

How to Make
YOURSELF
PROMOTABLE

7 SKILLS to
Help You Climb
the CAREER LADDER

METTE JOHANSSON



“The world has become much more complicated and the same certainly applies to career planning and development. Mette Johansson clearly gets this and with her new book “How to Make Yourself Promotable” she has taken the career ladder and completely revamped it. The advice she offers has extraordinary depth, with the perfect blend of strategic advice and practical tips. Anyone who wants to make themselves promotable really needs to read this quality book”.

–**Andrew Griffiths**, *International Bestselling Author, Mentor and Speaker*

“How To Make Yourself Promotable – 7 skills to help you climb the career ladder” offers unique encouragement and direction on how to achieve your career goals while becoming a better version of yourself. It is written as a thoughtful combination of theoretical building blocks and practical advice that you can easily integrate in your day-to-day life and work. If you are looking for both personal and career fulfillment, this book is an essential read.”

–**Tatiana Ohm**, *VP, Kelly Services*

“The book is an easy to follow, very practical guide that will benefit most corporate executives. Mette combines her 15+ years of experience in leadership positions with intensive research into the writings of thought leaders and business gurus to reveal the key elements of what makes a successful executive.”

–**Angeline Teo**, *MD of PEP® Worldwide Asia and co-author with Stephen Covey*

How to Make
**YOURSELF
PROMOTABLE**

**7 Skills to Help You Climb
the Career Ladder**

METTE JOHANSSON



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*This book is dedicated to Leon and Louca, who taught
me more people skills, and made me practise juggling
multiple tasks more than anyone else in my life.*

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Foreword

Many books have been written on the topic of how to advance one's career and score high-level jobs – and I admit that I have read quite a few of them. However, Mette Johansson's book stands out from the crowd because she writes from first-hand experience.

This book helps you to find your own way up the career ladder with structured exercises and targeted questions that support you along your individual journey. In doing so, the book very effectively connects scientific foundations with personal experience, and gives clear guidance that you can adapt to your own abilities and career goals.

Before you dive right into the topic of the book, you should ask yourself: Why exactly do I want this career? Why do I want to climb this ladder? Will it really make me happy? Because there is one crucial aspect Mette has found out throughout her career: happiness leads to success – not the other way around. In this book, she breaks down the skills it takes to become successful, and divides them into seven categories. She then introduces them within the PROMOTE Framework:

- **Practise powerful communication:** Communicate in powerful and positive terms and truly listen to what others say. This is the primary tool in your leadership toolkit.
- **Raise your self-confidence:** Stand, smile, and speak with confidence.
- **Own your brilliance:** Convincingly demonstrate your skills to others via effective presentations and pitches.
- **Mentor and be mentored:** Grow with the help of a mentor, and practise essential leadership skills by mentoring others.
- **Optimise relations with your boss:** Managing up is the best practice for managing down.

- **Target peak productivity:** Achieve more in less time through planning and prioritising.
- **Engage authentically:** Understand and embody the characteristics of authentic leadership.

These categories are universally valid – in whatever country, company or industry you work in. They shape the basis for other social skills that you need if you strive to get to the top. For example, to work efficiently in a team or to develop intercultural expertise, you have to be a good listener; and be open, interested in, and respectful of others. Transparent and clear communication is just as important as a professional, confident and authentic personality.

I have learned throughout my career that if you want to climb the corporate ladder, you should be prepared to leave your comfort zone. At the same time, it is important to be authentic and to communicate clearly what you want. A good mentor – someone who lends support and advises through asking questions – is also key to your success. I was fortunate to have people around me who continuously challenged me to push myself further; but, at the same time, always trusted me. Their support has clearly shaped me and provided the right foundation for me to grow. I have not only learned from my mentors and people I looked up to, but also from those who were not successful and made life very difficult for others. It is the sum of these positive and not-so-positive experiences that has shaped me, and indeed, shapes all of us. Eventually we find out who we want to be career-wise, and what is important to us.

I met Mette when we both worked together on several occasions for the same company. Our collaboration inspired us both and it expanded our horizons. Today, Mette is a corporate trainer, an entrepreneur, an author and a mentor. She lives the topics she writes about every single day. It is therefore only logical for her to collect these invaluable experiences and use them to guide and mentor others in their careers. I hope you enjoy this book and that it will be your guide to realise your dreams.

