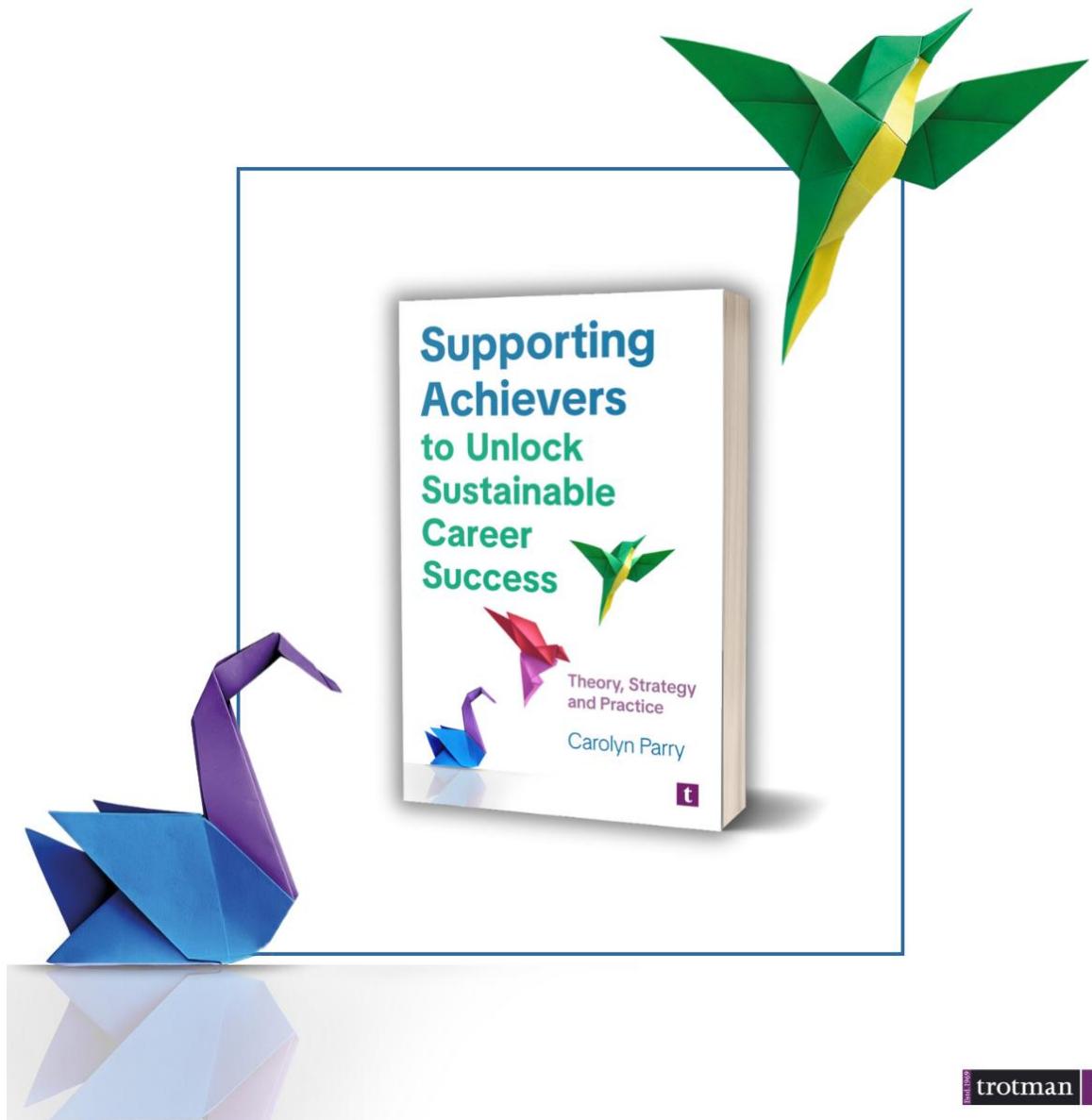


WELCOME TO THE LAUNCH OF



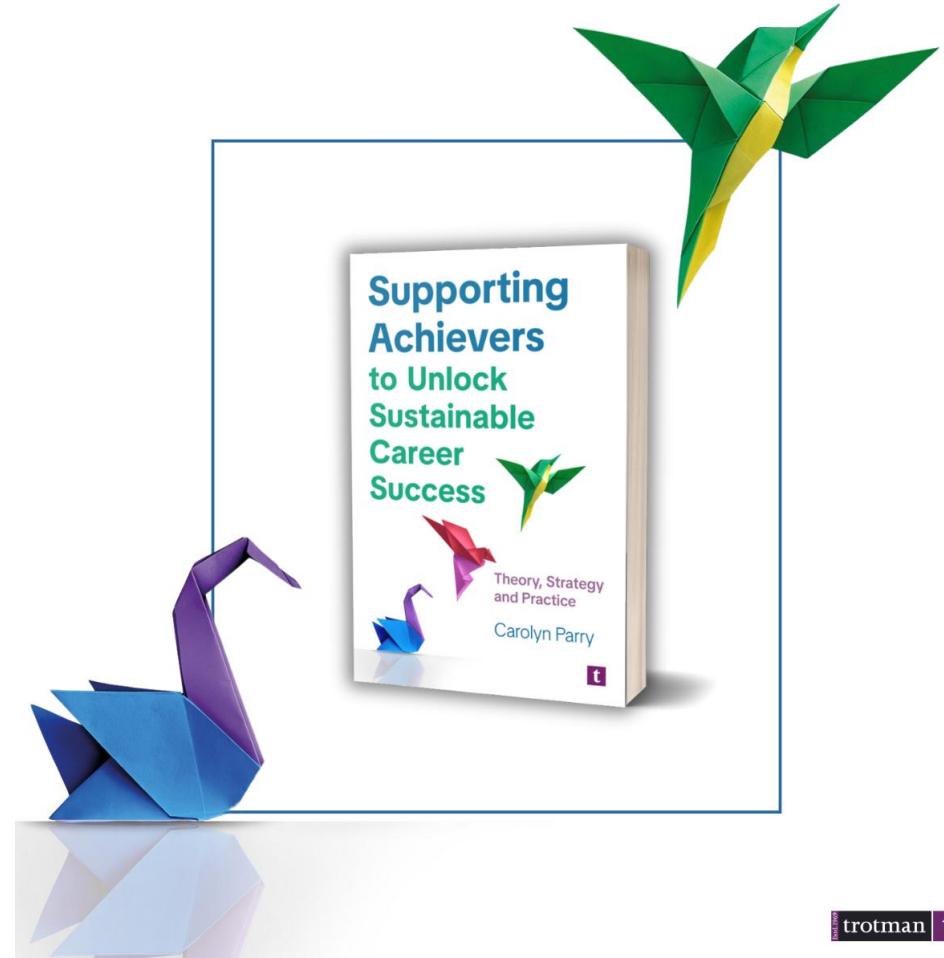
With author,
Carolyn Parry, FRSA, FHEA, FCDI



Hosted by
Associate Professor Deirdre Hughes, OBE, PhD, FCDI

TODAY'S AGENDA

- Why this book and why now?
- What is an achiever, and what challenges do they face anyway?
- Introducing the Seven Career Thieves
- Origami coaching activity
- The Seven Protection Principles, aka the Guardians
- Introducing the Sustainable Career Success Profile tool
- How to get your copy



WHY THIS BOOK – THE BACK STORY



Own nature
Parental expectations



Stuck in the hamster wheel
of success



Repeated cycles of burnout
due to lack of meaning



Finally, I found career
coaching, aged 39



From HE trainee
careers adviser in 2001
to Director in 2013



Career Alchemy in 2015
Awards and TEDx talk
First Book – 'Change Your Story'
CDI President ended Dec. 2023



Shelley Hutchinson 1st



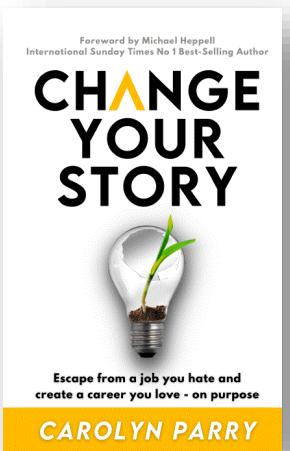
“My clients are achievers.”

