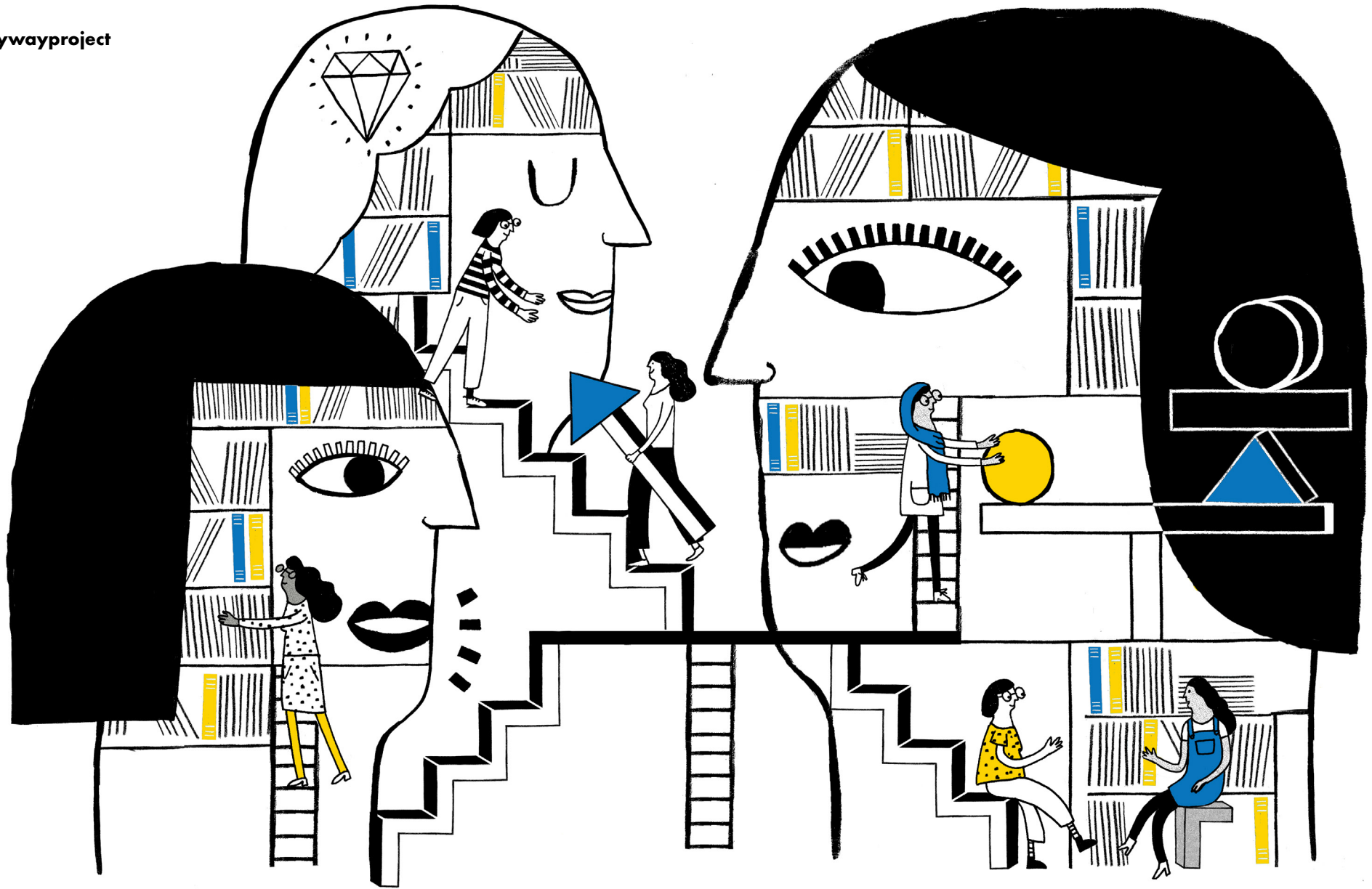


# The My Way Project

A toolkit for helping women build their success

#themywayproject



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# 1.

## My Self



**My reflections and doodles**





# My ideas

How do you work out next steps in your career? It can be difficult to know where to start! We suggest thinking about what you enjoy doing and what strengths and experiences you have from all areas of your life. This tool supports you map out your interests, experiences and strengths so you can start to think about the types of roles and projects you'd like to get stuck into next.

If you're struggling to fill this in ask a friend who knows you well to help you out.



What are your key skills and talents?	What work experience do you have?	What do you enjoy doing?	What are you doing when you lose track of time?	Ideas for next steps in my career...
Professional				
Personal	What are you good at?		What problems could you help solve?	
What would your ideal working day look like?			What positive things do people say about you?	