Susanne Marell, CEO, Edelman Deutschland
October 2015

Section 1

Getting ready

Introduction

What does it take to be promotable?

Do you think you're made for something bigger than your current job? Are you dreaming of getting that promotion, and wanting to find out what you need to do to get there faster?

Every job in every company needs specific “hard” skills: the kind of skills that they teach you at University. For instance, knowledge of law is essential for a solicitor. Accountants need technical skills to balance their clients' books. Scientists working in a lab need scientific know-how. Whatever your individual job, you're probably already pretty good at the required hard skills.

However, in today's service-based economy, soft skills – such as people skills that are rarely taught at school – are increasingly important. In one study^(xxxviii), both managers and members of Generation Y agree that soft skills are *the* most important consideration when promoting Millennials.

These skills are seen as essential for climbing the career ladder, and are required in nearly all jobs. They're about developing the right personality to be promotable, about focusing on the things that add value, and about getting those things done.

Good to know: Quick definitions

Soft skills are the personal aptitudes that, for instance, enable someone to interact effectively and harmoniously with other people. They are fairly intangible and difficult to quantify. Soft skills include communication skills, interpersonal skills, leadership skills, and self-management skills.

Hard skills, by contrast, are specific, teachable abilities that can be easily defined, measured, and tested in written exams. The knowledge we learn in school and university typically involves hard skills.

Many soft skills can be learned through sustained targeted effort. They will add value to your life through positive interaction with people, and by building true connections both in your professional - as well as your private - life.

Before you launch yourself into this book, however, it's important to ask yourself *why* you want to be promoted. Not everyone is made for a leadership position, so take the time to understand what you expect to get from your promotion. For example, you might expect:

- That a promotion will lead to a more fulfilling and satisfying life.
- That you'll have the opportunity to handle more responsibility, and that the extra challenges will be extremely fulfilling.
- That it will be rewarding to manage people, make an impact, and help people develop and grow.

It's also important to realise that, if you want to be promotable, you'll probably need to do things differently to the way you're doing them now. In today's fast-moving society, stagnation equals regression; so to take the next step in your career, you'll need to grow, and keep growing.

And that is exactly what this book is designed to help you do: to develop yourself and the skills you'll need to acquire to grow into your next promotion. Therefore, I'll ask you throughout the book to continuously learn as well as to form new habits. I'll also ask you to take time to assess what's truly important to you. If you fail to take the time to define your values, you may end up climbing the ladder of success... only to find that it was leaning against the wrong wall.

Introducing the PROMOTE framework

The skills you need to become promotable are both specific and learnable. Yes, a lucky few seem to be born with them. The rest of us, however, need to consciously work on developing them. I've studied these skills in the course of my career, and over time distilled them into seven categories. These categories have then become the 7-step PROMOTE framework that I've detailed below.

Throughout my own career, I've seen a growing trend for people who are promoted to score highly on several of these skills. The ones who consistently score highly on all of them are the true leaders. I'll list the categories briefly below, and then I'll explore each one in depth in its own section.

The PROMOTE Framework:

- P Practise powerful communication:** Communicate in powerful and positive terms and truly listen to what others say. This is *the* primary tool in your leadership toolkit.
- R Raise your self-confidence:** Stand, smile, and speak with confidence.
- O Own your brilliance:** Convincingly demonstrate your skills to others via effective presentations and pitches.
- M Mentor and be mentored:** Grow with the help of a mentor, and practise essential leadership skills by mentoring others.
- O Optimise relations with your boss:** Managing up is the best practice for managing down.
- T Target peak productivity:** Achieve more in less time through planning and prioritising.
- E Engage authentically:** Understand and embody the characteristics of authentic leadership.

The PROMOTE framework is built upon a foundation of openness to learning, and an understanding of your own values, goals and mind-set. These characteristics allow you to take each category in the framework, and then stamp it with your own personality and your unique image of what you want your life to be like.

For that reason, the first section of this book focuses on exploring and developing these characteristics. Once you're clear on them, you can then go into the framework with a far more concrete idea of what you're working towards and why. After all, there's no point in working towards a promotion that won't take you where you want to be in life. Sort out your priorities first: it will make all the difference.

