



# Career Strategy

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SMO 441

motivation

strategic reserves

match learning  
to energy

tips for learning

MOTIVATION

# Why be strategic in your career?

You will go through multiple career changes

- Macroeconomic pressures
- Personal / family health
- Drive for career impact / calling

Strategy can help us prepare for inevitable career turning points

- Most of your waking attention will be consumed by your career
- Your work can have a large impact on who you will become

# Connect with your motivation

Start close in - look for your north star

- Find your authentic voice - what moves / excites you, and why?
- Being curious with one's emotions
- Continual questioning of one's identities

Reorient to your north star

- It's easy to forget our intentions under pressure
- Motivation ebbs and flows; transformation takes time
- Choose to reconnect with your original reasons for caring

# STRATEGIC RESERVES

# Build a strategic reserve

## Keep your eyes on the horizon

- Prioritize time for discovering new paths, opportunities, threats
- Always in tension with operations
- Learning rate matters

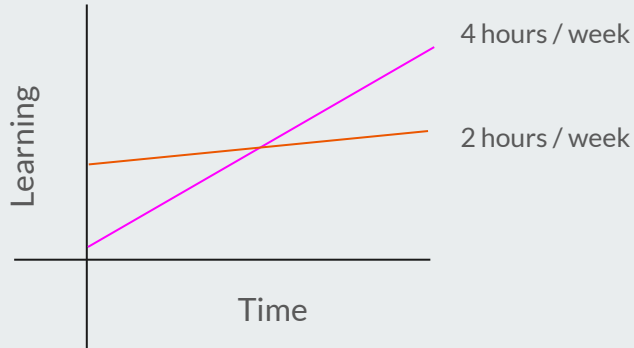
## Increase your learning surface area

- Completely separate from work (least surface area)
- Go part time
- Automate / reduce responsibilities in your job
- Integrate current job (most surface area)

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MATCH LEARNING  
TO ENERGY

# What do I do with my reserve?

Have a variety of activities to line up with different energy levels

- Right learning for right energy
- Passive / active learning
- Opportunistically learn

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If you were a hiring manager, what would you look for?

- It's never just experience or education
- Initiative; self authorization; motivation; drive for learning

# Learning

Books / Book Clubs

Articles / Newsletters

Courses / Webinars

Podcasts

# Build skills

## Reflect

- Synthesize your learnings
  - Write in a journal / blog
- Map out different ways of achieving a new career state

## Teach

- Attempting to teach concepts shows your blindspots
- Improves your communication and understanding

## Present

- Public speaking / presenting / panels

# Experience

## Start / join a startup

- Ensure you have the proper domain knowledge
- Warning: incredibly resource intensive (time / energy / money)
  - But usually a very high soft payoff (assuming failure)

## Volunteer for boards / consulting / projects

- Research and have a list of possibilities

## Continually look for ways to increase learning surface area

- Develop skills for your new career within your current one if you can
- Don't be afraid to switch jobs to gain perspective
  - Different role same company
  - Same role different company

# Networking

Continually socialize your ideas of career to others

- Be a mentee, be a mentor
- Interview people in the next phase of your career

Join groups of interest

- Meetups, community events, startup community (friendly!)
- Slack groups - you can find a surprising amount of opportunity
  - Nick's groups: Edmonton Startup Community, Dev Edmonton, All Tech is Human

Networking can help with flanking

- Understand how to use the side instead of front door

# Continually pursue jobs

Look for jobs even if you don't intend on getting them

- Set up career alerts on keywords
- Get to know the gap between where you are now and where you want to go
- Use interviews as practice rounds

Frame your work in terms of outcomes, not just responsibilities

- To communicate to others your work, per piece of work you get to talk about
  - 1-2 responsibilities (remember anybody can have responsibilities)
  - 1-3 outcomes (not everybody has accomplishments)
- Work backwards from outcomes



# TIPS FOR LEARNING

## Use social deadlines

Sign yourself up for activities that involve preparation

- Large difference between internal and external deadlines
- Especially if you're out of a job - critical to get outside of one's head

## Articulate 60% thoughts

- Faster course correction
- Emotionally this is difficult - but also an opportunity
  - Self awareness
  - Communication
  - Vulnerability
- Perfection is the enemy

# You don't need to be a specialist to get ahead

## Generalists vs Specialists

- Specialists excel at optimization
- Generalists can excel at transformation
- Expertise / fame isn't always correlated with accurate predictions

## Range

- Breadth of experience and interest drives innovation
- Continually experiment
- Starting early and specializing is fashionable, but has dubious merit

# Sometimes you'll need to pull back

Be gentle with yourself; persevere

- Don't expect yourself to be 100% on
  - motivation ebbs and flows
- There will continually be setbacks
- Allow the emotion, rekindle the fires as you can

Rest can be the doorway to courage

- Rest is stopping, but also coming home
- If it's not the right season of life to contemplate career, listen to that

# TAKEAWAYS

# Persevere in learning

## Steps

- Connect with motivation
- Build a strategic reserve
  - maximize learning with limited resources
- Match energy and time to learning type
  - Know the different ways that keep you learning

## Tips

- Use social deadlines; try teach others
- Specialization doesn't always trump generalization
- Articulate 60% thoughts
- Be gentle with yourself
  - Preserve the fires within

# Resources for the journey

## Career Tools Podcasts

<https://www.manager-tools.com/career-tools-basics#>

<https://www.manager-tools.com/map-of-the-universe>

## On Motivation

Consolations - The Solace, Nourishment and Underlying Meaning of Everyday

Words - David Whyte

<https://davidwhyte.com/pages/consolations>

## Generalists vs Specialists

Range - Why Generalists Triumph in a Specialized World - David Epstein

<https://davidepstein.com/the-range/>

## EACOS - Edmonton Advisory Council on Startups

<https://www.eacos.ca>

<https://edmonton-startup-slack-sign-up.herokuapp.com/>

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