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**Module 1:
Soft skills –
The new
working life
superpower**

Pehmeät taidot työelämän supervoimana /
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What is Nova?

The project aims to improve your competitiveness in the labour market in your current job, provide further training for new jobs in sectors with oversupply and support career paths within a sector.

Service Centre for Lifelong Learning and Employment – State Aid for training to strengthen labour market position in sectors of oversupply and structural change.

The training is funded by The Service Centre for Continuing Learning and Employment. The service centre promotes the competence development of the working-age population and the availability of a skilled workforce. The service centre is run by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture and the Finnish Ministry of Employment and the Economy.



Story of your name?



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This material is partly based on the Reboot project (Rebooting, Re-rooting and Re-skilling Unemployed and Underemployed Higher Education Graduates for Work 4.0, Project Number 2018-1-FI01-KA204-047188, funded by the European Commission's Erasmus+ programme)



Module 1

Soft skills – The new working life superpower

Module 1 encourages you to reflect on your personal skills, abilities, aptitudes, and competence that you need to perform work in a high-quality manner.



Module 1 – content

- What are soft skills?
- Why are soft skills important in the working life?
- How can you find soft skills?
- How can you develop soft skills?
- What is my goal in the working life?

Soft skills – why?

- For example, LinkedIn's 2019 Global Talent Trends study and the Finnish National Agency for Education's Osaaminen (*Skills*) 2035 report highlight the increasing importance of soft skills in our increasingly technological environment.
- Soft skills are industry independent. The LinkedIn study highlights creativity, persistence, collaboration, flexibility, and time management as the most important soft skills. In particular, the Osaaminen 2035 report lists skills most relevant to managing change, such as problem-solving and self-direction, as the skills whose importance will increase the most.
- However, without one essential soft skill, self-knowledge, we may not realise that we have certain soft skills or recognise qualities that we could develop. Developing soft skills starts with self-reflection. We can learn a lot about ourselves by being open to feedback, both positive and negative.



What would you add to your CV?

We are quick to add our hard skills and the courses we have taken on our CVs, but in the working life, empathy could be a greater skill than Excel...



Identification exercise

Discuss in a group:

1. Which soft skills do you think are most important in the working life and why? (You can use the list on the next page to help you.)
2. Which soft skills can you identify as strong in yourself?

Soft skills include for example

- Self-knowledge
- Understanding change
- Curiosity
- Perseverance
- Adaptability
- Self-reliance
- Motivation
- Time management
- Teamwork
- Interpersonal skills
- Negotiation skills
- Leadership
- Multidisciplinary skills
- Networking
- Openness
- Creativity
- Tenacity
- Flexibility



Unelmakartta / Dream map

Select pictures and texts which inspire you

This is only for you and don't need to be shared unless you wish to

There is power in dreaming!



Task:

As a group, discuss your hobbies and think about the assumptions an employer might make about your skills, talents and abilities on the basis of your hobbies.

Which of these hobbies could add value to your CV?

Self-knowledge exercise COPS analysis

When looking for a job, it is important to be able to identify and assess your strengths, weaknesses, potential threats and opportunities. The COPS analysis is a useful tool for this purpose.

- COPS (Challenges, Opportunities, Potential weaknesses, Strengths) is adapted from a strategic planning tool created by Albert Humphrey (SWOT).
- COPS starts by defining the goal. Next, you identify the internal and external factors that help or prevent the achievement of the goal. Fill in the form while reflecting on either your job search or your business idea.

Soft skills exercise: Self-knowledge exercise COPS analysis 2/2



Based on Albert Humphrey's SWOT analysis

Challenges

- How can you get the employer's attention?
- What is stopping you from developing yourself?
- What kind of obstacles will you face on the way to your goal?

Opportunities

- What kind of new, unidentified, and attractive opportunities will open up?
- Which sector best suits your skills and experience?
- How can you develop yourself?

External factors

Goal

Potential weaknesses

- What do others do better than you?
- What kind of experience do you lack?
- What kind of resources do you lack?
- Which skills should you improve?

Strengths

- What do you do better than others?
- How good is your reputation?
- What kind of experience do you have?
- Which skills can you rely on?

Internal factors

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Openness

- How can you think without prejudice?
- How can you face new situations with an open mind?
- How can you be open, interested, and courageous about change?

Openness skills can be broken down into, for example, the following areas:

Open thinking:
Future skills
Ability to dissent
Concentration skills
Flexibility skills

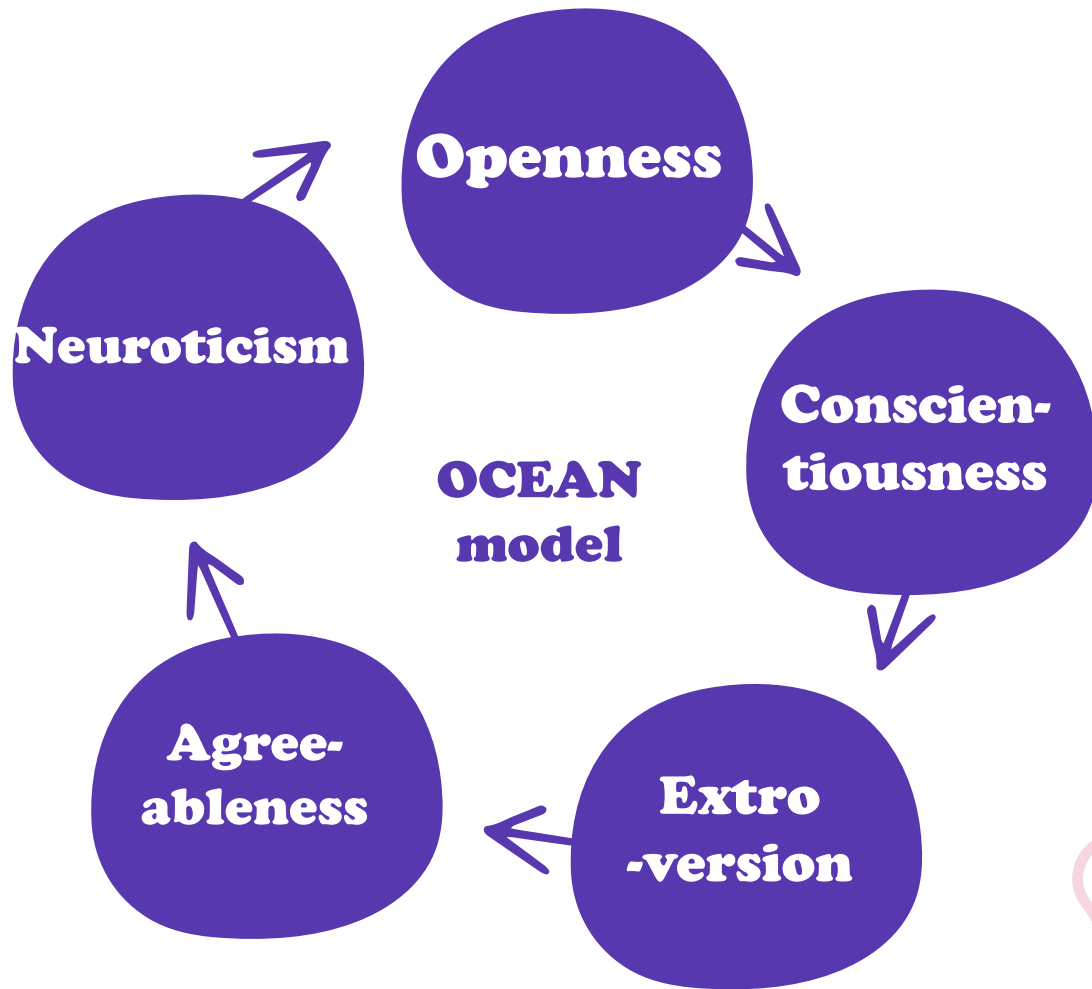
Open action:
Questioning skills
Interaction skills
Listening skills
Discovery skills



