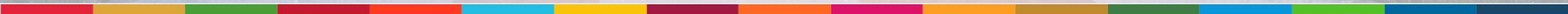




Habits under Pressure: working more intentionally

How to move from reactive patterns to deliberate action



Today's presenter/panel/facilitator



Alison Osborne

HR Officer

World health Organization



Sara Canna

Team Lead

World Health Organization

House Keeping Rules

You are muted by default. The chat function is disabled.

If you have any questions, please submit them through **Zoom Q&A button**.

The session will be **recorded**. The recording and presentation will be available on: [Inter-Agency Career Week 2026 webpage](#)



Due to the large number of participants in this session, we might not be able to respond to all of your questions.

Thank you for your understanding.

What is your current
level of job satisfaction?





Reflect and write down 3-5 things you are grateful for in your work today

What rating would you
give it now?





What has your work felt like recently?

- Reactive?
- Stretched?
- Focused?
- Purposeful?



Most of us are not struggling because we lack motivation

We are dealing with:

- constant information
- constant decisions
- constant responsiveness
- competing priorities

The result:

We start working reactively instead of intentionally



Under pressure, habits do not disappear.

They become:

- Faster
- Automatic
- unconscious

Most habits under pressure are not about performance

**They are
designed
for
protection.**



PROTECTIVE PATTERNS

Common habits under pressure:



- Over-preparing
- People-pleasing
- Avoiding difficult conversations
- Overthinking
- Constant busyness
- Seeking validation
- Taking on too much

These patterns are not weaknesses
- They are intelligent adaptations -



Your system is trying to:

- avoid risk
- maintain safety
- protect your position
- reduce discomfort

In your experience, what happens when these habits take over?

Go to www.menti.com
Enter code: 6187 6673

What typically happens is:



- reduced clarity
- slower decision-making
- less strategic thinking
- lower energy
- hidden frustration

From Survival Strategies to Leadership Strategies

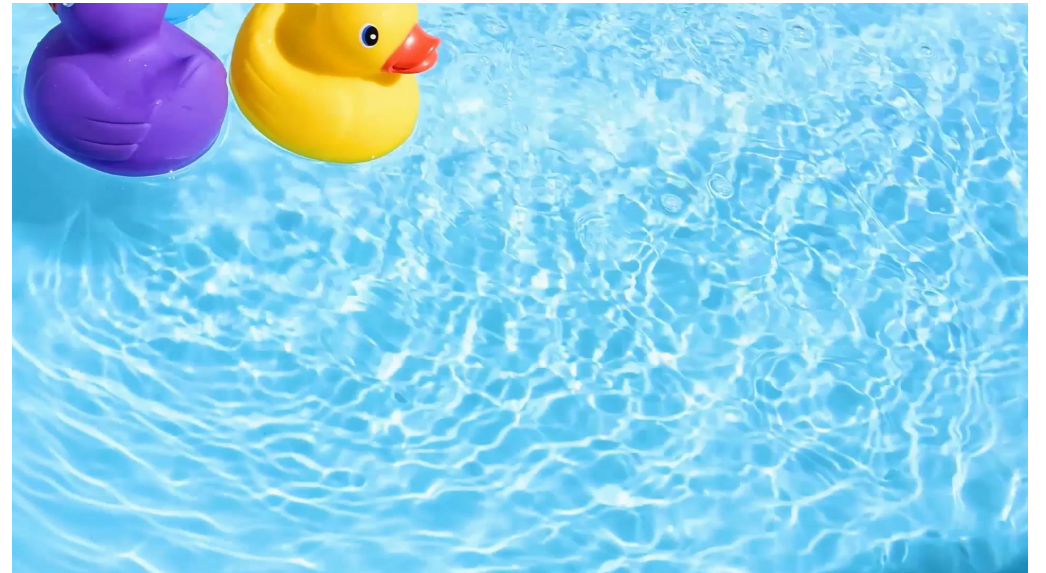
People-pleasing → diluted authority, exhaustion
Over-preparation → perfectionism over progress
Boundary fuzziness → resentment, blurred team accountability
Over-responsibility → disempowering others, isolation, lack of collaboration
Seeking validation → Reactive decision-making
Conflict avoidance → Surface harmony, hidden tension
Over-analysis → Paralysis, loss of agility
Chronic busyness → No strategic thinking space
Self-criticism → Fear-based leadership, micromanagement

