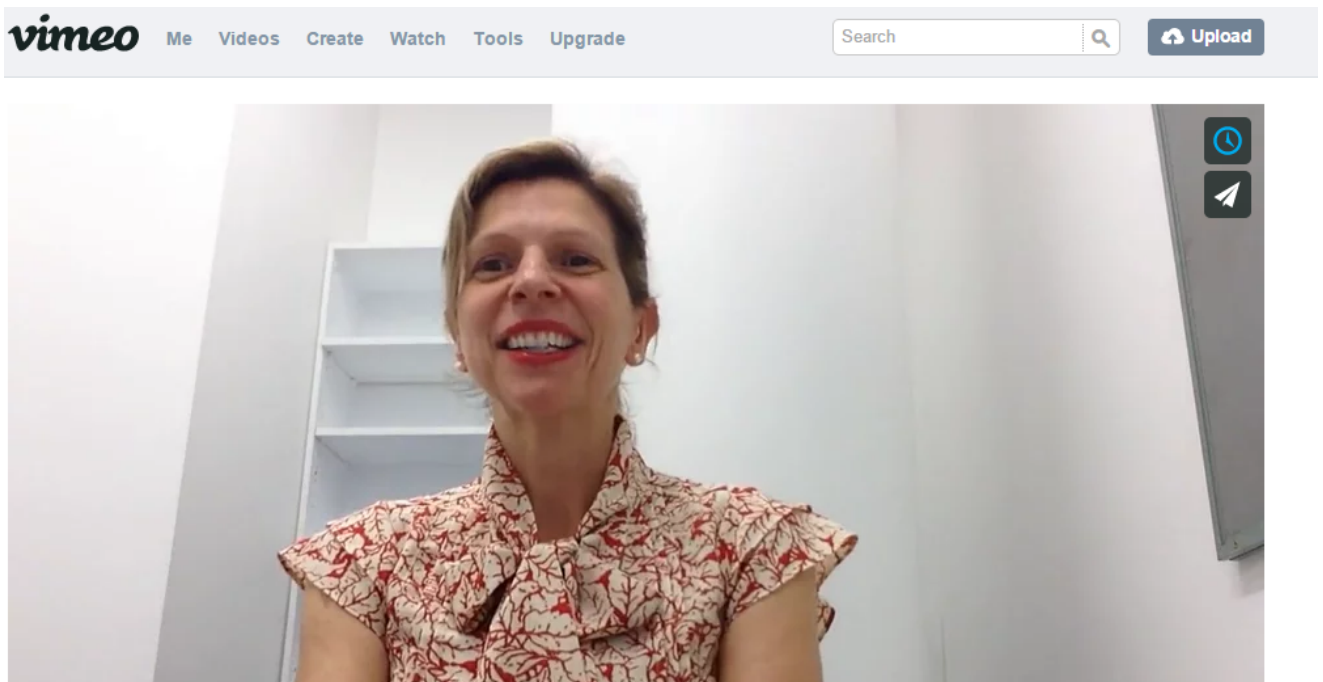


# The Power of Career Visioning: A How To Video & Steps



**Is your career lacking direction?** Do you have some ideas about potential careers however feel there may be other paths you just don't know about? Or perhaps you know that what you are doing is not right, however you are not sure what other career paths to follow.

If you are up for spending a small amount of time reflecting and doing a [visioning exercise](#) you may just find some new and exciting career paths begin to form.

Before undertaking the visioning exercise below, you may like to spend a few minutes viewing my [video on vimeo](#) about visioning and how to get started.

**How to do a visioning exercise?**

- Find somewhere quiet where you will not be distracted for the next 10 minutes.
- Close your eyes and take a 5 short breaths. Let go of everything else that is going on in and around you.

Picture yourself in future – this could be 5 or 10 years from now.

Focus on what you want in relation to your worklife. Think big, dream. See the success of your dream in full. Do not include practicalities around the visioning – it is dreaming only.

Move all those self-limiting thoughts to the side. Simply visualise what you want for your worklife in the future. See it in your mind. Feel it. Resist focusing on the solution about how you will achieve it. Focus only on the desired outcome of your dream. Allow the details to take care of themselves.

*Visualize* what it is like to experience the success of your dream. Use all of your five senses to imagine yourself x years from now or when your dream has become a reality.

Draw upon all of your senses to visualize your new worklife.

- What do you see?
- What do you smell?
- What sounds do you notice?
- What tastes are you experiencing?
- What sensations are you experiencing?