Book recommendation: Nando Malmelin; Avoimuus uudelle (in Finnish) (also available as an audiobook)

Openness

Openness is classified as one of the five personality traits in the “Big Five” personality theory (OCEAN model)



According to the theory, the subcategories of openness are:

Imagination
Creative
Emotional
Adventurous
Intelligent
Liberal



Interested in testing all five areas? Free Big Five Personality Test - Accurate scores of your personality traits (truity.com)

Openness

Consider your own level of openness using the OCEAN model on a scale of 1–5.

- Imagination (various levels of imagination, perceiving/not perceiving the world, orienting/not orienting towards facts rather than imagination)
- Creative (internalisation and appreciation of art and beauty; aesthetic sensitivity)
- Emotional (being aware of your feelings; expressing them openly)
- Adventurous (eager to try new things and activities; prefers/does not prefer the familiar and routine)
- Intelligent (enjoys/does not enjoy abstract ideas, intellectual exercises, dealing with intellectual questions In the OCEAN model, intelligence focuses more on attitudes, which is an ability, rather than on pure intelligence)
- Liberal (challenges/does not challenge authority, consistency, stability, and security)

Openness: Ocean model

Rate your openness, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest

	1	2	3	4	5
Imagination	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Emotional	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adventurous	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Intelligent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Liberal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>





Group / pair task: Openness

Discuss your level of openness

- Do you have any similarities or major differences?
- Think about situations in your life. How have you reacted to unexpected changes to the plan?
- You only know each other superficially, but did you have different expectations of each other's levels, for example, due to first impressions?



How can you develop openness?

Assumptions are one of the biggest obstacles to emotional openness. We also tend to regard assumptions as truths rather than beliefs.

If the level of openness is low, it can be developed by reflecting and questioning your assumptions. When you question your assumptions often, it becomes a skill you have learnt.

- Think about a situation in which your assumption about something or someone turned out to be wrong. What happened as a result?



Exercises

- Watch a film in a genre that usually does not interest you.
- Listen to music you would normally not listen to.
- Try a new dish. What could you do?



<https://www.fastcompany.com/40494077/4-ways-to-train-your-brain-to-be-more-open-minded>

Curiosity

“The desire and enthusiasm to know and learn about various things in life and the world”

What is curiosity?

Opening the mind to new experiences and discoveries, unfamiliar situations, people and information. At the heart of curiosity is the desire to learn and take risks. Even if the result itself is not always useful, positive or interesting, the learning process is valuable in itself.

Why is this skill important?

Exercising and nurturing curiosity at work is important for discovering and learning new things. Every day, we are faced with compulsory tasks that do not seem particularly interesting or enjoyable. Often, we just take care of those tasks even though we could be getting so much more out of them. Similarly, we avoid things we are not interested in or do not like, even though we are simultaneously losing things that could enrich our lives.

Curiosity homework: Megatrends



First, listen to a short video on the impact of curiosity: [Curiosity Portfolio - Moving Art by Louie Schwartzberg](#)

Explore Sitra's Megatrend Cards: [Megatrend cards 2023 – Sitra](#)

- Briefly review the content of the cards and choose a topic that does not normally interest you very much or that you would normally skip.
- Take note of any new things you come across on the megatrend card and explore them further.

Research the topic further and write a summary in Moodle that includes the following:

- What did I learn?
- How might the megatrend you chose affect your work or the job you want to do in the future?
- How did you feel about the task?
- Did your curiosity about the subject increase?



Creativity

The ability to create something new, to combine things into unique new solutions and to spot opportunities

Why is this skill important?

Creativity is needed for problem-solving, innovation, developing new concepts, combining knowledge, project work, dealing with customers and colleagues, increasing the level of user-friendliness, observing opportunities, optimising things, etc. Creativity not only helps to save resources or differentiates you from competitors, but also acts as a social glue, facilitating teamwork.

Creativity is independent of industry. Its main elements are imagination, curiosity, playfulness, risk-taking, tolerance of uncertainty and open-mindedness. Everyone is creative, but so-called creativity blockers can prevent and destroy the expression of creativity, both on a personal and collaborative level.

Creativity

Creativity blockers include negative, pessimistic and egotistic attitudes, inflexibility, persistent adherence to one's views and solutions, competition, punishment, blindly following rules, not listening to others, playing it safe, fear of failure and keeping up appearances

Task: I am a tree



Homework: Super Me

Reflect on the soft skills you think you are good at.

- What kind of a superhero would your powers make you?
- Who could the superhero help?
- What kind of good deeds would it do?

This task only has one rule: Have fun, and do not let creativity blockers distract you from your work!

Understanding change

Understanding change is the ability to anticipate and incorporate change into different activities as well as the ability to see change as new opportunities.

Why is this skill important?

Change is an inevitable part of life. That is why it is good to recognise and prepare for it. Many people are afraid of change because it leads us into the unknown. However, it is important to have a positive attitude towards change. Change helps us grow, experience new things and develop as individuals. Changes in the labour market can be a cause for concern, as they affect employment and employability. However, change can help an individual progress both professionally and personally.