# My strengths

We all have thoughts that can hold us back and put the brakes on what we could achieve. These are called self-limiting beliefs or even 'mind monkeys'. These mind monkeys could tell you that you're not good enough, that no-one will want to work with you or that you'll just fail.

We've created this tool to help you reflect on times when you have faced challenges, what you did to solve them and what you've learnt along the way. We're all a lot stronger than we give ourselves credit for. This tool is a good one to return to every week or month to remind yourself that you are strong and you overcome challenges all the time.

Write down a challenge you've faced	How did you overcome the challenge?	Write down 3 things that make you strong
		1
		2
		3
Reflect on what you've learnt about yourself		

# My values

Your values come from an understanding of what is important to you in life. They're a set of principles or behaviours – unique to you - that guide everything you do. Taking the time to understand our values and to know why they're important will fuel your confidence and your resilience as you progress in your career. They will help you understand what's important to you so that you can make the right decisions as your career develops.

Turn over the page to see some example values to help you.

<b>Value 1</b>	<b>Value 2</b>	<b>Value 3</b>
↓	↓	↓
<b>Why is this important to you?</b>	<b>Why is this important to you?</b>	<b>Why is this important to you?</b>
↓	↓	↓
<b>How do you bring this to life in your work?</b>	<b>How do you bring this to life in your work?</b>	<b>How do you bring this to life in your work?</b>

# What are my values?



To complement the 'my values' tool, we are providing some ideas to get you started. Each block suggests an overarching category and includes some examples of values. You can tick any words you identify with and then try to narrow it down to three to use on the tool (or of course use your own!). If you are unsure, think about which ones feel the most motivational for you; which have driven you in your life so far? If you are still struggling, why not talk to others and see what words they associate with you?

## Autonomy

- ☐ creativity
- ☐ curiosity
- ☐ self-respect
- ☐ independence
- ☐ privacy

## Challenge

- ☐ varied life
- ☐ excitement
- ☐ adventurous
- ☐ bravery

## Fun

- ☐ enjoying life
- ☐ pleasure
- ☐ luxury
- ☐ playful

## Achievement

- ☐ success
- ☐ influence
- ☐ ambition
- ☐ intelligence
- ☐ capable

## Status

- ☐ wealth
- ☐ social recognition
- ☐ authority
- ☐ social power

## Protection

- ☐ wellbeing
- ☐ healthy
- ☐ sense of belonging
- ☐ reciprocity

## Conformity

- ☐ politeness
- ☐ obedience
- ☐ discipline
- ☐ deference

## Traditional

- ☐ sincerity
- ☐ humility
- ☐ moderation
- ☐ respect
- ☐ fairness

## Making a difference

- ☐ equality
- ☐ social justice
- ☐ environmentalism
- ☐ friendship
- ☐ spiritual

# 2.

## My People



**My reflections and doodles**





# My pitch

Being able to summarise what you do in a few short sentences will help you when you're introducing yourself at events, online and to prospective clients. This tool helps you nail down what you do, who you help and the value you bring.

It doesn't always come naturally at first, but it's a great way to open conversations and get people excited about what you do.