Pay attention to how it feels to achieve your worklife dream. Have all the parts of your past come together to bring you this success. What does it feel like?

Open your eyes and come back with 5 short breaths.

**Journaling:** Find a quiet place and take 15 minutes to write in your journal what you saw in your vision. Describe what it

felt like, sounded like and tasted like. Write down all the details as you saw them.

**Video:** click to watch my how to [career visioning video on vimeo](#)

*Reference:*

[http://leadershiplearning.org/system/files/VisioningTemplate\\_DonellaMeadows.pdf](http://leadershiplearning.org/system/files/VisioningTemplate_DonellaMeadows.pdf)

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# Oh, The Places Your Graduate Career Can Go! What You Need to Know to Get Your Graduate Career Soaring



**Congratulations on becoming a graduate.**

**Today is your day!**

**You're off to Great Places!**

**You're off and away!**

If you take a Dr Seuss approach to your career, I can assure you that it will be full of choices and wonderful opportunities. As a graduate, I can also appreciate that embarking on your career can be an exciting yet also a daunting and stressful experience.

It was around 20 years ago now that I completed my Bachelor of Arts – a wonderful degree that does not qualify you for any specific career path. It would have been helpful to know then what I know now about the world of work. During my career I have been involved in hiring graduates through graduate programs and for specific roles. From these experiences I have identified the core areas that graduates should focus on when looking to secure their first graduate position.

Don't get stuck in the waiting room. Here is how to join the high fliers.....

As a graduate you are no doubt full of excitement and trepidation as you embark on securing that first 'real job'. You have spent a number of years completing your degree where it has occupied your mind, time and finances and now you are itching to put it all into action. Unfortunately the [job search](#) process rarely goes as ideally as you had planned in your mind.

***8 of the key reasons graduates get stuck in the waiting room include;***

**1. Underestimating how much time and effort needs to go into the process**

When you have 1000+ graduates applying for a handful of positions in a graduate program your application needs to be nothing short of brilliant. This includes your resume, application letters, key selection criteria, research and interview preparation. If you are not willing to put the time in to prepare a first class application consider how interested you really are in the opportunity. Focus on doing a handful of good applications rather than spreading yourself to

fine.

## **2. Not looking outside graduate programs**

Combine looking at graduate programs with other job openings. Hedge your bets so to speak given graduate programs are very competitive. If you don't get into a graduate program, look at other entry level roles that are aligned with where you saw your career starting off. For instance, if you wanted to get into a government graduate program and missed out, another angle would be to try for an administrative role in government and work your way up. While graduate programs are great, you can experience a very successful career with or without them.

## **3. Unrealistic expectations about the roles you are ready to secure**

Certainly aim high in terms of the roles you apply for however also be realistic and willing to take roles that are relevant to what you are after and that may just offer you a foot in the door and some relevant experience. There are various paths to the same goal so take a strategic approach.

## **4. Failing to create your own job opportunities**

As a graduate you are heading into the unknown. While there are structured job search paths available to you such as graduate programs and entry level roles advertised, it also makes sense to be more adventurous and create your own opportunities where you can. This is done through having a clear sense of the value you bring and the problems you can solve for a particular audience. Then setting about 'selling' yourself into these companies. This could be in the form of voluntary work, project work or as an employee. Careers are no longer linear, and we now talk about ['Chaos Theory of Careers'](#) as defined by Dr. Jim Bright. The theory is not saying we cannot control our careers and that everything is random. It more suggests adopting different strategies to managing our careers. The focus is around planning and looking for opportunities.

## **5. No seeking out the support and listening to advice from others**

When you are starting out you don't know the rules of the game and as a result are learning as you go. It can be lonely and tough. With the support of trusted and experienced people who know how the job market works you can save time and hopefully secure a good role a lot quicker than muddling through on your own. Support could come from career coaches, mentors, family members, family friends, other more recent graduates who have been through the process and networking.

## **6. Unrealistic salary expectations**

While you bring a degree and maybe some relevant work experience, as a graduate the employer is hiring you on your potential and taking a risk! The reality is that a lot of degrees show that you can learn, they don't necessarily qualify you for particularly jobs in the real world – so your degree is valuable in one sense and not so in others. So while in your next roles you certainly will have salary negotiation power based on real live work experience with your first it is unlikely. That said if the prospective employer is not paying you the award or a reasonable salary then it is worth entering into negotiations.

