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Winning in the Second Half OR *Seize a new opportunity*



‘So what are you going to do when you grow up?’

Those of us born since World War II have something to look forward to which no other generations in the history of the world have ever had: exceptional longevity. Most of us currently in our 40s and 50s will live until we are around 100. With my genes and lifestyle my GP predicts I’ll keep going until 102.

Whereas we can expect to live until around 100, our parents and grandparents had little expectation of living much beyond 60 or 65. There was no point in them bothering to try to map out and make sense of a time of life which simply wasn’t going to exist for them.

Unconscious stereotyping

Throughout recorded history, only one in ten people could expect to live to 65. It is hardly surprising therefore that the psychology of our society has developed over many generations so that we have now unconsciously conditioned ourselves to believe that we work until our 60s . . . go into rapid decline . . . then die. This is despite the evidence of our own eyes and personal experiences these days.

As individuals, our mental models are built consciously and unconsciously upon role models, particularly those formed in childhood and youth. Our rational adult minds know full well that increased longevity nowadays has

not just added years, but has added fitness, health and vigour to those years. Increasingly we see headlines on, '60 is the new 40'.

And yet our mental images and the self-limiting beliefs that arise from them, tend still to focus on the long outdated role models we bring from our earliest years: our grandparents and their peers. And these have transmuted to become the grey-headed, grey-attitude stereotypes we carry around in our heads, largely without realising.

That's why we still carry the recollection of how early retirement was the Holy Grail. Back in the 1960s and 1970s it was painted as the reward for a lifetime of hard work, coupled with the assumption that it would be all beer and skittles. The reality was more desperate than that. It had less to do with money earned and assets amassed, and far more to do with the opportunity to steal back a few short years of vitality beyond the confines of 'work' before one's likely death.

The prospect of early retirement today is markedly different. It is no longer about trying to fit everything in to a mere handful of years. It has far more to do with wondering what we will do *to fill up* the next 20, 30 or 40 years ahead. And there are just as many concerns about abundance of time as there used to be about its scarcity.

We know that subliminally. Indeed, today when most high-achieving 50-somethings are polled, their quizzical response tends to be, 'What, *me* retire?!?' The answer isn't just about money, or the ability to fund it (although of course with an increased number of years likely to be ahead that can be an issue). It has far more to do with the concerns of, 'What would I do? Who would I be? . . . because I've got an awful lot of years ahead!'

I was moved to consider writing this book whilst I was still in the Executive Search (head-hunting) field. I began noticing that a very large number of my candidates and clients in their late 40s and 50s were getting themselves caught up in 'baggage' around the concept of an inevitable, impending retirement. In most cases I found they were looking at it along extremely traditional lines, as if it were an ON/OFF button. As if they only had a 'career' whilst working full-time and moving ever upwards on a promotion ladder – then suddenly had no 'career' any more if they moved diagonally, or in a new direction, or undertook anything which was not full-time, nor as well paid.

And I became acutely aware of how this ON/OFF button approach, and the gap between stereotypes and their own personal reality, affected their

mood, behaviour, performance and whole life. The images it conjured up for them were not based on the reality of what they saw today and who they knew themselves to be in their 50s and into their 60s. The images came from much further back in their pasts, the stereotypes exacerbated by a fear of age discrimination.

It was fascinating to watch the variety of responses too: denial, bitterness, frustration, acceptance or, in surprisingly few cases, alacrity.

Harder for high flyers

The theory that I have developed, through my work and in the interviews for my research, is that it is generally far harder for leaders and topflight executives to go through this Second Half transition than it is for the average worker. The A-Type Achievers who come to identify themselves through their power, position and prestige paint themselves into a corner if they continue with the ON/OFF button attitude. It leaves no space for innovation and attitudinal change. It feeds the temptation to aim at continuing the same style of successes of the First Half of life: partly to stay squarely in their comfort zone, and partly through sheer fear of the unknown. What can they see as the alternatives? There are as yet so few role models for us to aspire to.

That's where the sporting analogies concerning Second Halves, like playing and winning, etc., start to come in useful. An executive at the top of their game is very much like an elite athlete. Success is wonderful and all-consuming, fuelled by passion and determination. The aim is to reach peak performance and the desire is to stay there as long as possible. Of course that cannot last forever. So what happens *beyond* the peak? How do elite athletes adapt to what comes after? What aspects can be shared, and what lessons can be learned in the broader context of work and life?