“I AM ... AN ACHIEVER!

WHY THIS BOOK – THE BACK STORY



I fell in love with book writing!
Shout out to my fellow
CWA and SoA members.



Available on Amazon



As one door closed on RENEWAL ...



... a better one opened!



WHY NOW

People Management

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One in six employers expect job losses from AI, CIPD finds

Entry-level roles most at risk, with some business leaders anticipating 10 per cent reduction in headcount over the next year

by [Isabel Jackson](#) | 10 November 2025



Getty Images

Increased disillusionment with the achievement trap, and growing achievement culture



Professionals who never expected or prepared for risk are experiencing it more than ever before.

Many professionals are achievers.

So are entrepreneurs, elite athletes, and experts.

One in five gifted pupils fail to meet expectations (Reis and McCoach)

So, we need to understand them and prevent talent from being lost.

As artificial intelligence adoption accelerates across industries, concerns are growing about its impact on employment.

One in six (17 per cent) of the 2,000 employers surveyed in the [CIPD's latest Labour Market Outlook](#) expect AI to reduce their workforce over the next 12 months, with 26 per cent of those predicting the technology will lead to at least a 10 per cent reduction in headcount.

Of those expecting to shrink their workforce, 62 per cent felt that clerical, junior managerial, professional or administrative positions – typically entry level and often undertaken by younger people – were most likely to be at risk of replacement by AI.

WHY IT MATTERS

HR

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Lara Bryant
06 June 2025 - News

PHYSICAL HEALTH MENTAL HEALTH HEALTHCARE WELLBEING AGE DIVERSITY

ONS sickness absence data: How can HR support sick employees?



*Employers need to equip line managers to have health-related conversations appropriately," said Broadstone's Brett Hill



The number of working days lost to sickness and injury in the UK in 2024 was 148.9m, according to Office for National Statistics (ONS) data published on Wednesday (4 June).

Lost working days cost UK £148.9M

Burnout is rising rapidly

We assume they can sort themselves out, so resources get allocated elsewhere – but they still need help.

When professionals who like to achieve become lost, it affects us all.

Deloitte.



News | 17 May 2024

Poor mental health costs UK employers £51 billion a year for employees

- The cost of poor employee mental health has decreased from £56bn in 2021, but increased from £45bn in 2019.
- 46% of working parents are concerned about their children's mental health, costing UK employers £8bn annually due to impact on performance, taking time off work or leaving their roles;
- 63% of respondents are experiencing at least one characteristic of burnout, an increase from 51% in 2021;

State of the Global Workplace 2025

The *State of the Global Workplace* report features annual findings from the world's largest ongoing study of the employee experience. The 2025 edition examines how employees feel about their work and their lives. The report includes global and regional trends in employee engagement, employee wellbeing and life evaluation, the global job climate, and other key workplace statistics.

DOWNLOAD THE 2025 REPORT

GET REPORT VIA EMAIL

What Is the State of the Global Workplace?

Last year global employee engagement fell, costing the world economy US\$438 billion in lost productivity.

The primary cause was a drop in manager engagement.

Since the pandemic, managers have been asked to square the circle of new executive demands and employee expectations. We are starting to see the toll.

But it is not going to stop with managers.

Manager engagement affects team engagement, which affects productivity. Business performance — and ultimately GDP growth — is at risk if executive leaders do not address manager breakdown.

If we support professionals, productivity could rise by £7.5Trillion

UK success at work

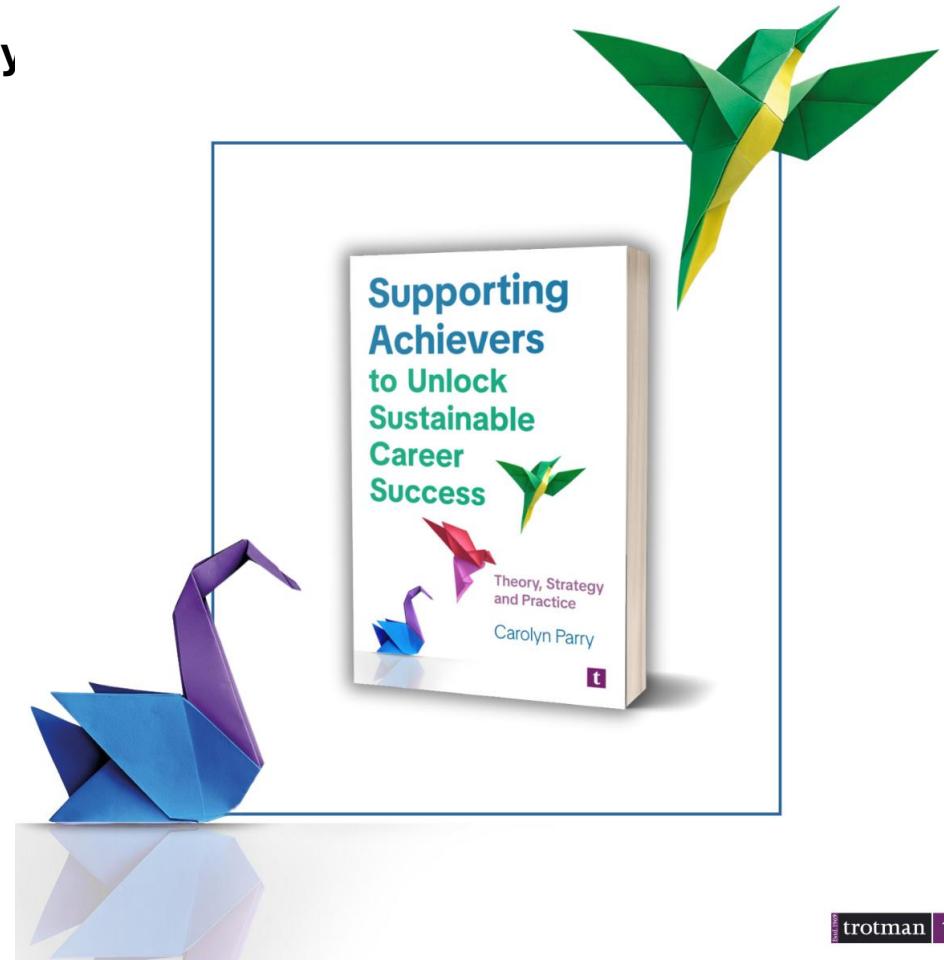
Stars = less than 1 in 10

Sleepwalkers = around 7 in 10

Saboteurs – just over 2 in 10

TODAY'S AGENDA

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- How to get your copy



RECOGNISING ACHIEVERS



Achievers generally:

Thrive on challenge and forward momentum - driven by progress, not just recognition, though it is important.

High achievers:

Deliver consistently high results, powered by both purpose and rewards - and can sustain it.

Overachievers:

Chase “enough” that never arrives - self-worth is always on the line, standards sky-high, balance is sacrificed.

Underachievers:

Capable of more than they’re showing - held back by fit, barriers, wellbeing, or fear; with the right support, they can rise fast.



ACHIEVER CHALLENGES



- **Achievement culture**

Turns worth into a scoreboard for achievers.

- **Work is unstable and demanding**

Pivots, hybrid, AI, constant adaptation doesn't sit well with underlying achiever fears about worth and success.

- **Context can still cap potential**

Challenges arise from culture, available opportunities, discrimination, disadvantage, and organisational fit.

- **Achievers are uniquely vulnerable**

High drive + high standards + “perform through it” expectations = significant internal pressure and stress.

- **Success can hide misalignment**

Meaning and belonging are often lost because of the success–happiness gap.

- **The cost shows up in wellbeing issues**

Achievers often suffer from chronic stress and are at high risk of burnout.