## **7. High grades are not a ticket to employment anymore**

High marks are very important in only a few disciplines and even then these companies are not just focused on IQ alone. More than ever before having great Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is just as important. Someone with reasonable grades and a high EQ is now more attractive than someone with just a higher IQ. Employers desire graduates who have great interpersonal and communication skills, a good attitude, respect for others and an inquisitive and creative mind. These are traditionally thought of as the 'soft skill's however not any longer. These are the personal attributes and skills in demand. Be sure to highlight these in your job applications and throughout the interview process.

## **8. Failing to have a plan**

In a competitive job market you need to have a plan when it comes to securing your first graduate role. While the plan does not need to be set in stone being organised will make the process far less stressful and more likely to get you results. If you are targeting graduate programs, research them and compile a spreadsheet of those you are targeting. List when applications open. Ask about your networks if anyone has any contacts within these firms. Look at roles outside graduate programs that are aligned with what you are after. They may be your plan B however factor them into the equation. As with the graduate programs, make note of the roles and companies of interest. Do your research on them and any networking contacts.

Ensure your CV is tailored to what your after and that your have a compelling written application letter / email. Also ensure that your online profiles are looking professional and current. Without a plan it is easy to lose focus which can result in a lot of time wasting and feeling of helplessness. You can avoid a lot of this by having a plan!

The most important thing to remember is that your first job as a graduate does not necessarily dictate the path your career will ultimately follow. Your career will follow many paths so don't put too much emphasis on getting that one job! For the truth is most jobs will take you great places where you will learn many things and meet lots of amazing people!

**And will you succeed?**

**Yes! You will, indeed!**

**(98 and  $\frac{3}{4}$  per cent guaranteed.)**

Visit [The Ladders](#) for great career articles and resources to assist you in your job search.

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# How to Combat the Fear of Getting Fired

Lack of job security is an unfortunate reality that we all live with. For many of us it can be a cause of great stress and anxiety. There are no 'safe' professions anymore and particularly for those people who value and need security in their worklife, this unsettled world of work we now have can be very challenging.



The post by Susie Moore, ['Five Reasons to Never Fear Getting Fired'](#) may provide some comfort as you trek off to work. I particularly like *point 4 – Something better is waiting*. I cannot agree more with this as next to always when people do find themselves without work they always go on to do something bigger and better that they enjoy a lot more than what they left or were forced to leave.

While fear of lack of job security is going to rear its head now and then, take comfort in the fact that we all go through it and that a lot of this fear is purely just that. The quote "worrying never changed anything" rings so true in this situation.

If you are feeling uneasy about your job security I encourage you to read ['Five Reasons to Never Fear Getting Fired'](#).

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# Status Anxiety & Its Impact on Our Careers

Do you suffer from status anxiety at work? Alain De Botton has done a terrific job in his book 'Status Anxiety' explaining how and why most of us are 'consciously or unconsciously' status orientated in life and work. As the excerpt below from his book clarifies so succinctly.



*"This is a book about an almost universal anxiety that rarely gets mentioned directly: an anxiety about what others think of us; about whether we're judged a success or a failure, a winner or a loser. This is a book about status anxiety. We care about our status for a simple reason: because most people tend to be nice to us according to the amount of status we have (it is no coincidence that the first question we tend to be asked by new acquaintances is 'What do you do?')."*

My interest is how status anxiety relates to our careers – our worklife in fact. I think it starts with our parents. They can have a huge influence over our careers and how we view career status. As adults we tend to hear our parents engaging in job title status related discussions with their friends about how well X,Y, and Z are doing in their careers. There is nothing worse than having to listen to your parents tell you how well your contemporaries are doing on the workfront and or their partners! Worse still when you are unemployed! Many parents seem to want to show how 'successful' their children are and having status orientated job titles and jobs seems to be an effective way of doing this. Unfortunately a great sounding

job title does not equal job happiness – and when do you parents brag to others about your job happiness?

While job titles are not all bad, a negative aspect is that they are a label and labels can be misleading. They can also lead to segregation and all sorts of other negative associations. Job titles can be truly un-helpful in our careers as people may not look too much into the content of the job but rather be swayed by the job title. From resumes to job ads to workplaces – a great sounding job title seems to give you a lot more status and career progression. The content of the job seems to play second fiddle to the title!

While I don't expect this to change anytime soon, I do believe there are a few ways to manage status when it comes to job seeking.