According to the ex-international sports stars and Olympians to whom I have spoken, their experience is that finding what's beyond can be even harder, psychologically, than the effort of getting to the peak itself.

There are a number of books aimed at higher income earners, which concentrate on the financial aspects of later-career and beyond. My concern with them is that they avoid the point of *what* you want to do and be at this largely unexplored stage of life – and therefore stay at the lowest levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

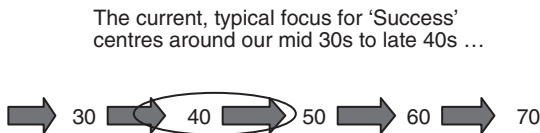
Frankly I don't believe that is meaty enough for those of you who have been pushing your intellectual and innovational envelope for years. Besides, as executives you are likely to be in the top economic quartile concerning your assets and therefore beyond the Maslow's survival level of enough to live on (which of course many others are not).

Beyond that point the existential question is no longer, 'How much money will I have?', but 'What do I want the money in order to do and to be?' Whenever I've spoken to Financial Advisors about the subject, they have told me that the *doing* and to an even greater extent, the *being* are commonly very vague and unplanned areas in their clients' minds. They are brushed aside by motherhood statements like travelling or paying off the debts. They tell me that very often the ones who put least thought into 'what comes next?' are those with the most money.

Simply because we have money it does not mean that we can magically 'live happily ever after'. Similarly, just because as high-level managers we may have been supposed to have all the answers to corporate questions, by dint of the authority and titles we assumed, it does not mean we will automatically have all the answers to what comes after that. As Jane Fonda quipped recently, 'I'm over the hill – but nobody prepared me for what was going to be on the other side.'

Now that we have a good chance of being around until 100, we have literally *almost half a lifetime more* than previous generations did. Not only that but, in the corporate world, we are likely to have peaked earlier and have achieved what purports to be the pinnacle of success somewhere in our 40s, even 30s.

It brings us, inescapably, to confront the question, 'What is Success beyond Success?, What will "winning" look like in our Second Half?' Whatever you choose it to be, it is a new opportunity to be seized.



Yet in the 21st century we all need to plan for our **Extended Careers**.
We will have more time post 'Success' than preparing for it

Figure 1.1 Model for 21st century Extended Career

As all good leaders know, it is one thing to recognise an opportunity, but the magic of turning it into success comes through how we define it and how we frame the challenge in our mind in order to take best advantage of it.

Choosing the right words

There is enormous power in how we frame our thoughts. The very words we use, the metaphors and the mental images affect our understanding, our attitude and our behaviour. Take the positive impact of the metaphor of approaching the years over 50 as if it is one's Second Half.

Why 'Second Half'? As it is in our nature to err towards completion, we can hardly think of it without finishing the sentence . . . 'Second Half of the Game'. And wonderfully quotable individuals from Shakespeare to Quentin Crisp and Alexis de Tocqueville to Joseph Brodsky have all affirmed that 'Life is a Game'. It's a common way to describe life – and nearly always with positive connotations. It gives us a sense of 'all in it together', 'playing', 'winning', 'being part of the team'. Not necessarily easy – but always upbeat.

According to the research of Dr Patrick McCarthy at RMIT University, the years from 50 onwards are a time when we are likely to feel that we are losing control over our career and ambitions, and feeling forced to move outside the comfort zones we have painstakingly built up over decades. So framing our thoughts through a positive, hopeful, empowering metaphor is therefore extremely helpful in coping with that by recasting our conditioned, largely unconscious, attitudes towards what we do in our 50–100 period.

I ran the concept past an acquaintance in San Francisco. 'But what if someone's life hasn't been much of a game so far?' he countered. My reply to him was along the lines of, 'Well, why not consider turning it into one? The Second Half is as good a time as any to start. If not then, . . . when?'

Additionally, associated with the image of life as a game, is the concept of the successful person as a Player. It is becoming very popular to describe today's A-Type successful executives as 'players' too, which gives it an even stronger meaning.