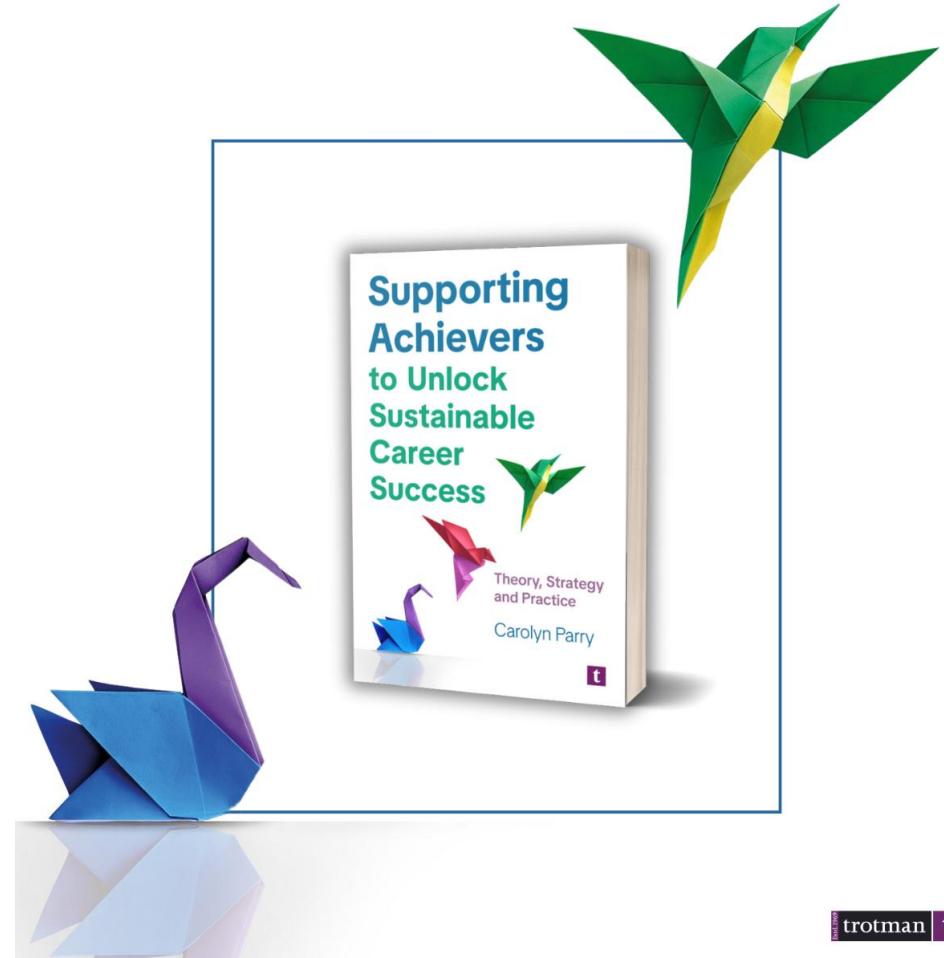
- **The need for support often goes totally unrecognised**

Leaders, managers and peers assume they can cope, and achievers think they should be able to as well.



TODAY'S AGENDA

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SO, WHAT'S IN THE BOOK?



This must-have resource equips career development professionals, executive coaches and HR managers with the theory, tools and strategies to identify, coach and empower achievers.

Packed with simple yet powerful coaching activities, reflective questions and real-life coaching outcomes from case studies, this book enables practitioners to foster deeper self-awareness, career alignment and sustainable success within achievers, helping them to unlock their career potential.

This definitive guide offers:

- **An actionable framework:** the innovative Seven Career Thieves model provides careers professionals with a structured approach to identify and address the specific patterns that undermine achiever potential.
- **Evidence-based interventions:** each chapter equips practitioners with coaching strategies grounded in psychological theories and neurological research, tailored for clients at different career stages.
- **A professional development toolkit:** contains practical techniques and exercises that careers professionals can immediately implement to help clients overcome achievement-related challenges and build sustainable success.

This is the indispensable practitioner guide for helping achievers unlock career success.

About the author

Award-winning coach, TEDx speaker, Fellow and former CDI President, **Carolyn Parry**, has over 25 years' experience coaching early-career and established professionals. After a pivotal mid-life shift from a successful management career, she spent 15 years at Aberystwyth University, latterly as Director of Student Development and Employability, before founding Career Alchemy in 2015.



trotman 
Helping you get the career you want
www.trotman.co.uk

... I have no hesitation in recommending this book. Its content will inspire and educate you, aid your own professional reflection and enable you to help your clients find their wings and fly off to a life in which they will thrive.'

Claire Johnson, RCDP and CDI, NICEC and ICCI Fellow



- **Introduction**
- **Seven chapters**, each with a thematic client story, topic definition, contextual domain insights (workplace, education, age and career stage, gender, ND, socio-economic, culture/ethnicity, entrepreneurship, sectors and career lifespans), neuroscience, case study theory-based analysis and three activities, plus a summary sheet.
- **Eighth chapter** on strategy
- **In all, seven stories and accompanying summary sheets, 37 theories and 21 activities.**
- Plus free resources: Extended Theories book and separate activities.

1. The Thief of Perfectionism
At a glance

Definition: 'The tendency to demand of others or of oneself an extremely high or even flawless level of performance, in excess of what is required by the situation. It is associated with depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and other mental health problems.' (APA)

Key theories and models:

1. **Self-sabotage Theory** (Higgins, 1987): Gap between actual self-ideal self andought self. Perfectionism, depression and perfectionism.
2. **Frost's 8-Dimension Model** (1990): Concern over mistakes, personal standards, parental expectations/infusion, doubting actions, organization.
3. **Hewitt and Flory's 8-Dimension Model** (1991): Self-oriented other-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism affecting interpersonal relationships.

Impact and context:
68% of UK students identify as perfectionists; overflood increase in burnout cases. Women experience more socially prescribed perfectionism; men have more task-focused perfectionism.

Research findings:
• Early career: Enhances confidence but increases stress.
• Mid career: Blocks growth.
• Late career: Complicates retirement.

Neuroscience:
Perfectionism is wired into the brain through specific neural pathways:

- Anterior cingulate cortex: Error detection and performance monitoring.
- Prefrontal cortex: Reduced activation in error tolerance.
- Amygdala: Hypersensitive to perceived failure.
- Reward circuitry: VTA and Nucleus accumbens create addictive achievement loops.

Dopamine release creates an ever-increasing pattern where success provides temporary relief, reinforcing the need to repeat the pattern.

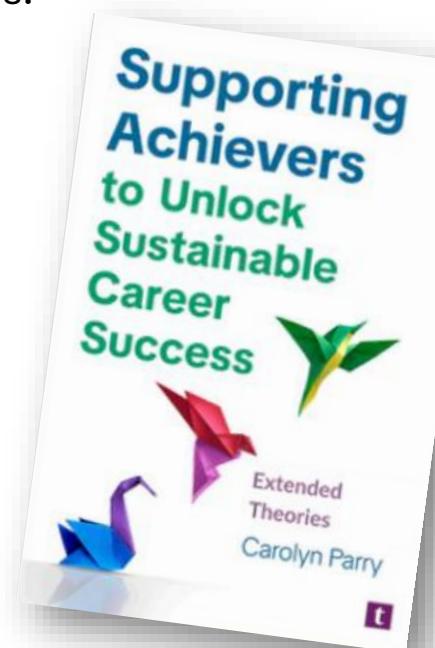
Warning signs:

- Fear of rejection: "I'm not perfect, people won't want me."
- Fear of shame: "If I fail, it proves I'm not good enough."
- Need for control: "If I do everything right, nothing bad will happen."
- Fear of being ordinary: "I don't stand out, I'll disappear."
- Fear of disappointing others: "I'm not perfect, I'll let people down."
- Fear of abandonment: Avoiding perceived abandonment through achievement.
- Conditional self-worth: Value tied entirely to performance and success.

Key coaching activities:

1. **Journaling for Thought Awareness:** Uses structured prompts to identify perfectionist thinking patterns and develop cognitive defusion from unhelpful thoughts.
2. **Flow to Interrupt Anxiety:** Identifies and assesses flow states to reduce perfectionist overthinking and reconnect with present moment engagement.
3. **"I Am" Identity Boards:** Builds authentic self-concept through visual exploration of personal values and qualities beyond performance measures.