The relationship between “soft skills” and promotability

Life itself is a continuous process of learning. Reading, everyday experiences, and regular interaction with people around you are all opportunities for growth and development. Continuous improvement is the key to not only advancing in your career; it is also the key to long-term physical and mental health (as well as a major ingredient in happiness).

“Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty.

Anyone who keeps learning stays young.”

—Henry Ford

I'm convinced that the single most important factor in being promoted for anyone, anywhere in a 21st century workplace is the ability to learn and master soft skills. These start with good communication skills (including listening skills), which are essential to develop a better understanding of those around you. Then add maintaining a positive attitude and showing respect for others into the mix. Finally, don't forget to be yourself (albeit perhaps a happier, more confident, and more balanced version of your current self), and acquire an achiever's mind-set.

Combine all these characteristics together, and you're well equipped to take the leap into the leadership ranks.

To help you develop these skills, I'll guide you through a little theory, and then provide some examples from my 15 years of experience in corporate life (most of which was in leadership positions). I'll also provide you with simple, easy-to-implement exercises to add into your daily routines. This is based on one of the most important principles in my training: focusing on the small changes that have the highest possible impact.

These exercises will result in some fairly simple habit changes. Will they be easy? No. Your brain is wired to keep you in your comfort zone. That means that even simple principles can be hard to implement. It takes a great deal of will and discipline to ignore the old synapse connections, and replace them with new routine “highways” in your brain.

Be aware that many experts claim that it takes 21 days to implement new habits¹. For this reason, you’ll need to continue most of the exercises and activities in this book for at least three weeks. This will give you enough time to really acquire the new habits that will make you promotable.

How to get the most from this book

The important thing to understand about absorbing knowledge is that on average, you’ll forget between 80-90% of what you learn within just a couple of days. To convert the knowledge into

a skill, you’ll need the right mind-set, practice, repetition, and persistence.

If you want to get the most out of this book, you’ll need to actually do the exercises. Repeat them until you master the skills they teach. Re-read the summary of each chapter a few days after you’ve finished reading it too, to help the information settle into your mind.

The most important part, however, is to remember that you’re an individual. Don’t take everything I say as gospel. Instead, read this book and become an experimenter in your own life. See what works for you and what doesn’t. Adopt the recommendations that fit you and that work for you.

For any recommendations that don’t resonate, you have a couple of options. Firstly, you could talk with a mentor or confidante about why a

*“Live as if you were to die tomorrow.
Learn as if you were to live forever.”*

—Mahatma Gandhi

1 And, for the record, others say this is rubbish. Take smoking, for example. You cannot just implement a non-smoking habit (or even exchange a smoking habit for a chewing gum habit) for 21 days, and then believe you are safe from ever smoking again. Breaking the habit demands long-term dedication beyond the period of simple nicotine addiction.

given recommendation might not fit you, and what you could do about it. You could also brainstorm with people you trust about how to make that recommendation succeed. Or you could work through it and see what you can learn: both about yourself and about the topics I take you through.

Secondly, not all of the recommendations I make will fit the particular blend of experiences and culture that makes you *you*. Environment, culture, context, and even our brain wiring all mean that it's impossible to produce something that suits everyone. However – and I've seen this too many times in my workshops – do not use option #2 as an excuse to avoid changing anything. If you want to grow, you need to reflect on whether you can improve on a skill, and be ruthlessly honest with yourself.

To make this work, you *must* be willing to step out of your comfort zone. Staying comfortable is the single greatest obstacle to human achievement. Your brain is wired to resist change, so embrace learning and push yourself out of your comfort zone.

It's rewarding if you put in the effort.

Start by thinking about happiness

Whether you get promoted or not, happiness is another important pillar that supports success in your life. It's also an art that can be acquired. If you're happy, you'll automatically have better people skills. You'll smile more; present yourself better; and in general, build trust and communicate in a more positive way.

To become happier, you need to take charge of your own cheerfulness. This often leads to a better relationship with your peers, as well as your boss; and will attract both clients and unexpected opportunities, because people will naturally react positively to your happiness. It will even attract mentors, partners, and new relationships. Additionally, it's much easier to be confident when you're happy; and confidence is probably the number one promotion enabler.

Last but not least, I'd like you to think about happiness because I want to share skills that add more positivity to your life. Aiming for a promotion should not only be based on a destination that makes you happy, but on following a road that does so, too.