### **What is behind the job title?**

It begins with looking beyond the job title when job seeking and looking at the content of the job ad and position description (if available). Don't be fooled by a great sounding job title or put off by a lame one. Sometimes people don't apply for their dream job because it has been mis-labelled and they think they are over or under qualified. I have seen this occur on a regular basis. If you are not sure, do as much due diligence as you can on and offline around the job. A good place to start is [ONet](#) if you are not sure about certain job types and titles.

### **Selling your achievements**

When job seeking your job title can hold a lot of weight and in those instances when your job title does not reflect the core job and what you have achieved, it is important to include relevant achievements stories. While listing your responsibilities is good, achievement stories have a much greater impact on the reader. If you can flesh out your transferable skills that are aligned with the job you are

targeting and demonstrate these in achievement stories it can help position you better.

## **Job titles**

I certainly don't advocate making up jobs you have done however if your employer has given you a completely obscure or irrelevant job title that is not relevant to what you do, then it is fair to change this to be more aligned with what the general market uses. An ill fitting job title means that recruiters may overlook your experience. So if for example your job title is Accountant and only a small part of what you do is the actual accounting work and the remainder is more operations and staff management, you may be better for example to have either, Operations Manager or a combined Accountant / Operations Management. You could even try to get your employer to change your job title if you have a good business case to do so.

## **Networking**

Networking is important in the job search as a resume cannot do justice to your career to date and where you want it to go and why. This comes through best when you meet with people face to face and they can see your passion and listen first hand to your story. Putting yourself in networking situations that are relevant to what you are targeting on the job front is a must. It avoids the focus being so much on what your current job title is and enables you to talk about what you want to be doing in your next role and what you bring.

At different times throughout our careers, job titles can have both a positive and a negative impact. In those instances where your job title is not working for you (as highlighted above) there are a few things you can do to better position yourself and your career.

Please share your views on status anxiety and how it relates to our careers.

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## Insightful Interview Preparation Questions

It is always a challenge to know what questions to prepare for an interview. It can also seem that the questions asked by the interviewer have no logic or real purpose behind them – this is rarely the case.



I found an insightful post by Yscouts called '[15 Outstanding Executive Interview Questions](#)'. They are a pretty good selection of questions to start from as they give you an explanation as to why they are being asked and therefore what the interviewer is looking for you to respond with.

For example:

***Teach me something I don't already know.***

*A good friend of mine informed me of a brilliant question that is asked from the top heads at Google during the hiring process. The candidate is asked some iteration of, "teach me something I don't already know." The candidate then has to quickly think of something unique on the spot to teach that will effectively portray their intellect and personality.*

### ***What are your goals?***

*I find this question helps me understand what motivates a potential hire and sheds light as to whether she would be a good fit. I am a big believer in 'fit' and this question goes a long way. People draw motivation from different sources, and understanding that from the outset is very helpful in building a successful relationship.*

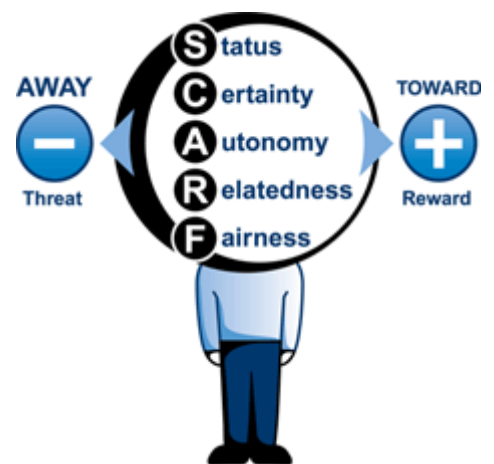
If you are going through the interview process you may find these [15 interview preparation questions](#) very valuable.

What are some of the better interview questions you have asked or been asked?

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## **An introduction to the SCARF model for Career Insights**

HC Online recently ran an article titled, ['Leveraging neuroscience for greater workforce insight part 1: Research and workplace foundations'](#)



I am always fascinated by the topic of neuroscience and was intrigued to learn more from a HR and employee perspective. While having minimal knowledge of the SCARF model developed by Dr David Rock (*which is the basis of the article*), I had not thought enough about how relevant it is to our careers. The

SCARF model offers us personal insights around our drivers to assist us in improving our ability to collaborate with and influence others in the workplace.

The [SCARF model](#) involves five domains of human social experience: Status, Certainty, Autonomy, Relatedness and Fairness.

- **Status** is about relative importance to others.
- **Certainty** concerns being able to predict the future.
- **Autonomy** provides a sense of control over events.
- **Relatedness** is a sense of safety with others – of friend rather than foe.
- **Fairness** is a perception of fair exchanges between people.