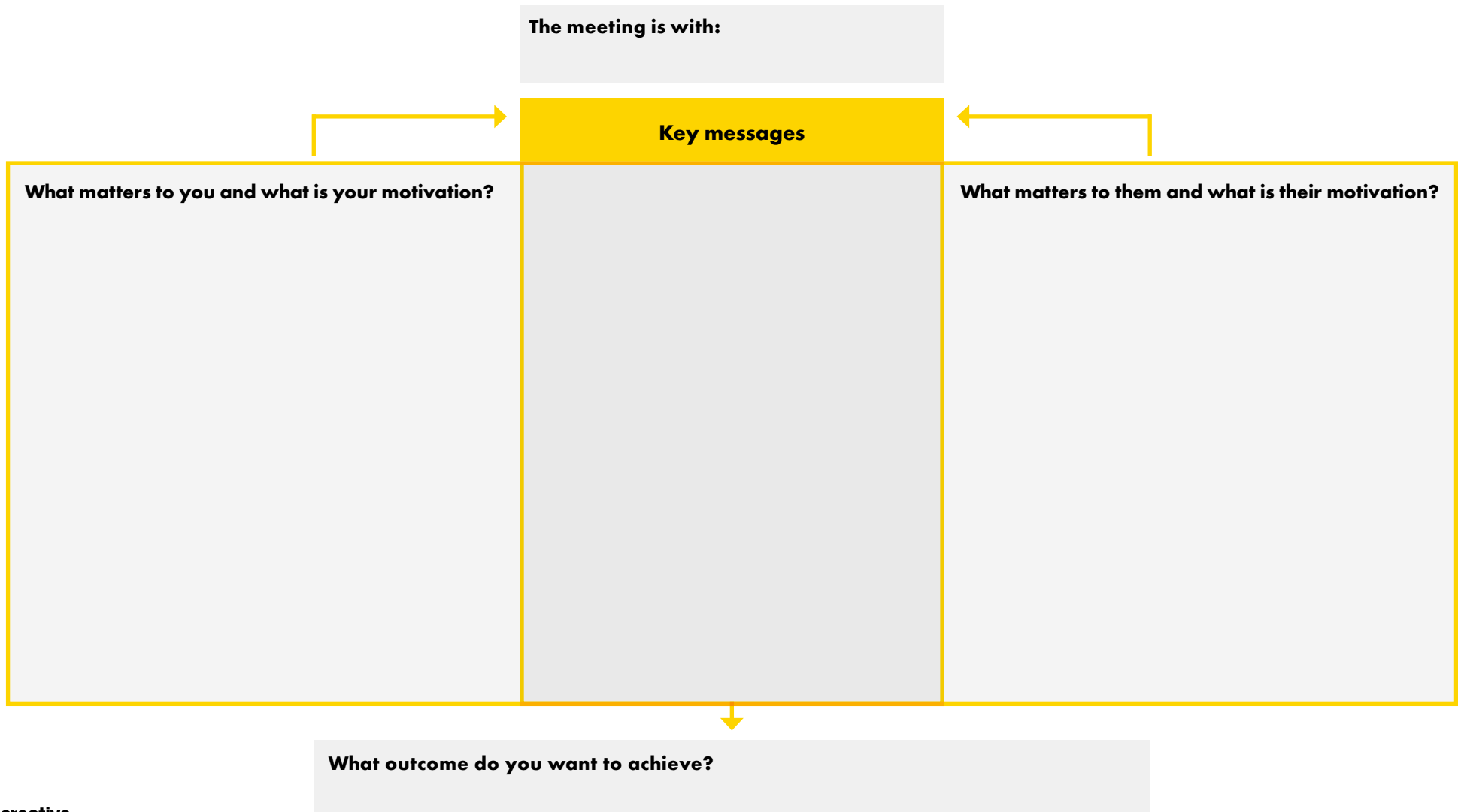
I am...	The problems I solve...	The difference I want to make...

# My audiences

With the structure of your pitch in place, you can now think about how to tailor it for meetings with different audiences.

Each time you have a meeting consider what matters to you and think about your motivations, alongside what's important to the person you're meeting, and their motives. You might be passionate about your idea's environmental credential but someone in finance will want to hear about the business case. Which messages will ensure you stand out while meeting their expectations?

Before key meetings decide what would be the best outcome for you and how you can steer the conversation in the right direction to achieve it. Then, if the meeting doesn't quite go according to plan, reflect on why and work out a new message to try next time.



# My inspiration

Never underestimate the power of one to one connections! This tool asks you to identify some inspiring role models and potential mentors to help you in your career. Who could you reach out to?

We suggest you look around you first to colleagues, to friends and family and then think about people from across your wider network and to those you find inspiring on social media platforms such as LinkedIn. Be bold and try to get introductions or connect online to people you don't know yet.

The right supportive mentors and inspiring role models will help fuel your professional and personal development; they can give you empowering advice and help you work out the strategic steps you need to take for success at work.



Please list 3 people you find inspiring and why:	How could you reach out to them?	What would be the best outcome of connecting?
1	1	1
2	2	2
3	3	3

# 3.

## My Success



**My reflections and doodles**



# My definition of success

Creating your own definition of success is one of the most liberating elements of being a woman in business. You can describe in your own language what you aspire to, how you're going to get there and how you'll reflect on everything you're going to learn along the way. This is your time to create your own definition of success.

**What does career success mean to you?**

**What goals can you put in place to achieve your success?**

**What steps will you take to achieve your goals?**

**How will you feel if you achieve your definition of success?**

**How will you notice and capture everything you are learning?**

**How and with whom will you celebrate your successes?**

# My vision and goals

Having dreams and knowing where you want to be in your career in 1, 5 and 20 years will give you direction and help you create a feasible career strategy.

It's not about having a rigid plan but having a vision and putting some goals in place is a proven pathway for achieving your version of success.

We suggest you make your goals **SMART** – they're more likely to be successful this way. So, make your goals: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound.



**1** year

**5** years

**20** years

Money goal = £

Money goal = £

Money goal = £



# My reflections

Congratulations! It has been 10 weeks since the programme started. This final tool invites you reflect on what we've covered and how far you've come on your journey.

It might be that your ideas have completely changed, that you want to pause to reconsider your next steps, or that you are now ready to put some of your ideas into practice. Whatever your decisions, please do take a moment to note down your reflections and your next steps.