Task: Learning from the past and building the future

This task encourages you to examine your life and think about which events have led to significant changes. Try to understand how past events have influenced your present life and what has made you, you.

- Describe at least three important events that have led to a change, such as education, employment, relationships and important changes.
- Think about what life felt like then and what it feels like now. Did it perhaps lead to something good or teach you something important

Learning from the past and building future

Write down at least three major events that have led towards a change for example education, employment or relationships. Think about how your life felt back then and how the events make you feel currently. Did the events lead to something good or did they teach you an important lesson?

Change

Serious illness at the age of 20.

How did the change feel?

Desperate. I was afraid for my future and children. I was worried how the health concern would affect my life.

Impact on the present

I realised that I have taken my health for granted and I have learned to value my health. I have also learned a lot of gratitude for my life.

How does the change feel now?

Although my life has become more challenging, I am proud of how far I have come. I feel it has made me mentally stronger than before.

Change

Losing a job suddenly during layoffs.

How did the change feel?

At first I felt a lot of uncertainty and I was afraid for my economic situation. I experienced feelings of disappointment, shame and inadequacy.

Impact on the present

I was too dependent on a single source of income and needed more diversified financial planning. I found that calming down was good for me and gave me more time to acquire new skills.

How does the change feel now?

Now I am grateful for what happened, because it forced me to grow personally and professionally. I also found a new job that suits me better.

Change

Starting a new hobby and making new friends.

How did the change feel?

At first I was unsure whether I was too old to start a new hobby. I certainly wasn't expecting to make new friends.

Impact on the present

It taught me to be brave and to keep trying new things with an open mind.

How does the change feel now?

After five years of this hobby, I have made many good friends and have a passion for my life that helps me cope with adversity in my life.

Initiative

What is initiative?

A person with initiative starts and does things, seeks information and identifies opportunities independently and in a solution-oriented way without being told what to do. A person with initiative anticipates things and takes the bull by the horns.'

Why is this skill important?

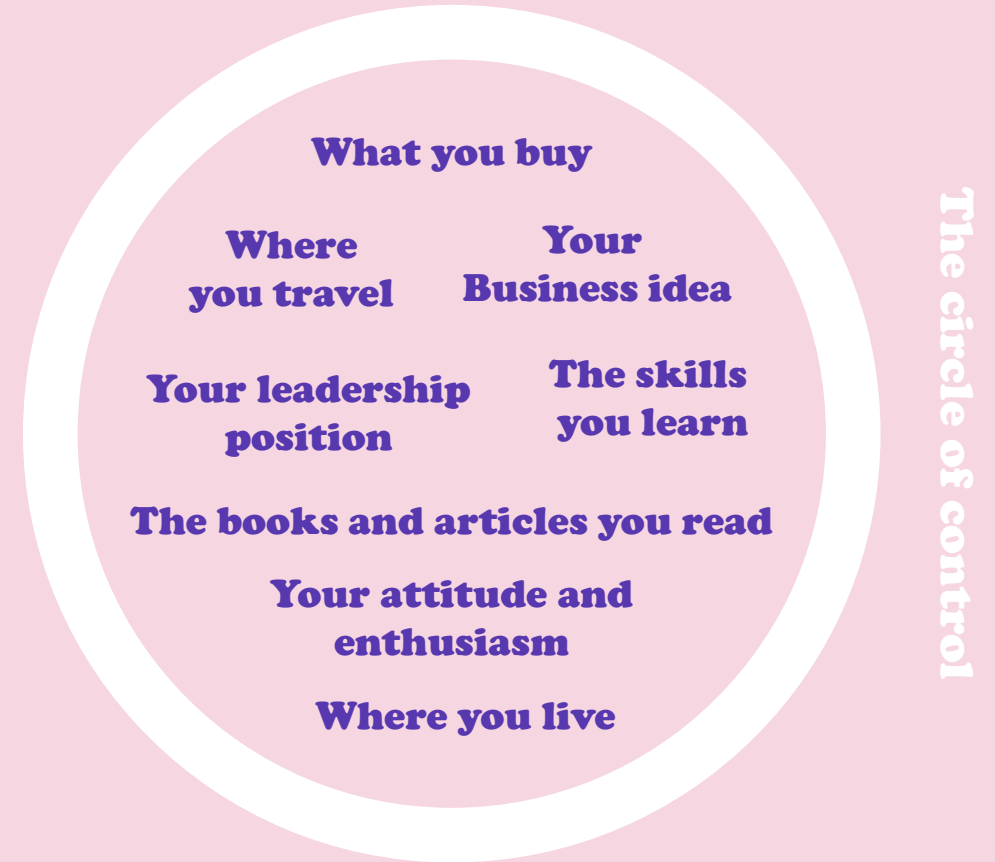
Initiative is a desirable quality in an employee, as a person with initiative demonstrates the ability to think independently and is likely to continue to develop and grow at work. The ability to take initiative helps you keep up to date with what is happening in your sector. People with initiative achieve things often because they come up with interesting and useful ideas.

Taking initiative and managing change



The Covey model has two circles: concern and control. The outer circle of the figure represents the circle of concern, and the inner circle represents the circle of control.

The figure depicts reactive people who spend more time and energy on things they cannot control.



This figure depicts proactive people who spend more time and energy on things they can control.