In the [HC Online article](#) each of these areas is detailed in full. For example: *Autonomy is defined as providing ‘a sense of control over events’. Allowing personal goal formulation, choice of engagement methods, and empowerment to collaborate beyond a person’s formal/primary role may support autonomy. Additionally, the effectiveness of reporting and the ability to explore career interests and options outside the current role can greatly impact the feeling of autonomy.*

As cited in my last post [‘Trends in the Careers Landscape’](#) ” most people want a degree of autonomy, mastery and purpose in their work, yet many organisations are still working on ‘chain & command’ models from the industrial age.” Using the SCARF model can assist individuals in understanding the degree of autonomy that is important to them in a role and work environment.

While you no doubt have some level of personal insight around each of the these five domains, there is never any harm in clarifying what each of these look likes and reflecting how these impact on our ability to work successfully in teams and our career in general.

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Click the links to learn more about [SCARF](#) and to take the [free SCARF assessment](#)

Note: the assessment is a fairly short questionnaire that provides a percentage weighting for how strongly you feel in relation to each of the five domains. Certainly worth the few minutes it takes to complete.

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## [How to prepare for your next Skype interview](#)


These days more and more people are having Skype interviews for both local and international roles. While general interview preparation is a given, very few people take time to consider the logistics around preparing themselves physically and their environment for the interview.



This great 4 minute YouTube video '[How to Look Good in Skype Interviews – Tips & Training](#)' takes you through some of the logistics and practicalities essential for creating a positive interview impression from the lightening, to your make up (for men & women), optimal camera positioning through to backdrops. The tips include a lot of the things that many people overlook when preparing for a Skype interview. It is certainly worth a view if you have a Skype interview coming up.

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# Recommended Niche, Employer Direct & Not for Profit Job Sites

While there are the big job sites to incorporate into your  job search (*however don't rely too heavily on these*), there are also a great selection of niche job sites to explore for part time, full time, volunteer, committee, board and not for profit sector roles.

I encourage you to branch out if you are looking to make a job or career change or thinking about starting your board career.

[Our Community](#) – *great for board, committee and volunteer roles. I found my last committee role here which was terrific*

[Not for profit jobs](#) – *for a great selection of paid jobs in the nfp sector*

[Pro Bono Australia](#) – *for a mix of paid and unpaid roles and volunteer opportunities*

[Apply Direct](#) – *while recruiters form an essential part of job searching, it is also nice to have a site where you can find a selection of jobs directly from the hiring companies*

[Lifestyle Careers](#) – *a site that has stood the test of time helping those looking for more worklife balance*

[Career Mums](#) – *a great site with lots of jobs and information for women looking for part time and family friendly job opportunities*



The above is a selection of some of the sites that I like, use and recommend. If you have any other great jobs sites please post or send through the details to add to the list.

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## [Discovering Martha Beck](#)

Late last year I came across an article in The New York Times about [Martha Beck](#) titled [‘The Merchant of Just Be Happy’](#) which has since led to a growing fascination with her and her business philosophy.



Martha is a PhD, Harvard educated and spent many years as an academic. With her husband she raised three children and encountered many personal challenges during this time from her own ill health to her middle child being diagnosed in utero with Down syndrome. She has successfully built up a business around ‘Life Coaching’ which she herself says is the closest term to describing her approach to working with clients. Martha is a prolific writer and has made the successful transition from academic to entrepreneur through her life coaching enterprise, [Martha Beck](#). She combines the practical with the spiritual which is perhaps why she has such a great appeal.

Martha has been big in the USA for many years now assisted by her appearances on the Oprah show and writings for the O magazine. From my readings of Martha and watching her TED presentations she truly is a remarkable and inspiring woman who is authentic and simply focussed on helping people to just be happy.

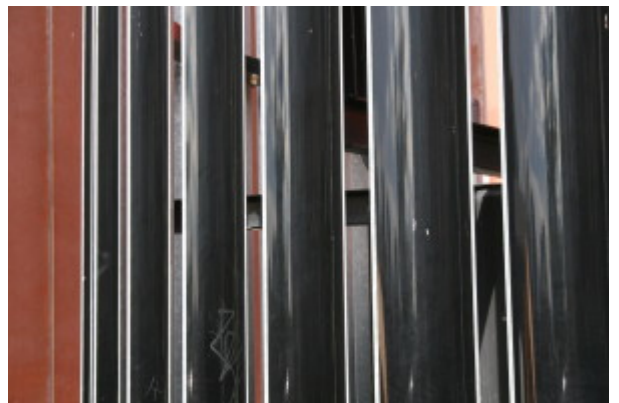
Her philosophy and approach can be encapsulated by the theme *"You will have all the happiness and money you need if you can just find what you're supposed to be doing and do it."* This maybe why I am attracted to Martha's work as I share the same approach in my careers work. My focus is on working with clients to identify what is going to give them the greatest sense of satisfaction and purpose in their worklife and helping them to achieve their career goals.