So do you want the promotion? Are you ready to get out of your comfort zone? If the answer's yes, then let's get started.

Prepare to get PROMOTEd

Most people want a leadership position because they believe it will make them happier. If this is true for you, think again. Research^(xxviii) has found that happiness doesn't necessarily follow success. In fact, the cause and effect is the other way round: happiness leads to success. So, start with happiness, and the rest will follow.

That means it's essential to ask yourself what makes you happy. Is it really a promotion that you want? Or would you prefer to scale back at work, and spend more time with the people who matter most to you? You'll be much happier and more successful when you've come to terms with the balance between each of these different elements in your life.

This chapter contains the happiness-related groundwork you need to do before you step into the PROMOTE framework and work towards your promotion. Preparation is everything – and this groundwork will give you a solid base to launch from.

Reflect on your values

Most people say they want to be happy. However, the things that make each of us happy are very different, since we all have different values, wants and needs. So many people struggle to find happiness in life because they don't take the time to ask themselves, "What makes me happy?" A father might say, "I value my family above everything else", and then work 12-hour days "for the family". Meanwhile, the family would probably benefit from spending more time together, rather than from accumulating riches.

The process of finding out what makes you happy and what you want from life doesn't happen overnight. It takes significant reflection to create a

core statement that expresses your one true dream: a dream that's realistic, that's based on your values, and that you've set your mind on achieving.

The process requires you not just to reflect, but also to be brutally honest with yourself. You'll need to spend time *truly* listening to yourself. You'll also need to list any goals or ideas that pop up in your head, and then consider each one in detail. Dig deeper into each by asking "Why?", "Why do I want this?", and "Why did I choose this goal over all the other goals I came up with?"

The relationship between achievement and happiness

Researchers explain the link between happiness and success by noting that positive moods are both infectious and energising. Also, happiness increases confidence. Together, these things mean that being happier gives you the energy to launch new projects, and helps others to find you likeable, sociable, and trustworthy. Not bad prerequisites for success, eh?

The positive payoffs don't stop here. Research says that positivity is good for your health; and can increase your lifespan, and even performance. For example, one study^(xxi) shows that optimistic insurance salespeople typically sold 37% more policies than their pessimistic counterparts. Additionally, the pessimists were twice as likely to leave the company during their first year of employment. That's why I suggest that you work on happiness and reflect on your values before setting yourself goals for your career and for life.

Tal Ben-Shakar, author of "Being Happy", has recommendations that are quite similar to some of the Buddha's teachings, which in turn are well known for cultivating a balanced mind. For example, Buddhist teachings tell us that happiness is not a static state; and that life will include varying shades of "not-happy" at times.

In fact, the idea that "painful emotions will arise" is one translation of the First Noble Truth – one of the four founding principles of Buddhism. This means we need to accept that everything has its opposite, which in turn means:

- Pleasure cannot exist without pain.
- Life does not exist without death.
- Happiness cannot exist without sadness.

Practical ways to become happier

You can choose to get happy by proactively manipulating your mood. Easy ways to do this include:

- Smiling rather than frowning.
- Saying thank you.
- Exercising.
- Noting down even the smallest of successes.

And the best news is that, if you keep at them, these techniques will increase your happiness over time. Get used to doing them, and you'll be surprised at the change in your mind-set, and in the way that people react to you.

Another happiness-increasing technique is to practise living in the moment. The faster the pace of your life, the less time you can take to enjoy the present moment. Living in the moment goes beyond putting away your phone when having a meal with family or friends. It requires placing your attention on what's before you: not in the past, dwelling on regrets or events that have knocked your confidence; nor in the future, worrying about what will come.

Of course, being happy doesn't rule out being ambitious and having plans. It's important to make happiness your *way*, not simply a distant destination. Aiming for continuous happiness is possible – even with life's ups and downs, setbacks and boosts – if you appreciate that whatever you have and wherever you are now, it can contribute to feeling happy.

Additionally, happiness also hinges on choosing to focus on solutions, rather than on problems.

Getting what you want

There are several steps you need to take if you want to become more intentional about living your life; and I'll go through each one in more detail below. Broadly speaking, however, you need to reflect on your values, set goals, define a vision, plan, and then set your mind to achieving your optimal life.

What do you value in life?

What's important to you in life? You'd probably like more responsibility at work, or you wouldn't be reading this book right now. But *why* do you want it? What deeper value do you have that underpins this desire?