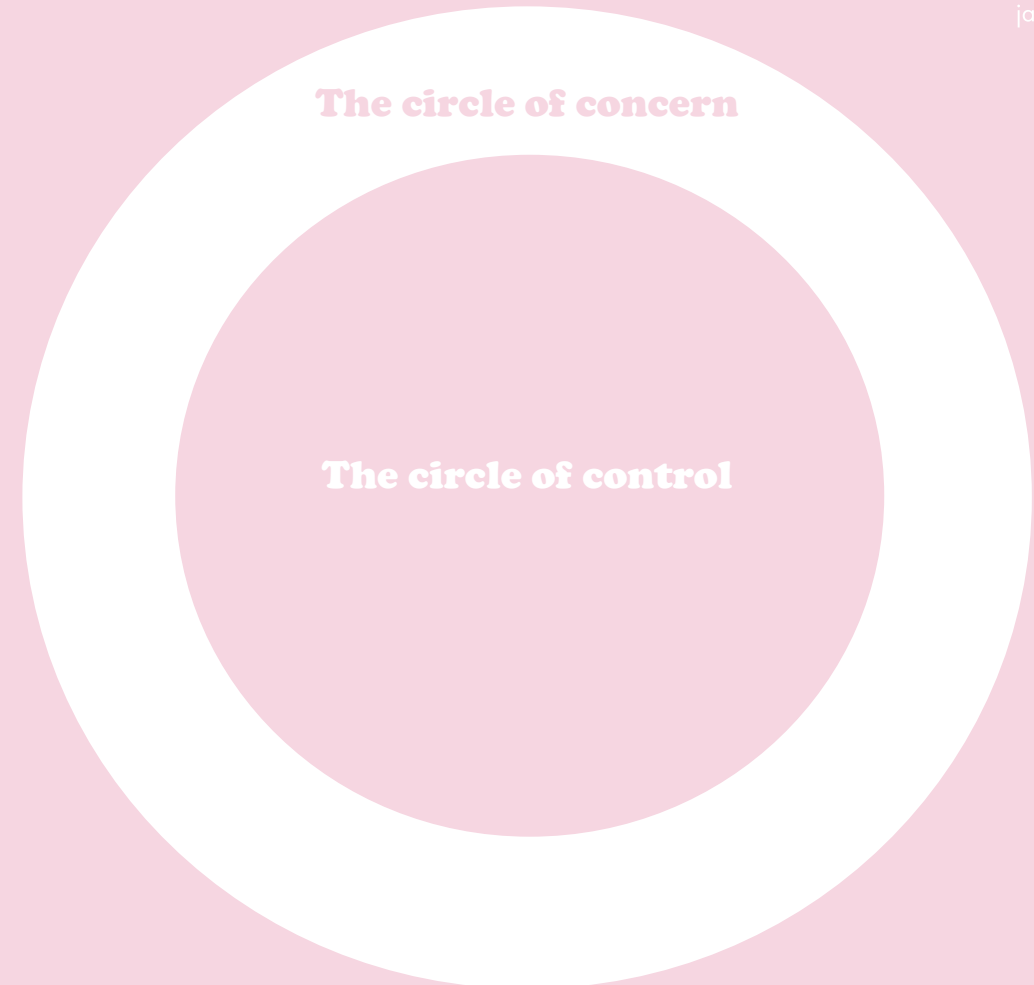
Task: Taking initiative and managing change

Think about your goal at work. In the circle of concern, write down issues that exist but cannot be controlled.

Add the things you can control in the circle of control.

Think about which circle grows bigger. Why does this happen?

Relate this against the previous task on understanding change. Even if there are many things in the circle of concern, can you learn something from them? For example, if AI is part of the circle of concern, could it also be part of the circle of control through learning new methods?



Adaptability and resilience

Adaptability

The ability to adapt your thinking, attitudes, actions and/or behaviour to fit into various situations and environments

Why is this skill important?

Adaptability is needed in the workplace and in life to react and adapt to different and unexpected situations in order to achieve the best possible results. Research has also found a clear link between job satisfaction and adaptability.

Resilience

The ability to adapt to and manage stress.

Why is this skill important?

Facing setbacks and challenges at work is inevitable. Persistent workers do not react negatively to this, but are able to “bounce back” and learn from their experience. Persistent employees are more likely to stay focused in challenging moments, and they are also future-oriented and curious to learn.

Adaptability, perseverance and dealing with setbacks

Write down a challenging situation or recent setback in your life that you do not think you handled well. Were you desperate? Did it make you angry and disappointed? Were you critical?

Setback:

I was well into the job search process. I had spent a lot of time and resources on the application and the process, but I was not selected for the job.

How did you react to the setback?

I was frustrated and angry. I didn't reply to a message I received from my employer.

How could I have handled the setback?

I could have contacted the employer and asked for the reasons why I was not selected, so that I could have learned for the next application process.

What skills should I develop?

Self-awareness and calming down.

Example

We could also show more mercy to ourselves. When does persistence go too far?



Perfektionistista pessimistiksi – pessimistinen elämänfilosofia voi suojella työuupumukselta | Oikotie Työpaikat



Motivation

A strong desire to do something and achieve a specific goal for various reasons.

Why is this skill important?

Once you understand what motivates you, you can harness it to your advantage and improve your performance to achieve your goals. Increased energy levels resulting from motivation can lead to better concentration and performance, as well as increased happiness when succeeding. Motivation also helps you to manage your time.

Task: Motivation rope

Think about all aspects of and experiences in your life: work, hobbies, previous jobs, internships, volunteering and social life. Try to identify when you felt motivated and when you did not.

If you were motivated, write the experience closer to the word TOWARD on the basis of how motivated you were, or closer to the word AWAY on the basis of how unmotivated you were.

For example, you might find that you learnt teamwork in your previous job at a restaurant, and because you enjoy teamwork, that experience motivated you. Similarly, you may want to move away from routine work towards more challenging tasks.

The things closer to the word AWAY will help you identify areas you do not want to work in. Things closer to the word TOWARD can make you ask yourself: What could I do to get more out of this area of motivation to succeed?

Does your current goal match your TOWARD ideas?