**Which tool did you enjoy the most?**

**Which tool was the most useful for you and why?**

**Write down 3 next steps for the rest of 2020**

**Reflect on what you've learnt about yourself over the last 10 weeks**

**1**

**2**

**3**

# Using this toolkit

**Investing time in yourself and your career will pay dividends. All too often we're caught up in the 'doing' of our career and forget to pull back and take a fresh look at where we are and where we want to be.**

**You can use this toolkit on your own, but we know there's a lot to be said for going over things with likeminded people on a similar journey.**

So, here are 2 ways you can link-up with others to use this toolkit:

1. Set up a toolkit club (like a book club) either online or in person, where you can meet each month and, for example, go over how your values guide you, how people are responding to your business and check you're each achieving your own version of success.
2. Find an accountability partner so you can support each other through the process of getting established in line with your values, bringing important audiences on board, and maintaining balance in your work-life.



# Further resources

## Books

### **The Empowered Entrepreneur**

Elizabeth Cairns

### **Draw a Better Business**

Cara Holland

### **The Multi-Hyphen Method**

Emma Gannon

### **The Thoughtful Leader**

Mindy Gibbons-Klein

### **She Means Business**

Carrie Green

### **Quiet Girls Can Run the World**

Rebecca Holman

### **Work Like a Woman: A manifesto for change**

Mary Portas

### **Little Black Book**

Otegha Uwagba



## TED Talks

### **The power of vulnerability**

Brene Brown

### **Your body language may shape who you are**

Amy Cuddy

### **The power of believing that you can improve**

Carol Dweck

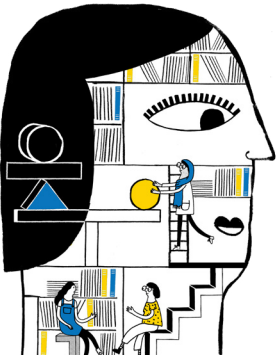
### **Women in business: entirely unremarkable**

Kirsten Hall

### **Can we all “have it all”?**

Anne-Marie Slaughter

# About the toolkit



## 2015 Research Beginnings

In 2015, Isobel, alongside Dr Janine Swail, carried out a piece of research to explore how women who start businesses engage in effort to both feel and seem legitimate as entrepreneurs. Existing research had been biased towards masculinised 'rules of the game' and largely suggests legitimacy strategies and approaches steeped in these norms.



## 2017 Research Findings

Isobel and Janine's research uncovered some interesting insight into women business founders and entrepreneurial legitimacy:

- **Entrepreneurial Identity Work**  
Over time women worked at nurturing their own version of 'entrepreneur' i.e. defined my way
- **Relational Orientation**  
Female entrepreneurs were adept at gaining legitimacy from and with "business besties"
- **Personalized Success Criteria**  
Beyond having prestigious clients and/or significant profit, feeling legitimate was linked to personal criteria i.e. not accepting compromises to their 'authenticity' or work-life balance.

## 2018 Research Impact

In 2018 Isobel secured a small budget to build upon her research. Along with Alex and Debbie the idea was to co-create a toolkit to fuel confidence, conversation and a sense of community for women who run their own business.

Over the latter half of the year, we hosted workshops with a wide range of female entrepreneurs. These inspiring events advanced our ideas about toolkit content and very much fed into refining the final toolkit.

We are extremely grateful to everyone who spoke so honestly and freely at these workshops, thank you!

## The Future

The next steps are just as important. Please join Isobel, Alex and Debbie in encouraging this refreshed and inclusive understanding of entrepreneurship.

You can add to the growing number of voices that advocate the rich diversity of what entrepreneurship is and whom it involves.

Join the conversation: **#theywayproject**





# The Project Team



**Dr Isobel O'Neil**  
University of Nottingham

Isobel works at the University of Nottingham teaching and researching entrepreneurship.

Meeting entrepreneurs like Alex and Debbie helped Isobel pursue a pathway to expand her work towards building partnerships and delivering programmes for local (women) entrepreneurs.



**Alexandra Hardwick**  
Line and Dot Creative

Alexandra started her creative agency in 2014 - allowing her to have creative freedom in design and life.

She works with charities and community projects with their printed materials and social media campaigns.

Previous clients include Experian and the British Heart Foundation.

[lineanddotcreative.com](http://lineanddotcreative.com) >



**Debbie Clarke**  
Debbiedoodah

Debbie started her business in 2013 with no real plan in place. She was a single mum on benefits and had just fought cancer.

Debbie looked at the skills she had and got in contact with people she thought could help her. It all started with a call out for a job on Facebook.

Today she has supported over 600 businesses create their business their way.

[debbiedoodah.co.uk](http://debbiedoodah.co.uk) >