Reflection is the first step in finding your values. Give yourself enough time to think things through. Reflect on your own life, asking the question, "What do I want to change in my life?", and then list down your answers to it. Select a notebook in which you'll write these reflections and any goals that you hope to accomplish.

To define your values, you need to consider what importance you want to give to the various elements of your life. Your professional ambitions can influence both your health and family life. Your attitude to partnership impacts your social life. Your approach to spirituality might also intertwine with your social life. Sometimes, one or more of these things will contradict your picture of your ideal life. For example, you might want a career – *and* want more family time. Managing this kind of delicate balance is only possible when you connect to – and get clear on – your values.

"The only way to do great work is to love what you do."

—Steve Jobs

Define your personal values

The following exercise will help you to reflect on what you want to achieve in your life. If you've already thought about your personal values before, it will only take two minutes. If you haven't, you might want to take a few hours out, on your own, somewhere you find inspiring. Sit at a busy café, on a beach, in a mountain cottage, on your patio – or take a walk in the woods. Go anywhere that allows you to be alone with your thoughts.

Example Values – for your inspiration

Assertiveness	Curiosity	Freedom	Integrity	Purpose
Authenticity	Dignity	Fun	Learning	Quality
Balance	Effectiveness	Happiness/ Joy	Love	Relationships
Caring	Efficiency	Hard work	Loyalty	Resilience
Collaboration	Enjoyment	Health	Open-mindedness	Respect
Commitment	Equality	Honesty	Openness	Responsibility
Compassion	Excellence	Humility	Optimism	Security
Composure	Fairness	Humour	Order	Self-reliance
Confidence	Faith	Initiative	Passion	Stability
Contribution	Family	Intelligence	Perfection	Simplicity
Courage	Focus	Improvement	Persistence	Thankfulness
Courtesy	Fitness	Independence	Practicality	Trust
Creativity	Flexibility	Inner Harmony	Professionalism	Wisdom

Some specific questions that will help you to define your own values include:

- What do you enjoy doing the most?
- What brings a smile to your face?
- In what situations do you think, “Its great being alive,” or “I really appreciate what I’ve got”?
- When do you feel you’re recharging?
- When do you feel really proud?

As an example, my own value list includes:

- Maintaining and developing healthy relationships with my core family and all the interesting people around me.
- Working on positivity and happiness.
- Maintaining good health.
- Engaging in personal life-long learning and development, both for myself and helping others do the same.
- Maintaining my freedom of choice and ability to explore.
- Showing respect for people and nature.

Some of my values might be similar to yours. Note that in value tests, love, happiness, and optimism tend to score very high.

Exercise #1: Defining your values

Now it's over to you. Write down your own values in the spaces below. You might choose to identify three, five, seven, or even ten values.

The following values are absolutely central in my life:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

7) _____

8) _____

9) _____

10) _____

Setting goals

Next, keeping your values in mind, define what you want to achieve. Set yourself some specific goals. Think of your life ten years down the line, and imagine where you want to be. Think big! There's no need to be modest.

Exercise #2: How to set goals

When you set goals for yourself, it's important to base them on your values. For example, if, you wrote that you valued family relationships above all else in the previous exercise, you want your goals to reflect this. If you wrote that you want a mutually supportive relationship with the love of your life, you need to set goals that will get you there. Make sure you address all the aspects of your life: body, mind, heart, and spirit.

Read and review all of the values-related notes that you've made up to this point. Group your goals according to topics or themes. For example, your headings might include family, love life, social interaction, health, work, hobbies and fun, personal growth, finances, giving back to society, attitude and beliefs, and physical environment.

Once you've categorised your goals, trim them down until you're left with just the essentials. These are the goals that you *really* want to accomplish.

If you're stuck, use the following sentence stems to get clear on how your values translate into goals:

In my family life, it is of utmost importance that... _____

To assure this will happen, I will... _____

To me, partnership or love life means ... _____

To work on this, I will... _____

To me, maintaining fruitful friendships means... _____

To achieve this, I will... _____

Concerning health, my target is to... _____

I will make this happen by... _____

Professionally, I want to be... _____

In order for this to happen, I will... _____

I get inspiration from and re-energise myself by... _____

Intellectually, I am fulfilled through... _____

Financially and materially, I will be in a position where I can... _____

I fulfil my need to help others or give back to society by... _____

Spiritually, it's important to me that... _____

I want to live in a place best described as.... _____

*When you've answered these, revisit them to make sure they are **SMART** (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time bound).*

Now, rank each of the different goals on a scale from 1-10 that reflects how important each one is to you.