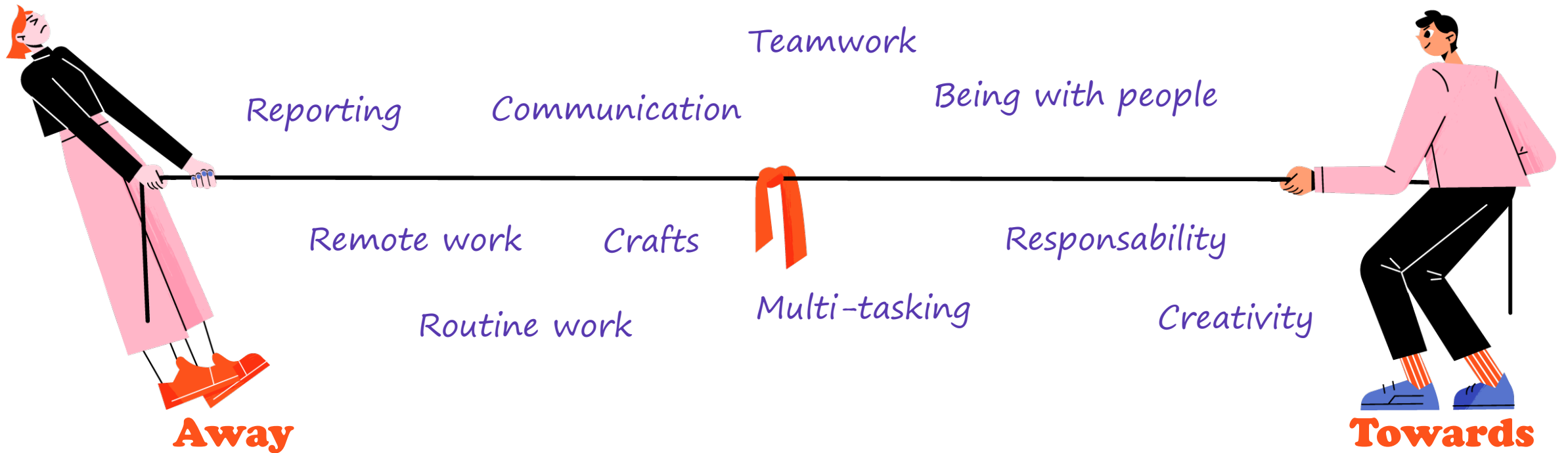


A horizontal black line representing a rope. On the left end, a hand in a black sleeve holds the rope. On the right end, a hand in a pink sleeve holds the rope. In the center of the rope, there is a red knot. Below the left hand, the word 'Away' is written in orange. Below the right hand, the word 'Towards' is written in orange.

Away

Towards

Task: Motivation rope



How does your goal fit onto the motivation rope?

Also, if you are about to become an entrepreneur, could there be things on the Away field that would be better outsourced? Could a partnership with another entrepreneur work?

Homework: Confidence in your abilities

Task 1: Positive power phrases

Come up with a power phrase that has a meaningful message for you. If you cannot come up with your own, you can find one that suits you.

Task 2: Meditation

Meditation is perceived to have a positive effect on attention and wellbeing. The ability to pay attention helps you be more present in the moment. Attention and confidence in your own abilities are closely linked, because as your awareness increases, so does your performance.

- Meditation music [video link](#) (10 min)
- Guided meditation exercise [video link](#) (in English, 20 min)
- Guided meditation exercise [video link](#) (in English, 10 min)

Meditation guidelines for beginners:



- Get into a comfortable position, either sitting or lying down.
- Close your eyes.
- Breathe naturally and try not to control your breathing.
- Focus on your breathing and how each inhalation and exhalation affects your body.
- You should be able to feel small movements in your body as you breathe.
- If your attention wanders, bring it back with your breath.
- Continue the meditation for two or three minutes.
- Think about how the meditation made you feel and how you feel afterwards.

Homework: Self-knowledge

Adjectives in the Johari Window

- One way to identify soft skills is through other people.
- The technique emphasises the importance of soft skills, such as self-knowledge, and helps reveal areas for personal development.
- The Johari Window model promotes personal growth and a better understanding of yourself (strengths and weaknesses). Developed by psychologists Joseph Luft and Harrington Ingham, the purpose of the Johari Window is to ask your friends, family and colleagues to choose five adjectives that best describe you. You will also choose the five adjectives that best describe you in your own opinion.

Interpretations of the Johari Window

Place the adjectives you and others chose in the top left-hand corner.

Others know

I know

Open

I don't know

Blind

Place the adjectives that were not chosen in the bottom right-hand corner.

Place the adjectives you chose but others did not in the bottom left-hand corner.

Others don't know

Hidden

Unknown

Place the adjectives no one chose in the bottom right-hand corner.

Homework: The Johari Window adjectives

Able
Accepting
Adaptable
Bold
Brave
Calm
Caring
Cheerful
Clever
Complex
Confident
Dependable
Dignified
Energetic

Extroverted
Friendly
Giving
Happy
Helpful
Idealistic
Independent
Ingenious
Intelligent
Introverted
Kind
Knowledgeable
Logical
Loving

Mature
Modest
Nervous
Observant
Organised
Patient
Powerful
Proud
Quiet
Reflective
Relaxed
Religious
Responsive
Searching

Self-assertive
Self-conscious
Sensible
Sentimental
Shy
Silly
Spontaneous
Sympathetic
Tense
Trustworthy
Warm
Wise
Witty

Which adjectives describe you the most?



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**Module 2:
Soft skills -
Me in
communities**

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Module 2

Soft skills: Me in communities

In Module 2, the student continues to identify their soft skills, especially in interaction situations.

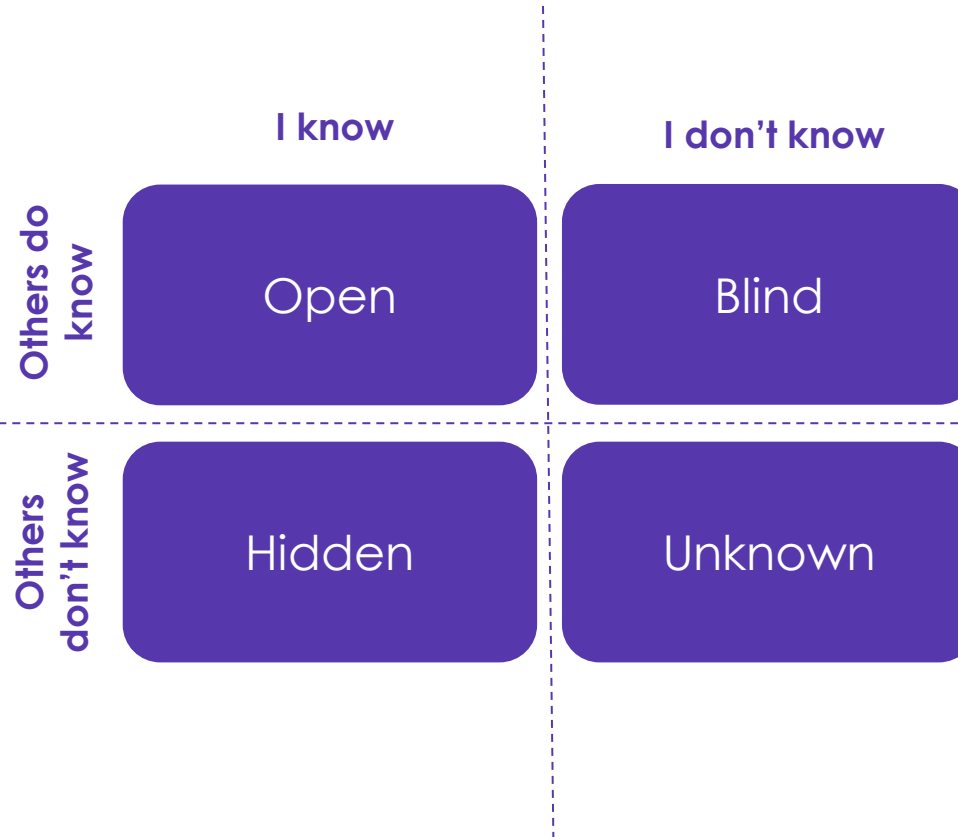


Module 2:

1. Listening skills
2. Interpersonal skills
3. Tolerance and culture
4. Teamwork: Problem solving
5. Planning and project skills
6. Self-management
7. Multidisciplinary approach
8. Networking and partnership
9. Career promotion on linkedin
10. Improvement plan
11. Final task

Interpretations of Johari's window

The more things in the open window, the greater one's sense of self can be seen to be. This window can be widened throughout life.