Core takeaways: Shift from perfect to progress + values.



THEMES: THE SEVEN CAREER THIEVES

**Supporting
Achievers
to Unlock
Sustainable
Career
Success**

Theory, Strategy
and Practice
Carolyn Parry



1. Perfectionism



2. Comparison



3. Approval-
Seeking



4. Overwhelm



5. Depletion



6. Disconnection



7. Burnout

THE SEVEN CAREER THIEVES - POLL

Join at menti.com | use code 3605 6479

Mentimeter

1. Perfectionism 2. Comparison 3. Approval-Seeking 4. Overwhelm

5. Depletion 6. Disconnection 7. Burnout

The Seven Career Thieves in Action

Share Like Comment

THE SEVEN CAREER THIEVES - POLL

Join at menti.com | use code 3605 6479

 Mentimeter

Which of the seven career thieves do you see most in your clients?

1. Perfectionism



2. Comparison



3. Approval-Seeking



4. Overwhelm



5. Depletion



6. Disconnection



7. Burnout



THE SEVEN CAREER THIEVES - POLL

Join at menti.com | use code 3605 6479

 [Mentimeter](#)

Which of the seven career thieves affects you most?

1. Perfectionism



2. Comparison



3. Approval-Seeking



4. Overwhelm



5. Depletion



6. Disconnection

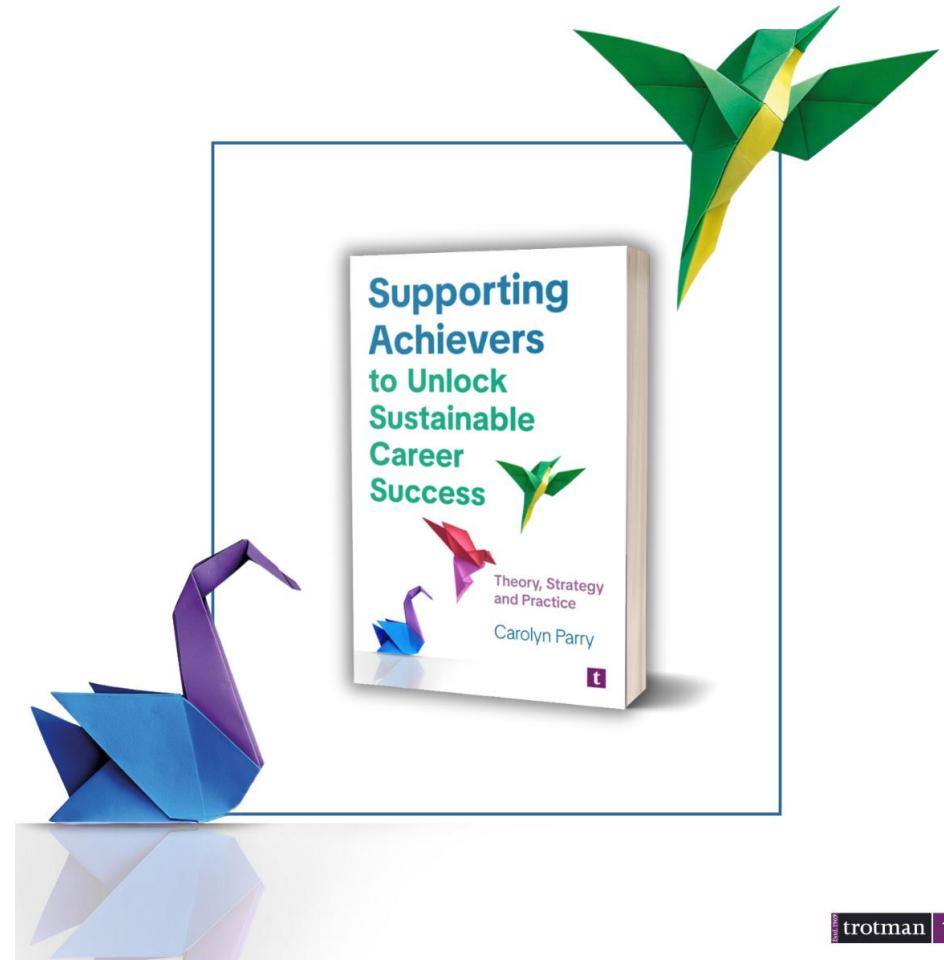


7. Burnout



TODAY'S AGENDA

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USING ORIGAMI TO COACH ACHIEVERS

What is it?

Traditional Japanese paper-folding art, rooted in contemplative culture, which includes Zen/Buddhist-influenced ideas of simplicity, patience and presence.

What benefits does origami offer?

- ✓ **Moving meditation** - gentle, repetitive steps that anchor attention and quiet the stress response,
- ✓ **Embodied learning** - hands-on focus helps people drop out of overthinking and into clarity,
- ✓ **Low-stakes practice** - paper can be unfolded and restarted, teaching iteration and "good enough" without catastrophic consequences, and
- ✓ **Psychological distance** - working with an object rather than discussing yourself directly allows patterns to surface without defensiveness.

Why use it with achievers?

- ✓ **Provides a live mirror for achievers:**

Perfectionism, impatience, self-criticism and control show up in real time (no long preamble needed), and

- ✓ **It creates a memorable metaphor:**

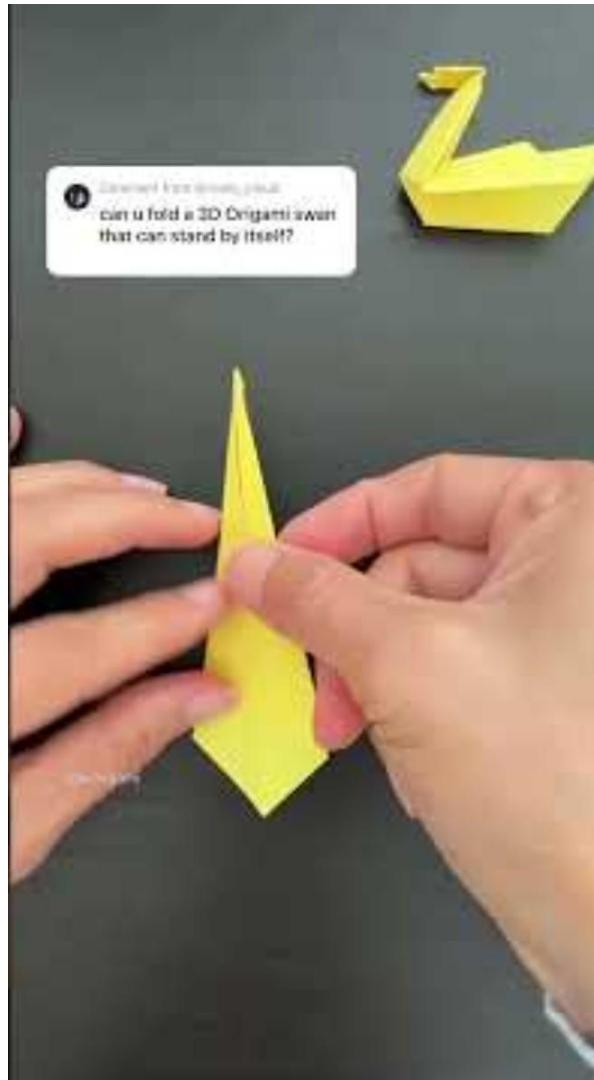
A flat sheet becomes something that can lift - small shifts, repeated, create transformation.