It is a central image within the works of writers on leadership like Fred Kofman, who says: 'You must take unconditional responsibility; you need to

see yourself as a “player”, as a central character who has contributed to shaping the current situation – and who can thus affect its future. This is the opposite of seeing yourself as a “victim”, subject to forces beyond your control. The Player is *in* the game and can affect the result. The Victim is *out* of the game and can only suffer the consequences of others’ actions’ (Kofman, 2006).

Focusing on the words themselves, compare the positive vibrancy of *winning, excitement, stamina, performance, goals, Player, energetic* connected with a sporting Second Half with any of the following:

- Never too old!
- Turning 50 or 60
- Becoming a senior citizen
- Retirement
- The Third Age
- Age Concern

What images came to mind for each word or phrase? How does your mind and body react to those images? How do you feel about identifying yourself with those words and images?

Unless I’m very much mistaken, the second set of words will be redolent of negative images for you. As you read them, your eyebrows are likely to have furrowed, you may notice an involuntary wry, even cynical smile rise to your lips. If you said them out loud the tone of your voice would probably strike others as disengaged at best, disapproving at worst.

There is nothing wrong with those words in themselves – but they have no attractive, inspiring connotations. They are not images that red-blooded individuals would actively aspire to. They are not . . . sexy!

As individuals, as couples, as families, as organisational cultures we all have particular words which jar on our ears, and which quite literally strike the wrong note. The words acquire ‘baggage’ and negative meanings and emotions become attached to them. When that happens, rightly or wrongly, they begin to influence the way we think about concepts to which they are attached.

From my MBA days, in our Marketing classes, I remember hearing how unsuspecting firms made horrendous mistakes by choosing words and names for their products which turned out to have dreadful, or risible, connotations

in certain markets. They were perfectly good products, but the words used to create an image in the mind totally put off the buyers.

Words have absolutely the same effect in shaping how we look at concepts like age and later-career, in whether we view them and act on them happily, as an opportunity, or alternatively as a frustration or disappointment.

There is the salutary story of the Chevy Nova in South America. The company was apparently unaware that 'no va' means 'it won't go'. After the company figured out why it wasn't selling any cars, it renamed the car the Caribe in its Spanish markets.

When I was in China, as a young student, I was both fascinated and aghast to find a brand of ladies' sanitary napkins subtitled: 'Raise the Red Flag High!' And my Romanian brother-in-law always does a double-take when he sees the chain of women-only gyms in the USA called 'Curves'. It is the direct translation for 'Prostitutes' back home.

Most of those are simply attributable to bad translations. But there are also numerous examples of how, when we think we're speaking the same language, differing generational or national interpretations can leave others with a totally different understanding of what *we* believe the word or phrase to mean: for example, I can never seem to entice American dinner guests to try my mother's recipe for good old English Toad in the Hole or my father's favourite, Spotted Dick.

The Scandinavian vacuum manufacturer Electrolux, no doubt through its terribly talented, fluent English-speaking marketers still fell into the 'right word, wrong connotation' trap. 'Nothing sucks like an Electrolux' may be technically true . . . but sounds like a complete loser to North Americans and like a complete pervert to most English.

By the same token there are generational dissonances. When I hear that something is 'really bad', 'wicked!', or that someone is 'quite cool' about my proposal, I feel the need to work out the age of the speaker to make sure I interpret the message correctly.

And what about the gender-contextual words? There is nothing intrinsically wrong with the word 'girls'. It is a perfectly apt description of young females up to and around puberty. Seemingly many men consider it a cute compliment to call their mature women staff or family 'girls'. Yet an equal number of mature women, myself included, feel their hackles rise when addressed like that, perceiving within it an irritating superciliousness and patronisation.

Reframing our perceptions

In short, the words we use have tremendous impact on the way we perceive a message. They are central to the way we frame our opinion and understanding. Changing our words to describe something can radically change our attitudes towards it. Words can change an image: from good to bad, or bad to good. Certain words act as a taboo, ensuring we keep the associated theme veiled and thereby not discussable.

This has clearly happened about the subjects of later-career, ageing and retirement. As Ernest Hemingway remarked, 'Retirement is the ugliest word in the language'.

A huge range of benefits can be accrued through reframing and reconnecting the previously *separate* concepts of later-career and retirement. One's career and leadership engagement do not cease just because one is no longer necessarily working full-time, nor in high executive capacity. It is simply how one plays the Second Half.