Possibly subconsciously things you don't want to bring up. If you want to bring these up openly, you have to learn to accept constructive criticism and objective self-observation.

Issues of confidence and self-expression that you don't want or dare to bring up, for example because you have been rejected in the past. Possible resources to be turned into an open window.

This is the hidden section where there may be things you unconsciously don't want to bring up. May contain unidentified resources and talents.

Feedback discussion

- Did the conversation with your family, friends and colleagues reveal anything new? Were you associated with an unexpected adjective?
- Was there an adjective in the window that you would have liked to see come up?
- Did you get adjectives you would not want to be associated with?
- When you look at the adjectives in the bottom right-hand corner (words that neither you nor others chose), is there one you would like to develop or focus your energy on?
- How could you develop the qualities you would have liked to see come up?



Listening exercise

- Pair up
- Tell your pair about a recent event in two minutes
- Your pair will observe your expressions and gestures and try to remember them
- When the time is up, your pair will tell you the story as you, trying to use the same gestures and tone of voice
The same in reverse

Alternative: tell someone else about yourself, and they tell others about you.

Discussion: what did you notice, was anything surprising?

Interpersonal skills as enablers of effective interaction



Self-knowledge

- The ability to understand your strengths.

Resoluteness

- The ability to set limits.

Expressions and gestures

Positivity



Be your authentic self

Trust

Empathy

- The ability to put yourself in someone else's shoes and understand their point of view.

Active listening

- No prejudices or interruptions.
- You show interest by asking more questions.

SOFTEN means Smile, Open Posture, Forward Lean, Touch, Eye Contact, and Nod. Read more at: <http://acronymsandslang.com/definition/201636/SOFTEN-meaning.html>

Tolerance and cultures

Tolerance is the ability to accept and respect different cultures, values, beliefs and lifestyles without prejudice or discrimination. It is an essential part of multicultural and interpersonal harmony, and therefore a well-functioning work community.

The biggest challenge in intercultural interaction is not knowing the foreign culture but knowing one's own culture and being aware of its influence on one's behaviour (Adler 2002, 81–91).

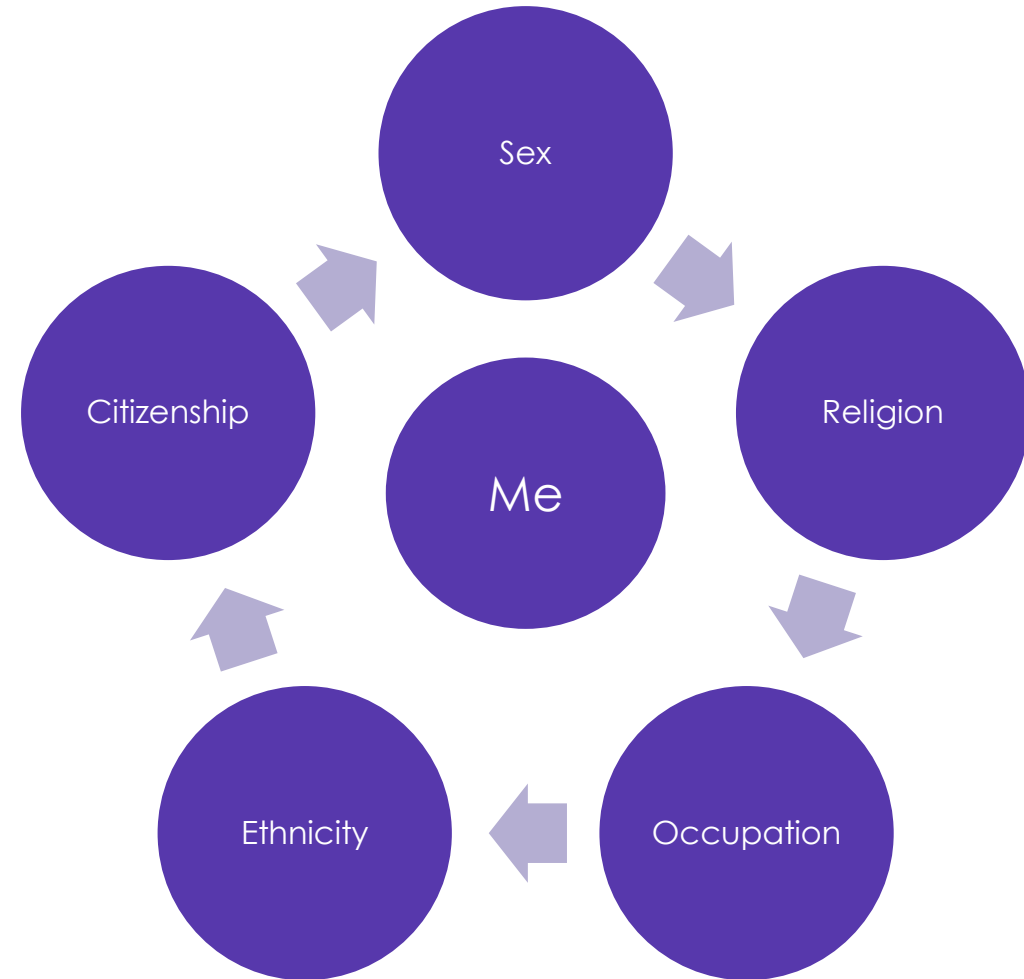
Stereotypes: helgi.and.erlend @instagram



Tolerance and culture: Circles of my multicultural self

Draw a circle in the middle of the paper and write "ME" inside it.

Think about things you think are important in defining you and your identity, e.g. ethnicity, nationality, gender, occupation, or religion. Place them in the circles.