One final point: write down your goals by hand. According to Brian Tracy^(xlvii), handwriting your goals is a “psychoneuromotor activity”, i.e. one in which your hand movements actually help to drive the learning into your subconscious mind. In other words, by handwriting the goals, you're programming your subconscious mind to believe in them and to take actions that will bring you closer to them.

Ask “why?” to deepen your goals

Every time you finish one of the sentences above, ask yourself *why* that goal is important to you. Don't just take your initial answers at face value. This technique is called the “Ultimate Why”, or the “5-whys Technique”; and was invented at Toyota for effective troubleshooting in the heyday of the Japanese economic revolution.

The Ultimate Why, or the 5-Whys Technique

To find the underlying reason for each goal, ask “why” five times, or until you get to the deepest possible motivation.

For instance, imagine you've stated that, "Professionally, in ten years, I want to be leading a team of 50, and be responsible for sales of \$20 million annually". Ask yourself "why" you want each of these things, and then why you want that thing in turn, until you get to the root of the matter.

This might take you five whys, or seven, or perhaps even more. For example, you might ask yourself these questions, and come up with the following answers:

1) *Why do I want this challenging career goal?*

Answer: Because I want to be in a major leadership role.

2) *Why do I want this leadership role?*

Answer: I enjoy managing people, so I want a large leadership role.

The third "why" might bring you a little closer to the root cause:

3) *Why do I enjoy managing a large team of people?*

Answer: I enjoy developing people. I also enjoy challenging my brain with more complicated tasks. And, I'd love the status and recognition that come with a large leadership role.

Then you'd continue:

4) *Why do I enjoy developing people?*

I enjoy seeing other people grow. I had the experience at university of tutoring others, and I love the bonding that comes with helping others grow.

5) *Why do I enjoy seeing people grow?*

It's partly the selfless wish to give back to society, and partly – probably more selfishly – about making a positive impact on people, thus leaving a legacy.

By repeatedly asking "why", you force yourself to search for – and find – deeper answers; possibly you'll find answers that are value-based. Coaches often use similar techniques to get their coachees talking, and lead

them to the root of their problems. However, you can just as easily do it for yourself.

The aim of this exercise is to help you dig deeper to learn what really drives you. Thinking in terms of legacy can be helpful too: what do you want people to remember about you when you're gone?

This thinking helped me personally when I said goodbye to corporate life because my position didn't fulfil me or make me happy. Asking myself the above questions helped me to make a decision that took into account my family, my husband, my finances, my health, my career prospects, my social life, and much more.

I knew that changing careers would have a mostly positive impact, although it would definitely have some negative consequences too. I could make my decision, however, because I had prioritised and clarified what I cherished in life.

Create your Vision

Finally, as an advanced, optimal step, build your vision statement. You've already defined your values and listed out your goals; so you can now easily write a one-paragraph vision statement based on them.

A vision statement is a future-based, inspirational statement that you can use to guide your future actions. It is based on the core values that you've identified for yourself. It expresses your vision for where you want to be in the future, and reflects your values, goals, purpose, and how you want to live your life.

Vision statement example

My vision is to be an honest, empathetic person who makes an impact in various aspects of my life. Professionally, I want to be recognised internationally within my company and among clients for delivering added value and quality work. I am committed to growing both as a human being and as a leader at work, where I will create and lead a dream team in which everyone plays to their strengths. I will lead a life that balances social activities, family life, and work life; and keep stress at arm's length. I will manage my finances to provide me with the freedom to follow my passion of discovering the world.

Now it's your turn:

Exercise #3: My vision statement

Now: plan it all out

The next step in laying the groundwork for achieving your goals is to create a plan. This plan lists out the actions you can take to begin being happy now, while also moving you towards your future goals. Start by giving yourself time to review your values and goals to make sure you've got them right, and that they're what you really want.