USING ORIGAMI TO COACH ACHIEVERS



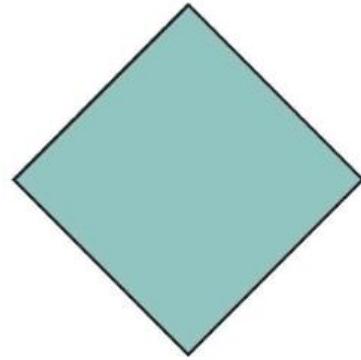
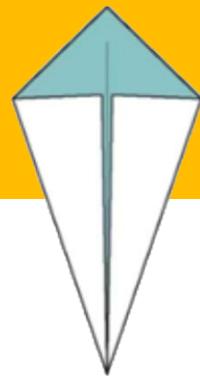
<https://amzn.to/49vibXf>



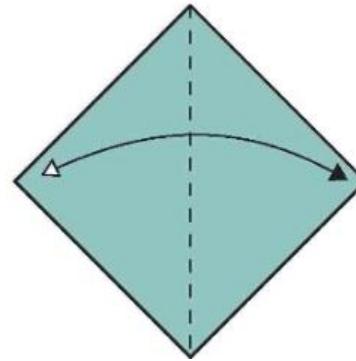
CAREER ALCHEMY

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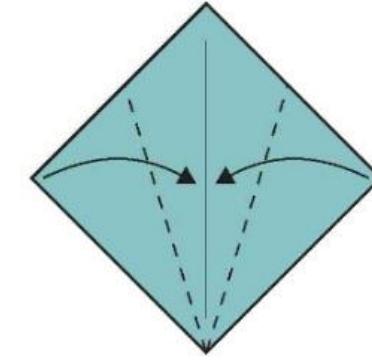
SWAN MAKING 1: MAKE THE KITE BASE



1. Take a Post-It note (sticky side up) or any other square piece of paper.



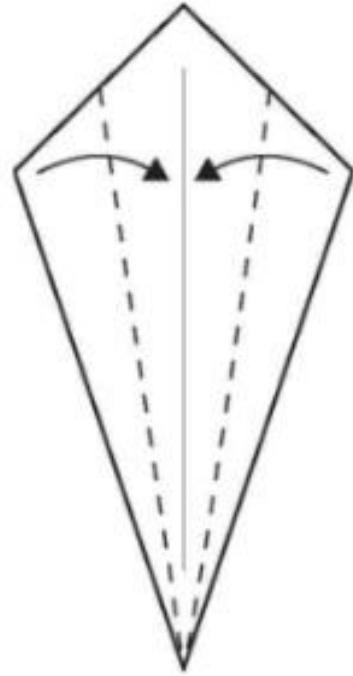
2. Fold the paper in half diagonally to create a triangle. Then unfold.



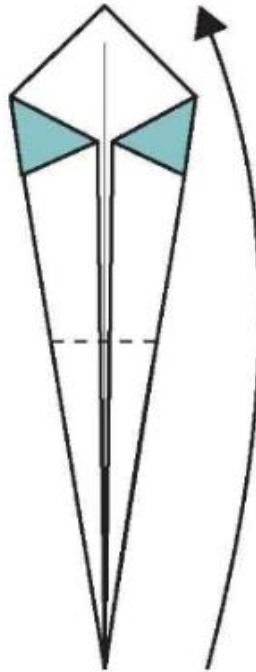
3. Fold the sides into the centre crease to form a kite shape as above.

Now, turn the model over.

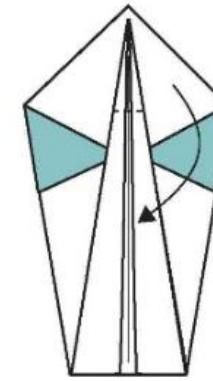
SWAN MAKING 2: DEVELOPING WINGS



4. Having turned the paper over, fold the 2 corners into the centre crease again.



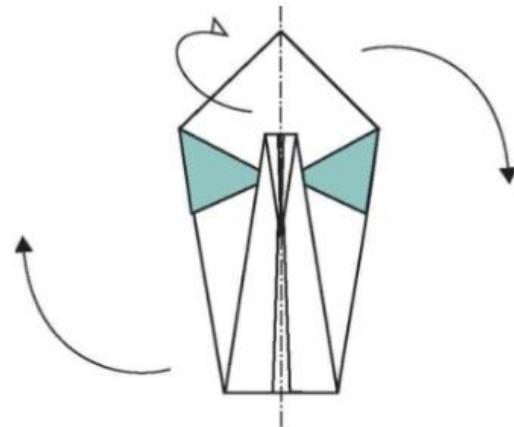
5. Fold the kite in half, bringing the bottom of the tail up to meet the top.



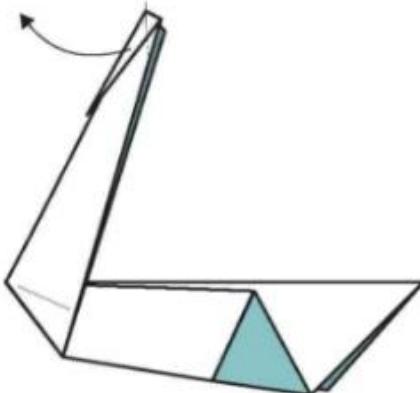
6. Fold down the tip of the top layer to create the beak. Crease it so it stays in place.

Add an additional pleat to the head like you saw in the video if you want to.

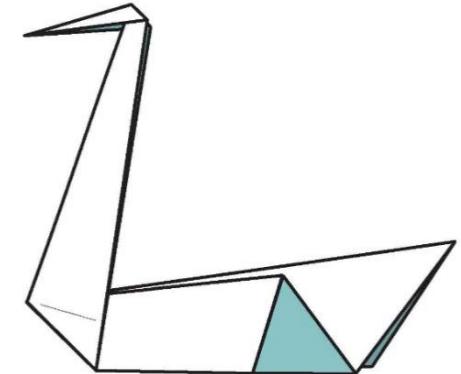
SWAN MAKING 3: COMING INTO BEING



7. Fold the entire shape in half along the centre crease.



8. Pull the neck and beak away from the body, pinching the fold to secure it.

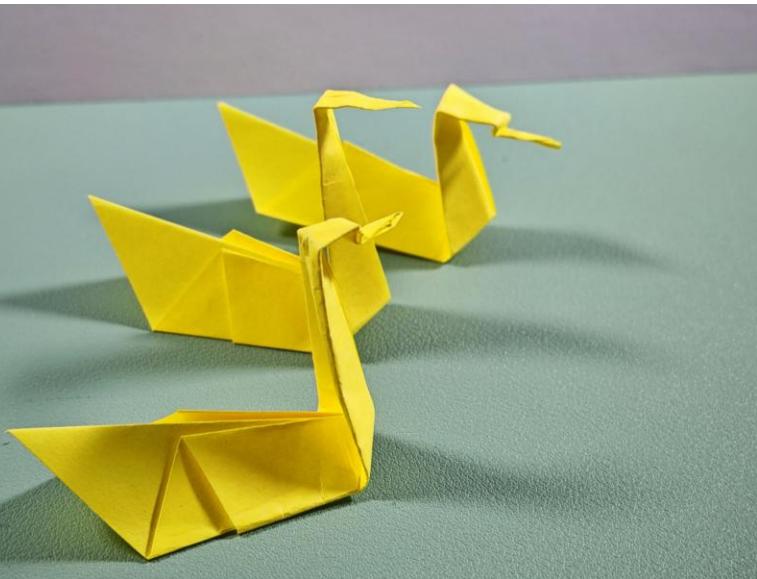


9. Congratulations on creating your swan.

HOW DID YOU GET ON? LET'S SEE!

CAREER ALCHEMY

TIME TO REFLECT



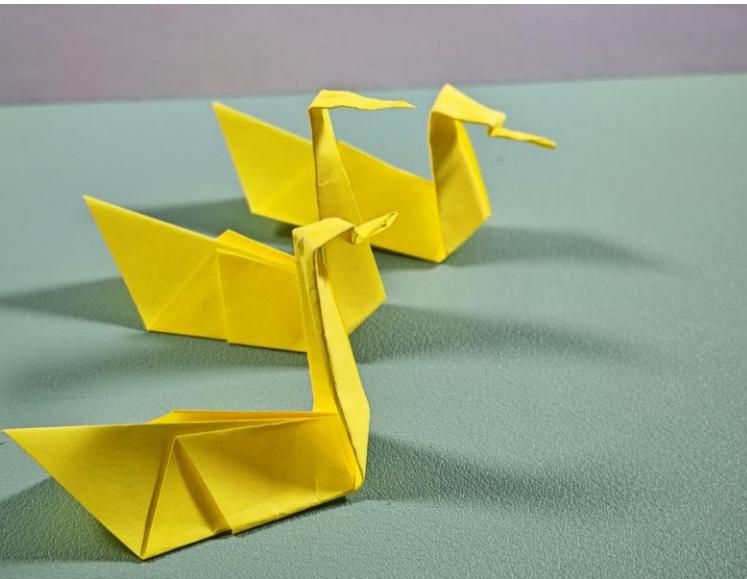
As you worked through making the swan, what did you notice:

- How did your body feel?
- What emotions came to the surface?
- What did you hear your inner voice saying?