Tolerance and culture: Circles of my multicultural self

1. Think back to a time when you felt particularly grateful to represent a particular definition.
2. Next, think about a time when identifying that definition in yourself or your feelings made you feel uncomfortable. Write this down.
3. In one of your chosen definitions, write down one related stereotype that does not apply to you. Complete the following sentence: I am, but I am not.

I am _____ but I am not _____.

(For example: If one of the identities is Finnish. One stereotype of Finns is that they are silent. So my sentence could be: 'I am Finnish, but I am not quiet.')

Tolerance and culture: SOFTEN

SOFTEN /Listening skills are also culture-bound

- Smile.
- Open. Open position. Turning to face your partner, hands at your sides or spread out.
- Forward. Leaning forward, towards your partner and turning your head in their direction.
- Touch. Touching your discussion partner: shaking hands, hugging etc. when greeting, closeness and possibly a light touch on the shoulder etc. when talking
- Eye contact. A warm, attentive look into or towards the speaker's eyes. Does not mean an unceasing stare.
- Nod. Approving nods and other gestures that signal listening.

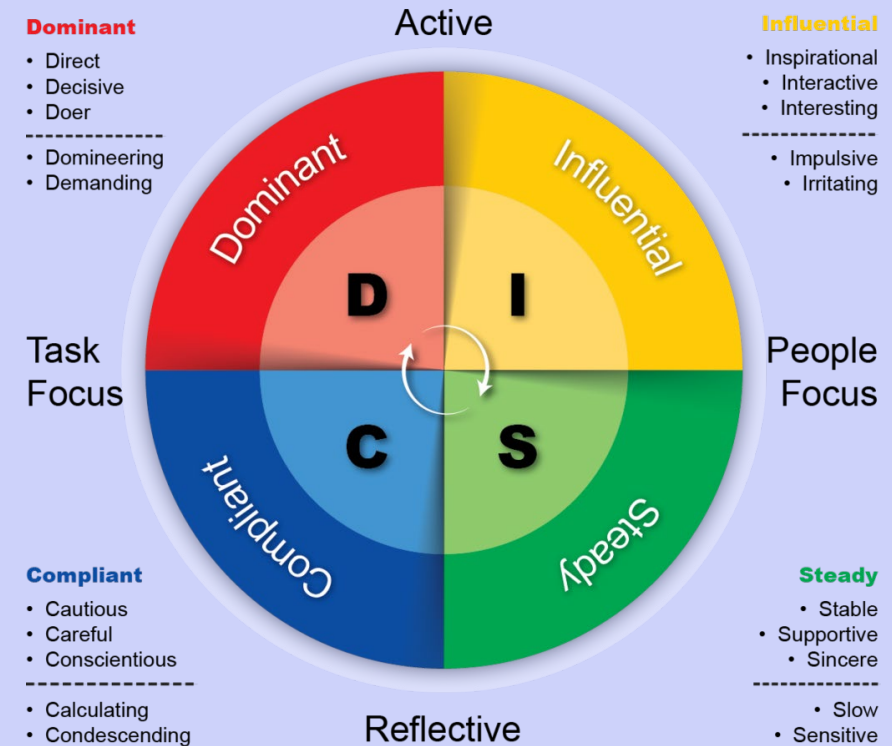
Discussion: how might various cultures interpret SOFTEN?

Teamwork

The DiSC personality test measures behavioural traits in four primary dimensions: Dominance, Influence, Steadiness or Conscientiousness. The test focuses on observable patterns of behaviour and communication style. Find out if you are a green, red, blue or yellow type.

Task: Take the [test](#). After the test, reflect on your profile and make notes on your strengths and weaknesses as a team player. Do you feel that the personality type suits you? The test has caused much debate about the overly compartmentalised and “black-and-white” picture. It is rare for anyone to feel that they are just ‘one’ colour.

“No one is perfect – but a team can be.”



Picture: [6 Benefits Of DISC Profile Assessment – John Pyron](#)

Teamwork

Personality type	Characteristics
Dominant (red)	Dominant individuals are typically assertive, result-oriented and focused on achieving goals. They tend to be direct, confident and competitive, and enjoy taking responsibility and making decisions.
Inductive (yellow)	Inductive individuals tend to be outgoing, enthusiastic and optimistic. They are excellent at building relationships, motivating others and promoting ideas. They are often seen as persuasive and outgoing.
Submissive (green)	Submissive individuals tend to be patient, reliable and focused on maintaining harmony. They are excellent listeners and are known for their empathy and loyalty. They prefer stability and routine.
Compliant (blue)	Compliant individuals are detail-oriented, analytical and focused on accuracy. They value quality and accuracy in their work and are typically systematic and organised.

Problem-solving, planning, project & time management skills

- A project is a process with a beginning and an end.
- A successful project requires good planning, adequate resources and risk assessment.
- Project management: the method by which an organisation plans, organises, manages and controls the implementation of a project.

Project phases:

1. Idea
2. Preliminary research
3. Planning
4. Implementation
5. Conclusion
6. Efficiency and effectiveness

Problem-solving, planning, project & time management skills

Due to a faulty production process, a production line has produced 100,000 defective products:

1. Bottomless glass bowls
2. Scissors that will not close
3. Combs without tines
4. Leaking paper mugs
5. Infographics that were printed several times and partly overlapping on the same paper

Task: For 10 minutes, think of as many new uses for the products as possible. The aim is to sell the products at a good price. Write down your ideas and present them to the other groups at the end.

Discussion: Which role did you take in the group: Dominance (red), Inducement (yellow), Submission (green) or Compliance (blue)? Was the role familiar or new to you? Why did you end up in this role?

Self-management

Self-management and self-direction are particularly important skills as job descriptions become more fragmented and tasks more diverse (HY+, 2022).

Self-management:

1. Motivation and interest
2. Time management and planning your work
3. Evaluating your working methods and identifying challenges at work
4. Assessing your coping, stress management and wellbeing
5. Lifelong learning skills
6. Project work skills



Self-management

Assessing your working methods, identifying challenges at work, as well as evaluating your ability to cope, stress management and well-being.

1. Choose a workplace environment (real or hypothetical) and identify at least three common sources of stress that employees may encounter in that environment. Briefly describe these sources.
2. For each identified stressor, analyse and explain at least two coping mechanisms to help employees deal with the stressors effectively.
3. Reflect on your own coping mechanisms in the workplace context. Describe two situations in which you have experienced stress at work and how you coped with them. Discuss whether your coping strategies were effective or whether there were better alternatives.