Now consider your "menu" of goals, and identify the ones that will make the biggest difference to your fulfilment and happiness (aim for not compromising any of the other goals). Once you've set your mind on those goals: go for it. Make a business plan for your life. Divide the plan up into the various aspects that are important for you, set milestones to aim for, and then schedule the steps to achieve each one. You can even make the steps part of your daily "To Do" list (more on how to make sure you translate your plans and goals into results in Chapter 6).

Identify which milestones you'll need to reach by when, and any possible obstacles in reaching them. For each obstacle you find, develop a plan to deal with that as well. Prioritise your goals according to their value and urgency. Finally, look back over your plan and schedule as a whole. Make sure it's doable, so that you can stick to your plan without feeling overwhelmed.

As you do all this, have faith in your abilities, and dream big. Most people

fail to achieve their plans not because their goals are too big, but because they failed to believe in themselves.

Going after your goals: mind-set

Setting your mind on something is powerful. Many successful leaders automatically set themselves on autopilot toward their goals. However, when most of us set a goal, we

“Believe you can and you’re halfway there.”

—Theodor Roosevelt

encounter resistance from within. If you want to become successful at anything in life, you need to master your own mind. And if you have an inner saboteur that keeps you from achieving your dreams, there are various techniques you can use to silence it.

Start by asking yourself what this saboteur tells you. Do you sometimes find yourself thinking, “I can’t do it,” or, “this is not for me”? If so, it’s usually because, at some point in your past, these thoughts were – for one reason or another – planted in your subconscious mind.

Your subconscious is the part of your mind that controls all the repetitive, habitual actions you don’t think about. These are things like walking to the bus stop or making a cup of coffee: patterns of actions that you’ve done so many times, they’ve become automatic. Your subconscious also controls your emotions, habits and responses to the world; and is where the voice of your saboteur resides.

If you let them, the thoughts from your saboteur will result in subconscious fears and beliefs that hold you back. We allow these beliefs to influence our actions day in, day out, because the thoughts from our subconscious minds direct us. The good news is that we can influence and even *control* these thoughts by accessing the connections between the conscious and subconscious minds.

You can get insight into your subconscious beliefs with meditation-like activities that will help you to understand the sabotaging thoughts more clearly. Even better, you can actually choose what you’ll believe instead. Some of the techniques that can help you to do this include:

- Meditating to understand your inner saboteur.
- Repeating constructive thoughts while completely relaxing (for instance just before going to sleep).

- Talking positively to yourself when doing repetitive aerobic activities (e.g. jogging, swimming, brisk walking, biking, etc.).
- Writing down your intentions every day just before you go to sleep, or just after you wake up.
- Hypnosis.

Life becomes so much easier, more fulfilling, and happier when your subconscious mind believes things that propel you toward your goals, rather away from them. Below are a few more examples of how you might go about getting in touch with your subconscious mind, and working to align it with your conscious goals.

Talking to and consciously manipulating your subconscious mind

The voice of the saboteur I mentioned earlier reflects thoughts – not facts. You have the power to stop those thoughts in their tracks, rather than increase their power by dwelling on them. You can even turn them around into positive thoughts, and so start the process of exchanging your negative habits for positive ones.

You can talk yourself out of achieving your goals, or you can talk yourself into achieving them. Which do you choose?

If you want the second option, here are some effective ways to connect with your subconscious mind and reprogram it to work with you, instead of against you. Try them out for yourself, and watch yourself becoming more able to achieve your life goals.

Mantras

Mantras are chants or incantations. I've used the word mantra simply for the lack of a better term. To me, a mantra is a very simple, short, positive statement that you repeat over and over. Using it in a rhythm with repetitive aerobic exercise can reprogram your subconscious, and bring it into alignment with your goals.

Make sure your mantra is P APAS:

- **P Personal:** use the word “I”.
- **A Active:** use words such as “am”, “can”, “will”, and “want”.
- **P Positive:** describe what you want to be or do every day; not what you will not do.

- **A *Appropriate***: truly reflecting your desired change.
- **S *Short***: a few words that will create a good rhythm as you repeat them.

Mantras work because they get you thinking positively. Words and thoughts are powerful. They influence your subconscious mind, which will in turn program you to perform the way **you** want to. Repeat your mantra in time with your breathing as you exercise, and it will sink into your subconscious mind even faster. For example, you could breathe in on the first two words (“I can”) and breathe out on the next two (“do it”).