There are many examples of reframing which can turn a taboo or uncomfortable subject into something totally affirmative. Until quite recently, 'bald' was one of those taboo words, relegating the topic of men with no or receding hair to the realms of comic turns and embarrassment. Yet, 'shaven head' and the sight of a Beckham-esque male have suddenly given the same look a very different standing in what we consider attractive, ugly or laughable.

In the same way, remember how condemnatory the word 'queer' was until it became replaced in our general parlance by 'gay & lesbian'. The descriptor 'queer' moved from being one that was in broadest common use, to one which now shows the speaker as having something significant against homosexuality.

Think also of the use of words like 'Negro' or 'Black', with the overtones of segregation and prejudice, which have gradually metamorphosed into the terms of respect of 'person of colour' and 'African American'.

And look at the power and optimism of the descriptor 'people living with AIDS' in contrast to 'AIDS victims'.

The metaphors and mental images of sport are central to recasting the attitudes we have about the years of 50 and beyond. Yes, it is about winning, AND it carries with it the Olympic ideal about playing simply for the love

of the game. It is about performance and, quite literally, goals. It is about playing (as in 'fun') and about being a Player in all senses of the word.

Winning in the Second Half

I asked Tim, a Partner at KPMG in London, what images those words brought back for him:

For me, I'm back in my first year at Secondary School. My first taste of external competition in a soccer game against another local boys' school, playing against people whom for once I didn't know. The First Half had been exhilarating, challenging. And it had been a bit of a blur too. A lot of running up and down the pitch, with not much strategy in mind, but a lot of loose energy.

I hadn't known quite what to expect, and I was pretty much doing everything on instinct. Yes, we had been given some rudimentary tactics to try to employ – but it all seemed to move so fast that I remembered them only after I realized I'd done something different: passed to the wrong person, taken the ball up the wrong side or forgotten to mark my opponent in the chase for possession. But we were ahead by two goals when the Half-Time whistle blew.

Half-Time was like being pulled back out of some dream. Our Soccer Coach, Mr Wright, cut through the buzz of 'activity' and brought us back to earth with three instructions: one was about marking, one was about pacing ourselves and the third, I distinctly remember was, 'Pass up to Mark. Let him shoot!' How sensible that all sounded. How calming.

But when I heard the whistle and the words, 'We're about to start the Second Half' it felt different to before. We had, supposedly, learnt something about the opposition's tactics. We'd tested our own strengths and stamina. And yet we already had something to lose – our lead. Somehow it wasn't the same as going on the field at nil-all at the start of the game. Better? Worse? Just a bit different.

I remember that sensation of stepping out there again. Heart in my mouth, excited. Keen as mustard to get right back out there and not make the silly mistakes of the First Half. And jolly well win!

My father and I were great fans of Welsh rugby and, back in the 1970s, when the Welsh team was in one of its cyclical heydays we used to go regularly to watch the internationals at Cardiff Arms Park or at Twickenham. But one of the best games I ever saw was on TV, when Wales were playing Scotland in 1971 away from home.

It had been a nail-biter right from the start. The lead had swung from one team to the other, and there was plenty of action in both halves. All the stars were on form. Then, right in the dying minutes of the game, when the score was 18–14 to Scotland, Gerald Davies the Welsh winger sneaked in a try – but the Scottish defence managed to keep him well away from the posts.

That took the score to 18–17. As the ball had to be placed on the right-hand side, the conversion looked almost impossible, particularly as Barry John, the usual Welsh kicker, had been concussed earlier in the match. I remember I could hardly bear to watch, as the suspense was so palpable. It was John Taylor who stepped up to take it and, although he was never a regular kicker for the side, managed to place it exquisitely between the posts the second before the final whistle blew. It neatly secured the Triple Crown and the Grand Slam for Wales. What a thriller.

And what was the point of that story? That in sport there is no ‘value judgement’ made about either half. The First Half of a match is not considered intrinsically better than the Second Half. The first and second halves of a race are also both equally important.

And to take it even a step further, the Second Half could be considered in certain ways *more* important. However good someone is in the First Half, however much of a lead they build up, they can only really count themselves a winner when the final whistle blows or they touch the finishing tape. And to get to that point it’s all about performing in the here and now, living in the present – and not losing concentration by looking forward, backwards or sideways.

