

Mid-Career Mindset Shifts

to advance your science communication career

Are you getting in your own way?

These mindset shifts may help!

Working and growing alone: Taking an individualistic approach to your career can drive loneliness, isolation, and even wariness about sharing financial, physical, or social resources.

Advance independently, in community: Recognize that you are now in a leadership stage of your career. This shift can inform more collaborative, higher-impact work than may be possible in solo work at earlier career stages. You can also commiserate about mid-career-specific challenges with colleagues.

Assuming your job description, employer, or clients define your skills or scope of career: Limiting your professional sense of self to what you currently do at work; allowing an employer or client to dictate your branding or even future career possibilities.

Re-define your sense of self based on your interests and goals: Use your skillset as a communicator in service to yourself, to articulate your goals and the professional framing that will help you reach them. Then reflect on how that jives with your current work and what you could do to take control of aligning your self-defined and external-facing trajectories.

Doubting your expertise or career stage: Second-guessing whether the challenges you're experiencing or the professional perspectives you have are valid.

Seek out professional community, likely beyond your current workplace: At the mid-career stage and beyond, you may thrive with virtual community and/or a refined professional network. There is distinct value in connecting with people at similar career stages to yours.

Reactively working and scheduling: Spending most of your professional time responding and reacting, allowing others' priorities to dictate how you spend your attention and professional energy.

Map out priorities and proactively schedule: Set your own goals and expectations (accounting for your interests within and beyond your current employment/income situation). Then, as much as possible, block the necessary time into your schedule to prioritize that work first.

Framing your career and current potential around what you've already done: Describing yourself in professional settings, social media, your website, etc., exclusively in relation to your professional (and/or personal) history constrains your future.

Re-frame your professional identity: Make stretch goals based on your expertise, skillset, and where you want to go next. Re-articulate your professional descriptions online, as well as how you introduce yourself in-person, to reflect how ready you are to take your next career steps.

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Tip sheet developed by Madalina Cocea, Marley Jarvis, Bethann Garramon Merkle & Virginia Schutte

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