Meditation

Meditation allows you to connect better to your feelings and inner motives, and to improve your understanding of why your mind repeatedly blocks your attempts to change. Meditating may not eliminate your sabotaging thoughts; however, it will help you to become more aware of them, and their origin and impact. This then becomes the first step toward getting rid of them.

“Whether you think you can, or you think you can’t—you’re right.”

—Henry Ford

A formal meditation course is often the best way to get started. However, many people learn to meditate through an app, or through instructions from the Internet.

Visualisation

Many elite athletes, like US swimming phenomenon Michael Phelps, have won Olympic medals with the help of this technique. Visualisation basically involves projecting yourself into an imaginary future in which you’ve already achieved your goals. See yourself in a specific situation – for example, in your new position, happy and successful at whatever it is you’ve chosen to do. Make the image as real as possible, and imagine the feelings you’d have too.

Do this every day, at a time when you’re relaxed, and you’ll soon experience a much stronger focus on your goal.

Mental bank book

Every evening, write down anything positive that happened during your day;

as well as a few affirmations that you'll focus on in the future. Repeated every day, this technique acts much like visualisation and mantras: it programs your mind to act in a certain way.

Do it in the evening just before going to sleep. This is a time when you're naturally relaxed, so the door to your subconscious mind has opened.

You can use the notebook in which you write down your goals and visions for this too.

Hypnotherapy

For this technique, you'll need to find a qualified practitioner. With their help, you'll aim to identify and overcome ingrained subconscious thought patterns that you want to change. Over time, as your sessions progress, you'll find that those thoughts have far less charge. NLP (neuro-linguistic programming, which, simplified, is about programming your brain with the power of words) practitioners can help you achieve the same results.

Exercise #4: Strengthen your self-belief

Choose one of the five techniques above, and use it to start taking control of any sabotaging thoughts that are holding you back.

Continue the practice for at least a month (or four once-weekly sessions in the case of hypnotherapy). After all, it took a long time to build the conviction that you "can't do it", so it will also take some time to replace that conviction with a belief in yourself.

Final thoughts

Now that you've reflected on your life, figured out why you want that promotion, and laid the groundwork for an optimal mind-set, you're ready to explore the PROMOTE framework. In the next section, I'll introduce you the seven components of the framework, starting with "Practise Powerful Communication" – which is the first step to getting your

leadership role.

Chapter summary

The first step on the journey to becoming promotable is to connect to your values. When you do this, you'll find that your confidence increases, you have much more energy, and your desire to make a difference increases too.

Your stress levels will also go down; and you'll feel happier and more balanced, because you're living your life with increased purpose. This also means that decisions seem much easier. The resulting happiness and positivity is not only good for your health and lifespan – it will even increase your performance.

Key points:

- Happiness leads to success – not the other way round.
- Smiling, laughing, showing gratitude, and keeping a list of the positive events that have happened each day all improve your mood.
- Taking time to define your values, and then living by them, also boosts happiness.
- Define your goals in all aspects of your life, including your personal, social and work lives.
- Write a vision and then make a life plan in which you think big.
- Control the sabotaging thoughts that hold you back.
- Happiness is a journey as well as a destination.

Do you think you're made for something bigger than your current job?

Are you dreaming of getting that promotion, and wanting to find out what you need to do to get there?

How to Make Yourself Promotable is all about working on the basics to make that promotion you're yearning for happen faster. It's targeted especially for people who are starting to settle into their jobs; for people who know they want more in corporate life.

Regardless of your profession and your industry, your knowledge – also known as hard skills – are essential for your success. However, those skills alone are usually not enough. If you only focus on hard skills, you can get stuck in that cubicle as the most experienced specialist in your field. If you want a promotion and team responsibility, you'll need the right set of soft skills: people skills, the right attitude, and the ability to get things done.

Getting promoted is not about being perfect at everything. Rather, it is about knowing which skills are essential for stepping up the career ladder, and then steadily improving them to bring your promotion within reach. "How to make yourself promotable" is a trusted guide to identifying and developing those skills as you move forward on your career journey.

"The advice Mette offers in 'How to Make Yourself Promotable' has extraordinary depth, with the perfect blend of strategic advice and practical tips. Anyone who wants to make themselves promotable really needs to read this quality book."

Andrew Griffiths, International Bestselling Author, Mentor and Speaker



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