If anything, in sport, going in to the Second Half is often even more exciting – especially if the First Half has been dull and predictable. There is always the hope, by players and spectators alike, that it will ignite into something spectacular.

The Extended Career

Linked with reframing the Second Half of our 100 years in such a positive pro-active format, is that our understanding of what we mean by ‘career’ is sorely out of date. We need a new mindset about it, and one that is not cluttered up by traditional notions of age and retirement.

This should help put it in perspective: Do you know how the consensus on a specific retirement age originated? It was because when Bismarck introduced the Old Age Pension in Prussia in the late 1880s he is purported to have asked his civil servants, 'By which age are most of them dead?'

So the pensionable age was set at 70 (but shortly after lowered to 65), meaning that only approximately 2% of the population at the time were alive to take advantage of it. That 2% or so, because of the health conditions at the time, were generally assumed to be disabled and therefore incapable of work. So, general health conditions at that time and State Pensions together managed to set in concrete the view that life beyond 'pensionable age' is about inactivity and rapidly becoming geriatric.

Another conundrum is that in most systems the retirement age is set lower for women (60) than men (65), despite the fact that women generally live around five years longer than their male counterparts. It is somewhat bizarre that this assumption has remained largely unchallenged in the light of our enormous increases in longevity and fitness. Our Western societies have only recently begun to question it.

In a curious symmetry, the challenge comes from the same financial standpoint as Bismarck in the first place. Today's governments and Pensions Commissions find themselves with enormous gaps in pension provision. There are simply not enough funds available to continue to have the workforce retiring at 65 if they are going to need to draw pensions for another 30 rather than five years. So they are asking, 'By which age are they mostly still fit and healthy?' with the aim of moving the pensionable age later. If the fit and healthy workforce keeps working longer, there might just be enough to go round.

So suffice it to say that it's very likely that you *won't* retire, at least in the conventional sense of the word. You'll either be working for the money in order to fund lifestyle, children or just plain everyday expenses. Or you'll be engaged in some form of activity in order to keep yourself active, involved, fulfilled or even simply 'occupied'. The pressures (and supports) come from a variety of sources.

The reframing here is that the focus must move away from the ON/OFF button of traditional retirement to one's Extended Career. The heart of the matter is one's personal sustainability.

As Ken Dychtwald points out in both *The Age Wave* and *Age Power* (Dychtwald and Flower, 1990; Dychtwald, 2000), there are new trends

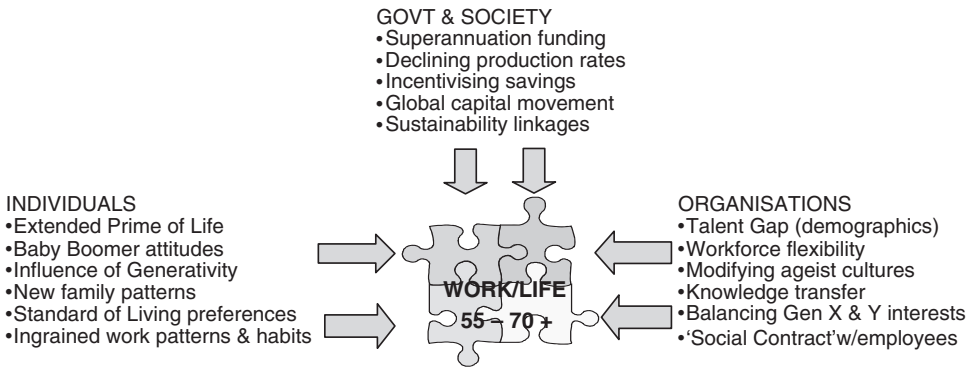


Figure 1.2 Influences on age and work

which see professionals go through two or three mini-retirements between their 50s and 70s. For some it is into serial project work, and this has fuelled the rise in interim management options. For others it is to part-time options, either by choice or simply availability. For still others it is the chance to explore running one's own business, or moving into a completely different style, or hierarchical level, of work. The latter options tend to be most appealing to high stress, burn-out victims.