Group activity: Discuss common sources of stress together. Share points of view.

Multidisciplinary skills

Multidisciplinary skills refer to the ability to explore, work and solve problems, drawing on knowledge and experience from different disciplines. These skills enable individuals to work efficiently in different sectors.

The four areas of competence related to multidisciplinary skills are:

1. The ability to have and understand different perspectives (understanding several and differing perspectives as well as differences between disciplines and knowledge areas)
2. The ability to develop structured knowledge (linking factual knowledge with knowledge that emerges during the process and when dealing with the topic/challenge)
3. The ability to bring together contrasting perspectives and/or insights from different disciplines or sectors (exploring issues creatively rather than giving one explanation)
4. The ability to understand how alternative approaches interact with each other.



Multidisciplinary skills

Task, part 1: Self-reflection

- Reflect on situations in which you have worked with colleagues from different disciplines. Think about what went well and where you faced challenges. Think about which multidisciplinary skills you feel confident in and which ones need improvement.

Task, part 2: Peer feedback (HOMEWORK)

- Contact two or more colleagues, classmates or team members who have worked with you in multidisciplinary environments. Ask for feedback on your multidisciplinary skills. What skills did I bring to the team? Ask these people for LinkedIn recommendations.

Multidisciplinary skills: efficient communication, problem-solving, adaptability, teamwork and collaboration, interdisciplinary skills, research and information retrieval, cultural sensitivity, leadership and facilitation, ethical decision-making and project management.

Time management

Time management is linked to productivity, efficiency and stress reduction. According to one definition, time cannot be controlled; rather, we must be controlled in the context of time.

Task:

- Discuss different methods of time management. Have you found any concepts that work for you?

Homework:

- A Book About Me p. 32–39: Read the definitions of time management and keep a calendar for two weeks.



Networking and partnerships

Networking is a very important skill in both personal and professional life. It can bring many benefits and opportunities, both in terms of career development and personal growth. Other soft skills, such as people skills, empathy, listening skills and cultural awareness, can help you network.

- Opportunities for career development: Networking can help you find new job opportunities and advance in your career. Being part of the right networks can open doors to new jobs or projects.
- Knowledge sharing: You can share and gain valuable knowledge and experiences through networks. You can learn new things about your field, get tips and advice, and keep up to date with industry trends and developments.
- Receiving support and offering help: Networking provides mutual support and encouragement. You can get mentoring and guidance from experienced professionals and peer support from others in similar situations.
- Personal growth: Networking promotes personal growth and self-development. It can boost self-confidence and social skills and provide an opportunity to learn from the life experiences of others.
- Innovations: Networking with different people and sectors can lead to new ideas and innovations. By exposing yourself to different perspectives, you can find new ways to solve problems.
- A broader understanding of the world: Networking broadens your perspective and helps you understand different cultures, values, and perspectives. This can promote openness and cultural diversity.

Networking and partnerships

Task: Contact tree

- Think about your goal in terms of a new job, career development or entrepreneurship. Write the goal in the roots under the tree.
- As an employee: The right side of the tree represents the hard skills you need to make a change in your career. It can include digital skills, for example. On the leaves of the tree, note down the skills you will need on your journey.
- As an entrepreneur: The right side of the tree represents the partnerships you need to succeed in your goal as an entrepreneur. These partnerships can include, for example, hard skills that you should not learn yourself (such as financial administration skills).
- The left side of the tree represents the soft skills you still need to develop on your way to your goal. Write down the soft skills you will need on the leaves.
- On the branches that lead to the leaves, add a person in your network whom you could ask for help or advice to learn the skill in question. As an entrepreneur, add potential partners on the branches.
- The visualisation of contacts will often facilitate networking and its perception.

Contact tree



Soft skills

Developing leadership skills, especially team motivation and conflict resolution.

Improving communication with team members.

My mentor colleague, who was successfully promoted from a similar position, can help me develop my soft skills and give me tips on team management.

A member of my network who is the head of the finance department, can help me learn more about the basics of financial administration and give me advice on reporting.

A deeper understanding of corporate financial administration and budgeting

Creating professional reporting in Excel and other tools.

Hard skills

Goal

Goal: Be promoted in your current job within the next two years.

A photograph of a group of diverse women smiling and looking towards the right. The woman in the foreground is a Black woman with short hair, wearing a bright blue blazer over a red top. To her left, a woman with dark hair and a red beret is partially visible. To her right, a woman with dark hair is smiling. The background is a solid orange color. White, wavy, vertical lines are overlaid on the right side of the image, separating it from the text area.

Friendship book

Do you still remember when you were a child, and we used to circulate friendship books?

- Pages 42–55 in A Book About Me contain a friendship book that helps you deepen your connection with your contacts by asking interesting questions.
- Are there people in your contact tree that you could get in touch with and go through the questions in the friendship book?

Promoting your career on LinkedIn

Founded in 2002, LinkedIn is an international social media platform with a vision to create professional opportunities for every individual (LinkedIn, 2022). Stand out on LinkedIn with the following:

1. Cover photo: Stand out from the crowd and choose a personal cover photo.
2. Profile photo: Choose a high-quality photo that makes you easy to identify. Make sure the background is simple and neutral.
3. Headline: Highlight your expertise in your headline. Think about what you are known for and what you can offer.
4. About: Engage the reader and help them discover your expertise.
5. Recommendations: Expertise requires recommendations. Recommend other users to get them to reciprocate or ask for recommendations from your former employers or team members.

Practise writing your CV with a short [lesson](#).

Improvement plan

Final task: Improvement plan

- Analyse the points you have added to the COPS analysis. From each section (C, O, P and S), choose one or two key things you want to develop or in which you see potential.
- Create 1–2 concrete SMART improvement goals for your chosen issues.
- Set out the action steps you will take to achieve each improvement goal. In the plan, include the working method utilised with the skills, the resources and the support you need.

SMART: a specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound development goal.

Homework

Reflect on how soft skills and mastering them can help you in the working life. How do you see the future of soft skills?

You can discuss the topic in terms of, for example, what you expected from the course. Did you gain any new insights?

For inspiration, you can read this article: [The 10 Biggest Business Trends For 2024 Everyone Must Be Ready For Now \(forbes.com\)](#)

Try to create a text that you could also publish on LinkedIn.

If you felt that the content of the course was not useful, you can also reflect on that and why you feel this way.