WHAT HAVE YOU DISCOVERED SO FAR?



USING THE SWAN TO ANCHOR AWARENESS

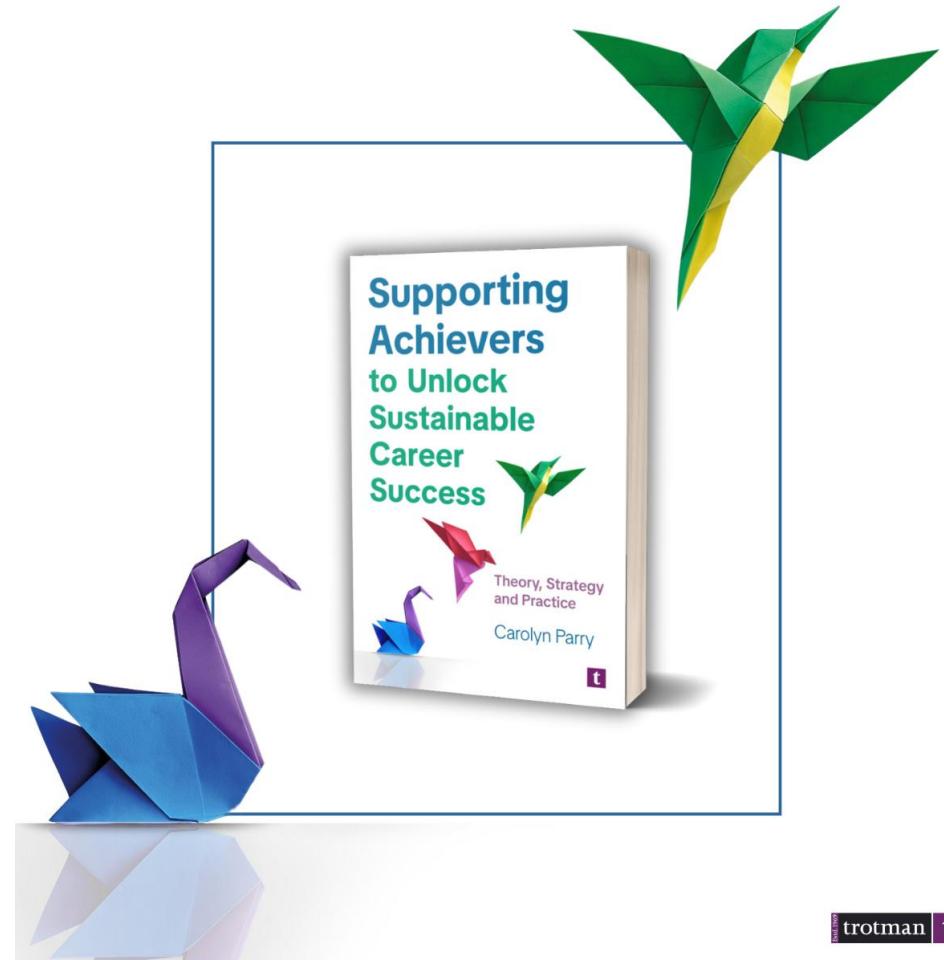


Now, thinking back to the thief most active in your life currently, write its name or draw its symbol on the top or inside of one wing.

Now you have a keepsake on your desk to anchor your awareness consciously.

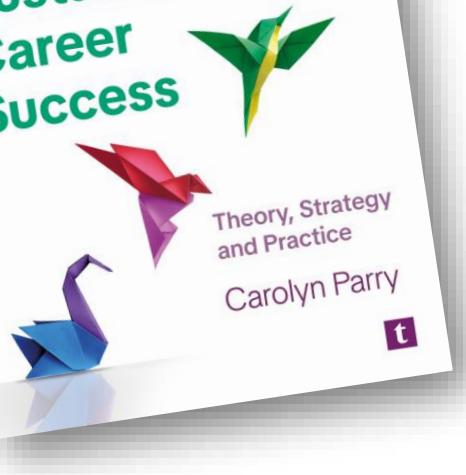
TODAY'S AGENDA

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THE SEVEN PROTECTION PRINCIPLES – aka THE SEVEN GUARDIANS