What it shows is that the situation can be even more flexible when one is in the mid 50s–mid 70s period of worklife than it ever has been before. The corollary is that one's own flexibility towards it must be greater too in order to fully appreciate it.

So what is it you will actually be doing in your Second Half? More importantly, who will you be *being*?

A research survey I commissioned while at Highland Partners in 2004 (Highland Partners, 2004) asked a cross-section of management-level workers in their mid to late 50s, across three continents, what they saw themselves doing as purposeful activity beyond the age of 60. Nearly half of the respondents had either failed to come up with any ideas or hadn't stopped to consider the question at all before. Only just over 20% believed they had it all thought out and well planned.

At one level we could say, 'Perhaps it doesn't matter. Life will go on' and 'Things will sort themselves out'. Or, 'It can't be all that hard, everybody has to go through it'.

Yet I see a peculiar paradox here. What type of things do we most often try to put off thinking about and procrastinate upon? It's never the easy stuff, it's always the hard stuff. The great cop-out is to take the excuse of being

What do you see yourself doing in terms of 'purposeful activity' beyond age 60?

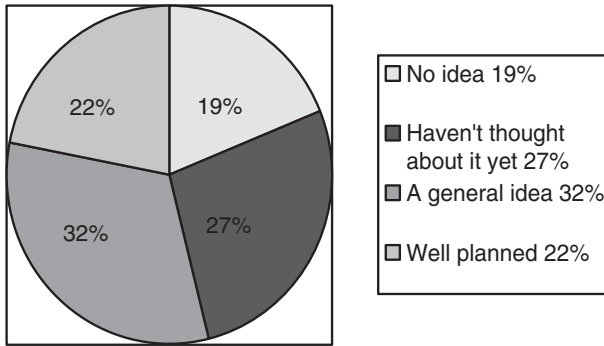


Figure 1.3 Extended career planning

Source: Highland Partners Survey, 2004

too busy to have the time to think. 'Normal' work is easy to focus on, as it's a known quantity. Later-career and beyond are unknown territory, and offer few viable role models yet.

There is a paradox too that these senior professionals, who are avoiding this question, are the very ones who would have had 12-month, three-year, five-year, even ten-year career plans from graduation onwards. I know, I've seen executives who in their 40s could enunciate those plans faultlessly and who were happy to spend quality time strategising those gameplans. And I've seen them ten years later in their 50s looking like rabbits in headlights when I asked what the next two years would hold, let alone the next ten.

Nor would they dare be so lax if setting strategy or product planning within their own field of business. In many ways products (or people) require least attention and maintenance when they are perceived to be at peak performance. Yet it is just as important to the sustainability of a business to work out what to do with a product which is moving towards the end of its cycle as it is in building it up in the first place. Handling the transition from cash cow to stable producer or fallen star can hit a bottom-line harder than a promising high-potential which never quite gets off the ground.

Part of my process has been to interview over 50 high-profile, very senior ex- and current executives and leaders in their fields, ranging from 48 to 78. But I've also talked in depth with a similar amount of professional people who haven't reached those dizzy heights – but would still fall into the Top 10% category.

In case it got your hackles up (as it did with some to whom I have mentioned my theme), the intention is certainly not to suggest that the

Chairman of a multinational or the founder of a household name business intrinsically knows any better about the uncharted territory of the Second Half than one of their Group GMs. The patterns that emerged did not support that theory at all. In fact, it is more a case of offering the comfort that the feelings of *uncertainty*, *unknown* and *unpreparedness* are shared across the board . . . except by those with the least imagination and capacity for self-awareness!

So, through this book I aim to point out some signposts, offer some real-life examples, suggest some frameworks and, most importantly, pose some probing questions to help you seize the opportunity to be a winner in the Second Half.

DEVELOPING THE GAMEPLAN: *Seize a new opportunity*

Questions & activities to help you understand
and boost your attitude to the new period
of opportunity

I. Your life line

In the last 90 years longevity in the developed countries has increased by over 30 years. You could say we have each gained half a lifetime. These days in our 50s we are only at our Half-Time point.

So if you've picked this up, my guess is that you are likely to be around or beyond 50 yourself. Or you know someone close who is. Somewhere around that Half-Time point.

One of the CEOs I interviewed for this book, revealed to me what he thought was the most powerful, meaningful and memorable exercise he had ever been asked to do in his 30-odd years in senior management. He was asked to take a blank piece of paper and draw a horizontal line, putting his current age at the end.

