an appointee.

### **Abandonment**

This concept is so important I have written about it in a separate section.

### **Collaborate with other organisations—even your competitors**

"Your back room is someone's front room." In other words, if others can do a job better than your organisation can, contract out to them.

He saw business as a "Lego" construction, where you could bolt together services provided either in-house or externally. He was referring to the fact that it was now easier than ever before to amalgamate different services from different entities and market it seamlessly to the customer as one entity. Businesses should be full of activities (pieces of the business) performed by third parties.

He stated that there was not competition but simply better solutions. Drucker saw collaboration as the key to operating in this world, even with an organisation that you previously saw as a competitor.

### **Have three test sites when piloting a project**

Drucker pointed out that one test site was never enough. If you test on a large entity within the organization the smaller ones will say, the positive result is not relevant and vice versa.

### **Drucker's seven sources for innovation**

This is advice is a bit heavy but is timeless. If you are ever involved developing new products / services re read this, again and again.

- **The unexpected**- the unexpected success, the unexpected failures, unexpected outside event. These are signs that the future is happening now.
- **The incongruity**- the incompatibility between reality as it actually is and reality as it is assumed to be. Look for differences between what customers want and what the market thinks they want.
- **Innovation based on process need**- where everyone in the organisation knows that there is a missing link that needs fixing.
- **Changes in industry or market structure** -where a new player comes into the market and starts changing it with an ever-increasing market share e.g., Google.
- **Changes in demographics**- Drucker points out that the aging population demographics is both a highly dependable innovation opportunity.
- **Changes in perception, mood and meaning by customers**- this often leads to unexpected success or failure.
- **New knowledge, both scientific and non-scientific**- this is not the most reliable source of successful innovations because there is a large time lag.

### **Companion pieces in other chapters**

If it's not working - abandon it

Make sure your career is as secure as a hedgehog

### **Comments**

*I have got the message. I will read about Peter Drucker's advice.*

*Peter Drucker's thoughts and advice are clearly very beneficial when you find yourself established in a business as I am (been here for five years).*

## **26. Thirty rules for a “killer” presentation**

The yellow shaded highlighted rules are the ones that were mentioned in the section “Propel your career with ‘killer’ presentations”.

## Planning your story

Presentation planning	<p>1. Last-minute slide presentations are a career-limiting activity. You would not hang your dirty washing in front of a hundred people, so why would you want to show your audience sloppy slides? Only say "yes" to a presentation if you have the time, resources, and enthusiasm to do the job properly.</p> <p>2. Create time so that you can be in a "thinking space" (e.g., work at home, go to the library, etc.).</p> <p>3. Map the subject area out in a mind map and then do a mind dump on Post-It stickers covering all the points, diagrams, pictures you want to cover. Have one sticker for each point. Then you place your stickers where they fit best. Using stickers makes it easy to re-organize them. This will lead to a better presentation.</p>
Have a story	<p>4. Have a story to tell. As a guide an hour long presentation will take 90 hours. 30 hours in the planning (collecting ideas, organizing ideas and sketching the story), 30 hours designing presentation and 30 hours practising.</p>

**Deliver the experience**

Steve Jobs rules	5. Create Twitter like headlines
	6. The rule of three. The human being thinks in threes. If you have six points to make, turn them into three groups.
	7. Introduce the Antagonist: Who are you against? The default future if we do nothing.
	8. Reveal a holy shit moment. When the brain detects an emotionally charged event, the brain releases dopamine to greatly aid memory and information processing.

## **29. Embrace SCRUM meetings on all projects**

Girls, yes, I know that you think you know all about scrums. But if you have not attended a two-day scrum course you still have a beginner's belt on whereas you need a 'black belt' in SCRUM.

Do your project meetings go nowhere slowly? Is there a stagnation of ideas? Is your team stuck in in a 'Groundhog Day'? If so, you need to completely change the way you communicate with each other. Scrum meetings is a technique that was developed to radically improve communications within project teams where projects are:

- typically, late with lots of pressure, no fun and have long dysfunctional meetings, going nowhere quickly
- slowed even further when more resources are applied to help speed them up, as the new staff are tripping over each other with unnecessary duplication
- often over-planned only to find that the game has changed
- constantly hitting roadblocks, with members not having the skills or internal authority to fix the problem by themselves.

The new SCRUM method is where you take a chunk of work – between one and two weeks of effort – which is a standalone part of the project and is signed off at the end by the in-house or external customer. This chunk is called a sprint. Each day of the sprint the team meets in a stand-up scrum meeting. They are asked to talk for one to two minutes about:

- what they did yesterday
- what they are doing today, and
- any current roadblocks.

Each debrief is to take no more than a minute or so; some teams even have a rule that you can only talk if you can hold a dumbbell in your extended arm. The team leader or 'scrum master' notes all the roadblocks and immediately sets about removing them with an appropriate phone call or walkabout visit. At the end of the session, the group touch fists– a homage to the source of this technique.

Team members now get to know what has been done, and what is going to be done and by whom. They also know that they will be having a scrum tomorrow, alleviating the need to email. Everyone is accountable, with no place for 'cruising'.

### **Comments**

*In my position (manager, five years with company) I am motivated to immediately implement the SCRUM meetings.*

## **30. Invest time to explore “Action Meetings”**

Most meetings are totally defective. They are held because they are considered a ritual. The fundamental purpose of the meeting has long since been forgotten.

Most managers, at some time, have received training in managing meetings, yet the level of frustration inflicted with meetings remains the same. A methodology has been developed called “Action Meetings” to address the real reasons behind dysfunctional meetings.

### **Getting people properly into and out of the meeting**

This is done through the introduction of a “first word” and “last word”, where attendees briefly say what state they are in. The first words could be “I am very time challenged and this meeting is last thing I need,” to a last word “This meeting once again promised little and delivered nothing,” to “I look forward to receiving Pat’s report and working with the project team.” The key to the first and last word is that attendees can say anything about how they feel at that point in time. Their comment is just that and is to remain unchallenged.

### **An effective agenda constructed as desired outcomes**

This involves the use of precise wordings about meeting outcomes. In the Action Meetings methodology outcomes can be one of three stages:

- project progress examined and understood
- the key initiatives agreed
- the responsibilities assigned

Outcomes provide focus and the ability to easily check whether an item has in fact been completed. One major benefit of establishing “meeting outcomes” worded in this way is that requested attendees should not attend if they do not think they can add value or assist in achieving the outcomes.

### **Meetings are participant - owned, not chairperson – owned**

All attendees are trained in the new methodology. Thus, meetings are owned and policed by all participants and are less reliant on the capability of the chairperson.

### **Once an outcome is closed, it remains closed**

During the meeting, remind anyone who is opening a closed item that the item has been closed.

### **Nonrelated issues are parked**

Any issues raised that are not related to the outcome under discussion are tabled for another, future discussion.

### **Document action steps**

Action steps are written carefully on a special pad and then entered into a web - based application so all can see the progress.

Visit Actionmeetings.com to find more about it.

### **Comments**

*Will visit the website to find out more. Have already used the parking lot for ideas off point.*

*I attend meetings where for hours after I am still not functioning 100% as I am feeling short changed. In particular where I was encouraged to express my opinion only to find they use my comments against me.*