I have enjoyed discovering [Martha Beck](#) and invite you to take a look.

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## Fear, Bullying and Our Growing Toxic Work Environments

*"I have experienced this fear myself and fully understand what people are saying when they talk about working with this element of fear hovering about each day."*



I have been compelled to write about this topic due to my concern around an ever growing number of people I come into contact with who are experiencing a level of fear in their jobs and who are working in toxic environments.

While we all accept that there is no absolute job security,

most of us expect if we do our jobs well, that we should be able to work with a reasonable level of confidence in our jobs being there tomorrow. Yet it seems that this too has changed. More and more people are going to work carrying this fear that they may not have a job the next day and it has nothing to do with their performance. Rather we are seeing that organisations are not upholding their values -particularly around their people. The bottom line overrides all else. While everyone appreciates organisations need to be profitable, and restructures and mergers are a part of business life, how this is being achieved and the cost to their employee's emotional health and wellbeing is rarely factored in.

My concerns are supported by evidence in the form of recent research by Right Management in the USA that 65% of workers are not satisfied in their jobs. The same statistic was found by Open Universities in Australia that 65% of people are unsatisfied in their jobs. While the reasons for the lack of satisfaction will be varied, the one thing we cannot ignore is that the majority of organisations are not providing environments that people are happy to work in. Something certainly has to change.

I think most of us will agree that the vast majority of people go to work to do a good job. Most people seek out a role that will be satisfying and where they can experience the feeling of doing a good days work. Very few go to work to do a poor job. We all just want to experience a sense of worth from our work. When people are not performing it is best to look at why. While there is a small element of people who are just lazy, most people's work commitment and performance will deteriorate for all sorts of reasons such as fear in turn causing stress and anxiety making it hard to focus, personal reasons, lack of challenge in the role and no career progression and so on.

We are also seeing an increase in the number of bullying claims being made in Australia. ['It appears that bullying](#)

[behaviour is rife in Australian workplaces. A survey of 800 employees by Drake International found that half of the respondents had witnessed bullying and 25 percent had been bullied.](#) Bullying and working in such environments is no doubt a contributing factor as to why people are not happy in their jobs.

Unfortunately when people are coming from a position of fear they can react in all sorts of ways. For some their behaviours may become bully like, which the growing statistic around bullying could be attributed to. Bullying is a real issue as evidenced by a 2012 publication I have been reading called **'Working with Mean Girls'** by Meredith Fuller. It's a great book with the tagline of *"Identifying and protecting yourself from workplace nastiness"*. A sad indictment on the current work environment really!

Clearly it is not healthy for employees to be working in environments where they are constantly fearful if they have a job the next day and are working with and around people who are not coping and displaying negative behaviours towards others. It makes it very difficult to stay focussed, motivated and productive – let alone happy.

I have experienced this fear myself and fully understand what people are saying when they talk about working with this element of fear hovering about each day. Going to work and knowing while doing a good job, this may not be enough because at any point the role could be outsourced or made redundant based on a whim of someone above. Fortunately I have been lucky to date not to have had to work directly with nasty men or women.

So what am I expecting from this post. Given the problem is a massive one I initially want to continue to raise awareness of what is going on. For those people who are experiencing this fear in their workplace – to let them know that you are not alone, it is a growing problem. It is not a sign of weakness

or that you are doing anything wrong, rather it is a signal that there is a major problem within our organisations.

The other objective of this post is to signal to organisations to really start paying attention to the environments you are creating for your employees and the implications. While as said above we all appreciate that organisations need to make money and deliver shareholder returns, you have to question at what cost. How much fear and misery do you want to be causing your staff? Do you want to have a workforce where 65% of them are not happy to be there?

***Please share your views and experiences on the topic.***

Note: for information on bullying, visit [www.bullying.com.au](http://www.bullying.com.au) or go to [Safe Work Australia](#) where you can access information on workplace bullying and a guide on how to manage it.