**Supporting
Achievers
to Unlock
Sustainable
Career
Success**



**1. Sustainable
Self-Care**



**2. Purpose &
Belonging**



**3. Aligned
Energy**



**4. Clarity of
Focus**



**5. Authentic
Self-Direction**

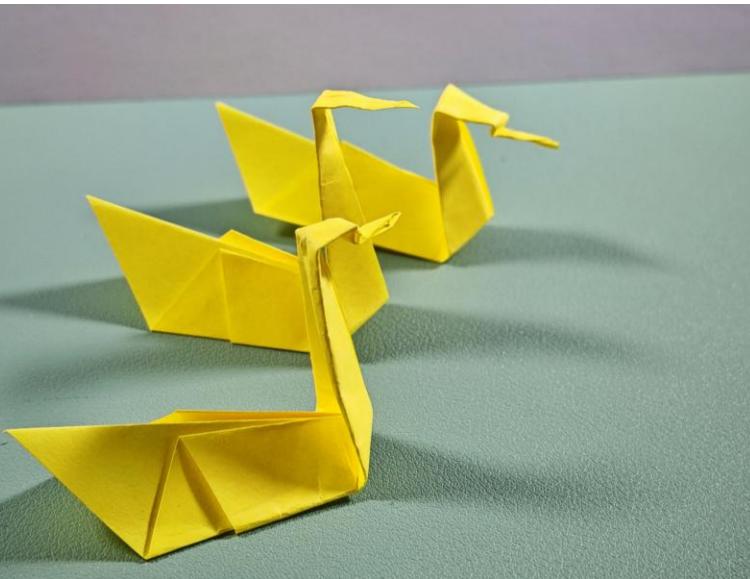


**6. Unique
Contribution**



**7. Self-Compassionate
Mastery**

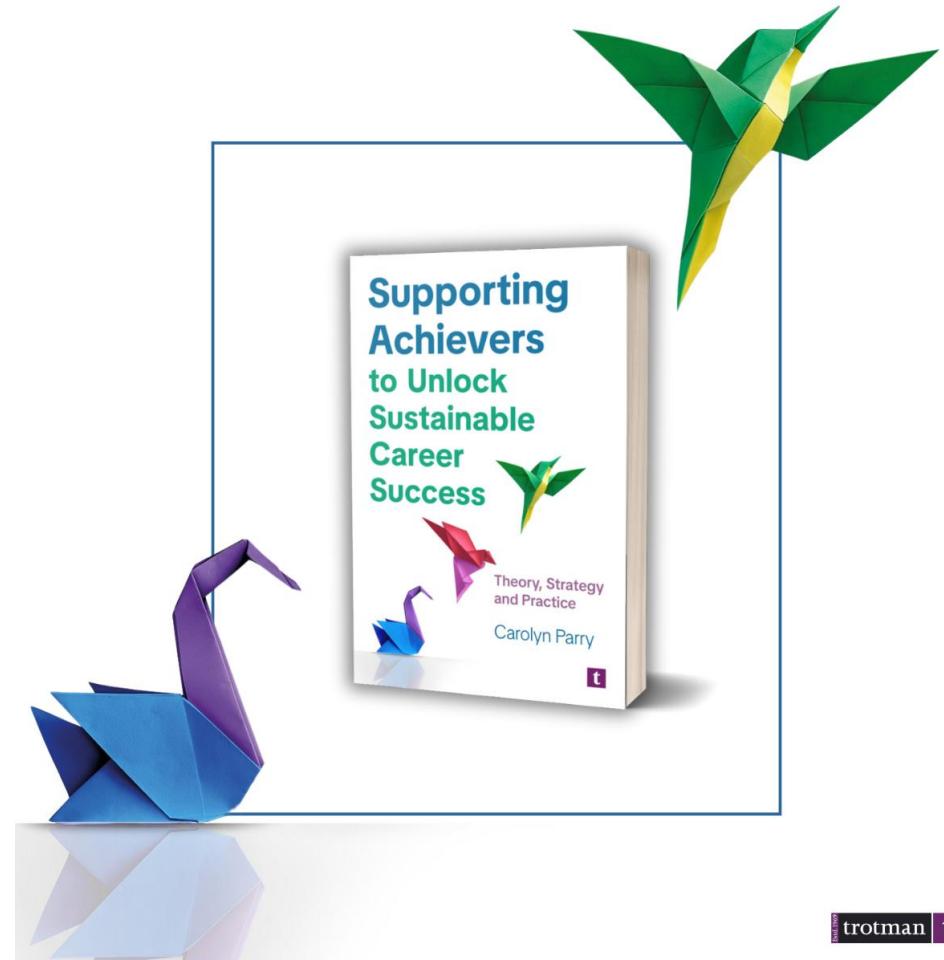
USING THE SWAN TO ANCHOR CHANGE



- Once a new Guardian-based strategy has been developed, write its name or symbol on or under the swan's other wing.
- This transforms the swan into a **physical anchor for change and intention**.
- It provides a visual reminder that growth does not require perfection to have value – it's the progress that counts.

TODAY'S AGENDA

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A REFLECTIVE TOOL FOR PRACTITIONERS AND CLIENTS



CAREER ALCHΣMY

Your Sustainable Career Success Profile

Which Career Thieves Are Holding Back Your Success?

→ Answer 28 questions and we'll send you a personalised report to support your development.

Take the Sustainable Career Success Profile to uncover your unhelpful achiever patterns and unlock your strategy to achieving a balanced and fulfilling career.

Please make sure your answers accurately reflect what is currently holding you back. This will ensure your personalised report provides the best coaching support for you and your career.

[Discover your profile here...](#)

Three stylized origami birds (green, red, and blue) are shown flying upwards against a teal background. The green bird is at the top, followed by the red and then the blue.

ON SCREEN RESULTS LOOK LIKE THIS...

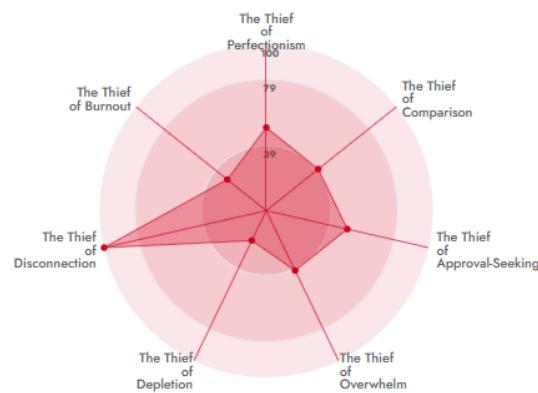
The Seven Career Thieves At Play In Your Career Currently

The chart below shows how strongly each of the Seven Career Thieves is currently influencing your working life.

Your score reflects your responses across the statements linked to each Thief.

The higher the score, the greater the risk that this Career Thief is undermining your wellbeing, focus and fulfilment - even if you're still achieving on the surface.

It is important to recognise that high scores do not mean you are failing. What they may well signify, however, is that you have been carrying a lot for a long time.



Your Most Active Thief Is...



The Thief of Disconnection

When connection and purpose are lost.

This thief leaves you feeling cut off from values, meaning, and belonging, giving you a sense that your work and life lack anchors.

The Seven Career Guardians At Play In Your Career Currently

This chart shows the strength of each of your Seven Career Guardians. The Guardians represent the protective habits and mindsets that help you stay steady and succeed sustainably. Your score reflects your responses across the statements linked to each Guardian.

This time, though, the scoring works differently: the lower the score, the less protection that Guardian is currently providing. That doesn't mean you don't value it.

Instead, it often means this Guardian is the first thing to slip when you are busy, responsible, or under pressure.

If you work to develop this Guardian, it will pay dividends for you and your career. Let's take a look at how well your Guardians are protecting you currently.



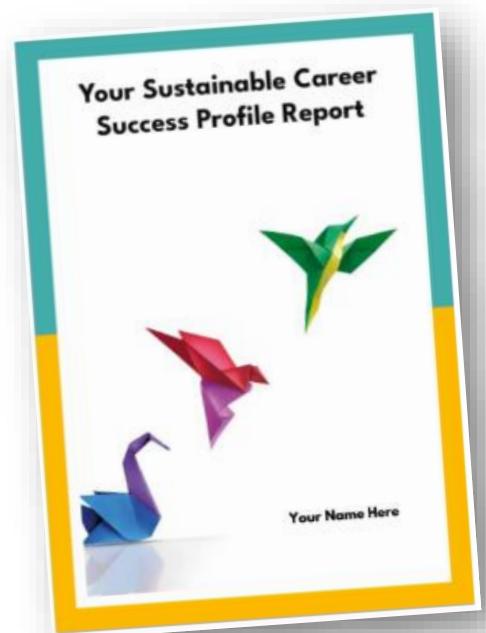
Your Least Developed Career Guardian is...



The Guardian of Sustainable Self-Care

This Guardian ensures you safeguard your energy through rest, renewal, and healthy boundaries.

IN-DEPTH PDF RESULTS LOOK LIKE THIS



Sustainable Career Success Profile

CAREER ALCHEMY

Your Seven Career Threats

This chart shows how strongly each of the Seven Career Thieves is influencing your working life. The Career Thief is undermining you from the inside out, influencing your performance and your ability to achieve on the surface. It is important to notice that the Thief of Disconnection is the most powerful. They do mean to make you fail.

It is important to use the chart as a pattern-matching exercise. One very high score often points to the most "duster" of habits that reinforce each other.

On the next page, we'll look at your Biggest Career Threats in more detail, shifting it with precision rather than willpower.

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Sustainable Career Success Profile

CAREER ALCHEMY

Your Biggest Career Threat Is The Thief of Disconnection

What is Disconnection?

Disconnection is the feeling that your work no longer fits - your role, identity, values, and purpose. You may still perform well while privately feeling detached, numb, or "not quite right".

Why Disconnection Matters

Disconnection is a quiet thief. It can sap meaning, reduce engagement, and increase the likelihood of change. It often shows up before people realise they're unhappy.

How Disconnection Typically Shows Up

Disconnection often looks like this:

- Feeling cynical, indifferent, or "going through the motions"
- Losing a sense of pride or belonging at work
- Feeling unseen, isolated, or emotionally flat
- Questioning, "Is this it?" even after success.

Quick Win and Reflective Questions To Mitigate Disconnection

- Where do you feel most disconnected - tasks, people, purpose, or self?
- When did you last feel genuinely alive at work?
- What kind of contribution do you miss making?
- What values are you currently compromising - and why?
- What would reconnection look like in one small step?
- How would life feel if your work aligned fully with your identity?

Now that we have explored your biggest career threat, let's take a look overleaf at the seven Career Guardians, which help to offset the Seven Career Thieves.

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Sustainable Career Success Profile

CAREER ALCHEMY

Your Seven Career Guardians Scores

This chart shows the strength of your Seven Career Guardians. These are the habits and mindsets that help you stay steady and focused. The Guardian with the lowest score is the one that is currently providing the most support. Here, the scoring works differently: the lower the score, the more support it is providing. That doesn't mean it is the best Guardian. It often means this Guardian is the first thing to slip when you are under pressure.