_____ 47

Then he was asked to think of the three most formative experiences of his life to date, and mark on the line how old he was when each happened.

_____ 9 _____ 27 _____ 42 _____ 47

Next he was asked to extend the line to when he thought he would die, and mark on how old that would be . . .

To understand the impact that had on him, you really need to go through it yourself.

Another executive I had go through this commented:

We had to draw this grid, mapping out our life and the significant points in it. The first aspect which made a big impression on me was that we had to plot our age by years, starting at birth and ending at death. What age should I put for that? I found myself instantly wondering if it would be the same age as my father, which of course brought him in as a reference point too, in my mind, for all that followed. I added a decade or so for myself on to the age he died.

And the second major shock to the system was that it showed up how I had fewer years left than I had already lived. What a sobering thought. And how little time to go in what I thought of as my working life. What was I going to do with it? More than my father, I found myself thinking – and hoping.

The exercise had a very profound effect on me, looking back.

So: take a blank piece of paper, or use the space below, and draw a horizontal line, putting your current age at the end.

Now think of the three most formative experiences of your life to date, and mark on the line how old you were when each happened.

Next, extend the line to when you think you will die, and mark there how old that would be . . .

How do you feel about putting that down on paper?
Does the time ahead feel like a blessing or a curse?

2. From the past to the future

A couple of years ago I saw the results of a survey of Europeans of both sexes and across a wide demographic. It had asked them when they predicted they would die . . . and when they would prefer to die. Most people thought they would die somewhere in their 80s, 90s or even beyond. But the most staggering aspect, as far as I was concerned, was that *the vast majority said they would prefer to die 10 years earlier than that!* What a waste of that opportunity . . .

If you are approaching, or are already in the Second Half, it's likely that you have very vivid images for the years in the past. For your childhood years, your youth, teens, 20s and the years of your 30s and 40s.

Are the years between around 55–75 as clear, looking forward, as the last 20 years of your life/career?

When you were looking at what the future might hold when you were 30, what seemed to lie ahead?

If you are somewhere in your 50s now, or nearing that point, how do the next 20 years look in comparison?

What will be your three most formative experiences *of the future*?

What will you be like?

I wonder what your responses to those questions about the Second Half look like for someone like you in the 21st century? Most people find themselves asking, what's life *supposed* to look like 0–50 vs. 50–100?

My bet is that it is not at all clear for you. Nor is it for most of us, if that is any comfort. Because no other generation has had the opportunity to live out this period before, there are precious few guidelines or role models for us to learn from. We all have the challenge now of trying to work these out as we go along.

3. Winning in the Second Half

'We're starting the Second Half!' Start by reading those words aloud.

What images and feelings does that phrase conjure up for you?

Excitement? Slight trepidation? A competitive urge? A sense of opportunity?

Now reread the story on page 9 about the vision which came to Tim's mind when he thought about an earlier type of sporting Second Half he had experienced.

What's your story of a memorable Second Half?
 What game were you playing?
 How did it feel?
 Are there any lessons or messages in it for you around your own Second Half now?
 Where are the parallels, where are the differences?

Look again at the account of the rugby Second Half on pages 9 and 10.

What famous Second Halves do you remember?
 Were you playing in them, or watching them?
 Do you think about one where the Second Half was a huge improvement on the First Half – or where it fizzled out?
 What were the memorable aspects of it for you?
 What sort of metaphors can you take from it as a way of looking at your own Second Half?

4. Sizing up and seizing

Positive, vibrant, high-impact words to associate with a great Second Half can include:

- Winning
- Excitement
- Stamina
- Performance
- Goals
- Player
- Energy, etc.

What words would you like to add to that list to keep as your own personal descriptors for your Second Half?
 What words will best describe the way you want to live it out?

What sort of game do you see your life as?
 Is it a sprint, a middle-distance race or a marathon?
 Is it going to be the same game in the Second Half – or a new game?
 Or possibly an updated set of rules?

Find time to discuss and share your answers with a colleague, friend or family member. Are they in a similar situation themselves, possibly in their Second Halves too? How can you support each other to gain maximum energy and centredness from the words and the images they evoke for you?