CAREER ALCHEMY

Your Protector To Grow Is The Guardian of Sustainable Self-Care

What is Sustainable Self-Care?

Sustainable self-care means protecting your energy, health and wellbeing through rest, renewal and appropriate boundaries. You prioritise yourself with the same commitment you give to work and others.

Why Sustainable Self-Care Matters

This Guardian prevents and repairs burnout. It helps you build success you can actually sustain, without sacrificing health, identity, or relationships. Self-care isn't selfish - it's the foundation that makes everything else possible. When this Guardian is strong, you show up more effectively in all areas of life.

How Sustainable Self-Care Typically Shows Up

Sustainable self-care often shows up like this:

- Treating rest as essential, not optional
- Setting boundaries that preserve your health, time and energy
- Recognising and honouring your body's signals
- Treating your own needs as legitimate priorities
- Asking for help earlier, not later
- Building daily practices that stabilise your nervous system

Quick Win and Reflective Questions To Sustainable Self-Care

- What are your earliest burnout warning signs?
- What would adequate rest and recovery look like for you?
- What needs to become non-negotiable for you to thrive?
- What would you change if your wellbeing was the strategy?
- How would life feel if self-care was your foundation, not a reward?
- What becomes possible when you treat yourself with the care you give others?

Find out more about how to mitigate your Career Thieves and strengthen your Career Guardians overleaf.

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CAREER ALCHEMY

Sustainable Career Success Profile

CAREER ALCHEMY

WANTED: BETA TESTERS (WIN A BOOK)



CAREER ALCHEMY

Your Sustainable Career Success Profile

Which Career Thieves Are Holding Back Your Success?

→ Answer 28 questions and we'll send you a personalised report to support your development.

Take the Sustainable Career Success Profile to uncover your unhelpful achiever patterns and unlock your strategy to achieving a balanced and fulfilling career.

Please make sure your answers accurately reflect what is currently holding you back. This will ensure your personalised report provides the best coaching support for you and your career.

[Discover your profile here...](#)



Supporting Achievers to Unlock Sustainable Career Success

Theory, Strategy and Practice

Carolyn Parry

fold it calm

Simple origami to quieten your mind

POPULAR TIKTOK ORIGAMI ARTIST

LI KIM SOH

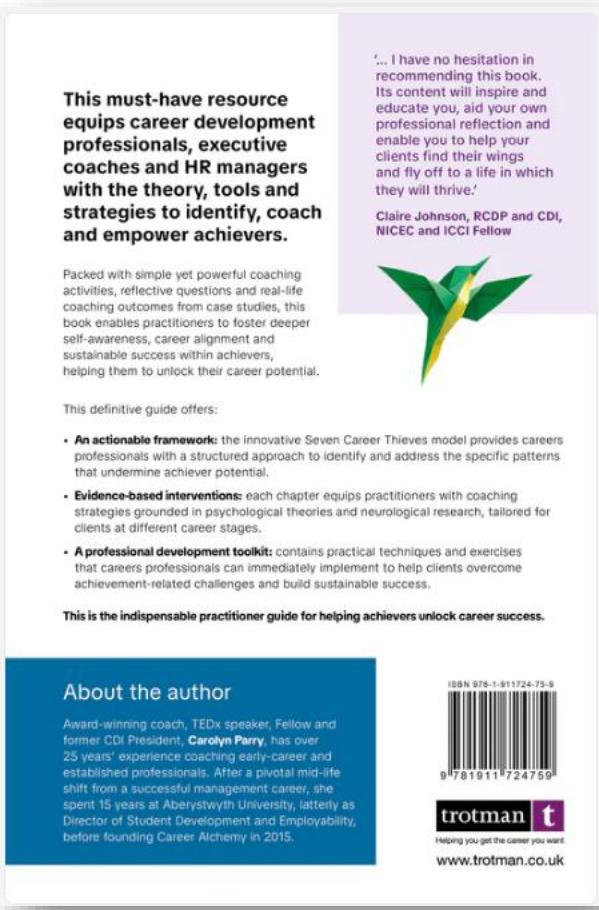
Go to <https://careerthieves.scoreapp.com/> Password: EPqSARfJ

IN SUMMARY



'Supporting Achievers' provides a practical, evidence-informed toolkit that helps to:

- **Build self-awareness and authentic confidence** by shifting unhelpful thinking, clarifying values, and strengthening identity
- **Reduce anxiety and overwhelm through flow**, perspective resets, mental decluttering, and nervous-system regulation
- **Create sustainable success** by breaking free from comparison/approval-seeking, designing energy rhythms, and rebuilding purpose, connection and belonging
- Plus a link to the **new sustainable career success profile reflective tool**.



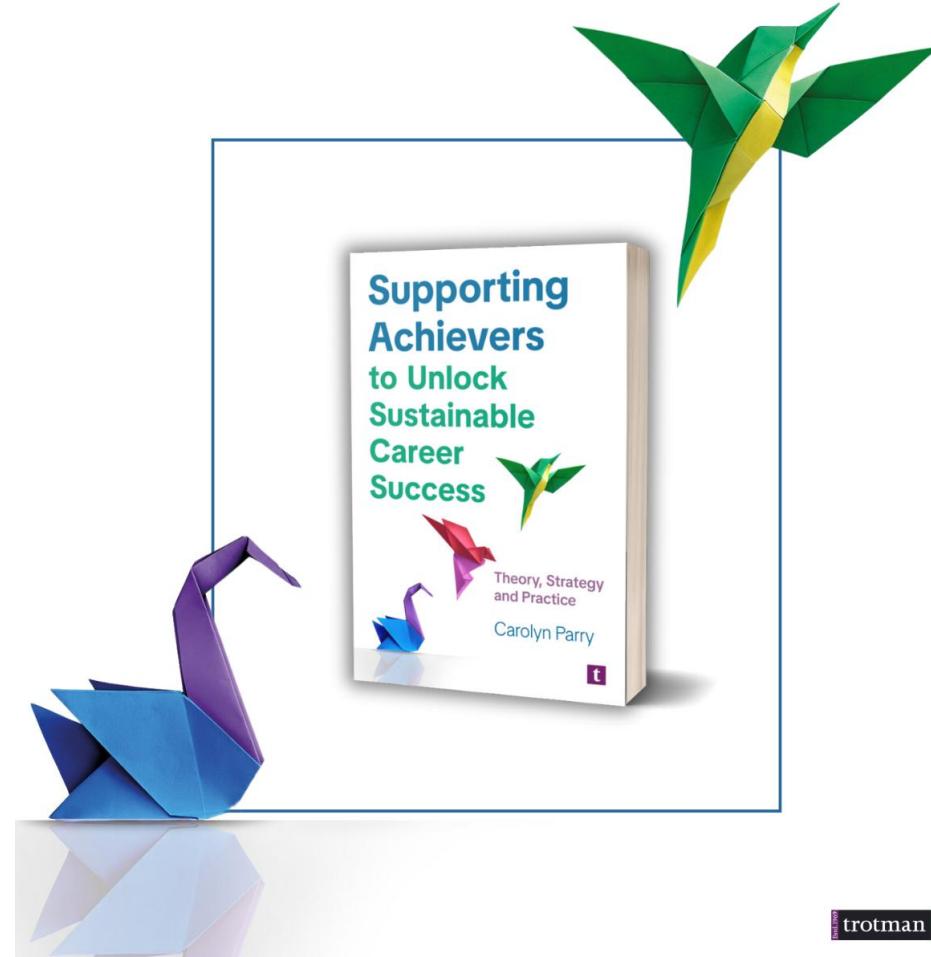
ANY OTHER QUESTIONS?



TODAY'S AGENDA



- Why this book and why now?
- What is an achiever, and what challenges do they face anyway?
- Introducing the Seven Career Thieves
- Origami coaching activity
- The Seven Protection Principles, aka the Guardians
- Introducing the Sustainable Career Success Profile tool
- **How to get your copy**



HOW TO BUY YOUR COPY



Direct from Trotman Publishing



<https://trotman.co.uk/products/supporting-achievers-to-unlock-sustainable-career-success>

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Also available from all good bookshops.

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