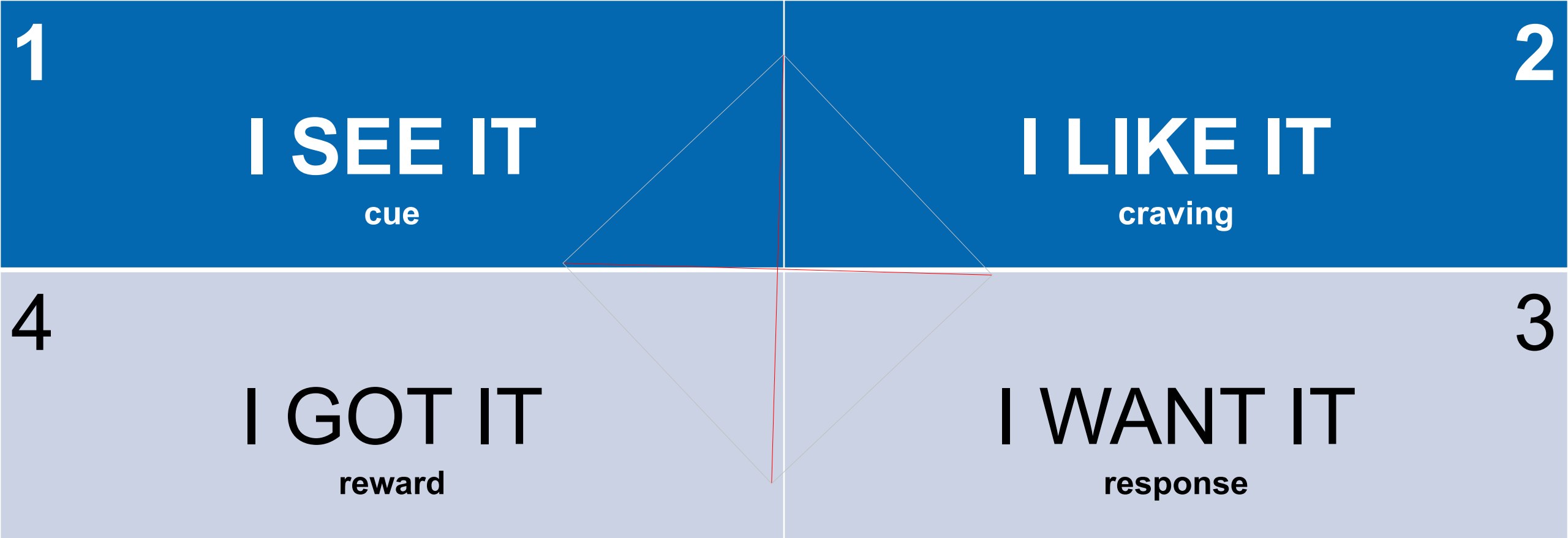


So the question is not: am I motivated enough?



The real question is:
What habits are directing
the show when I am under
pressure?





Rewiring the Brain

- Change isn't just psychological - it's biological
- Every repetition reinforces a new neural pathway
- Motivation follows action
- It gets easier with practice - until it is automatic
- It can also start with discipline, not just awareness
- Consistency not intensity is the key



Small changes

Over time

Big Impact



Confidence

- Discipline is the highest form of self-respect
- Each small action builds self-trust
- Confidence is evidence, not affirmation
- Do hard things → rewire your identity
- Easy dopamine fades - hard dopamine fulfills
- Intrinsic motivation = freedom



SELF
TRUST

Mini Habits That Shift the Career Needle

1. Habits that build calm & focus
2. Habits that build courage & action
3. Habits that build connection & joy

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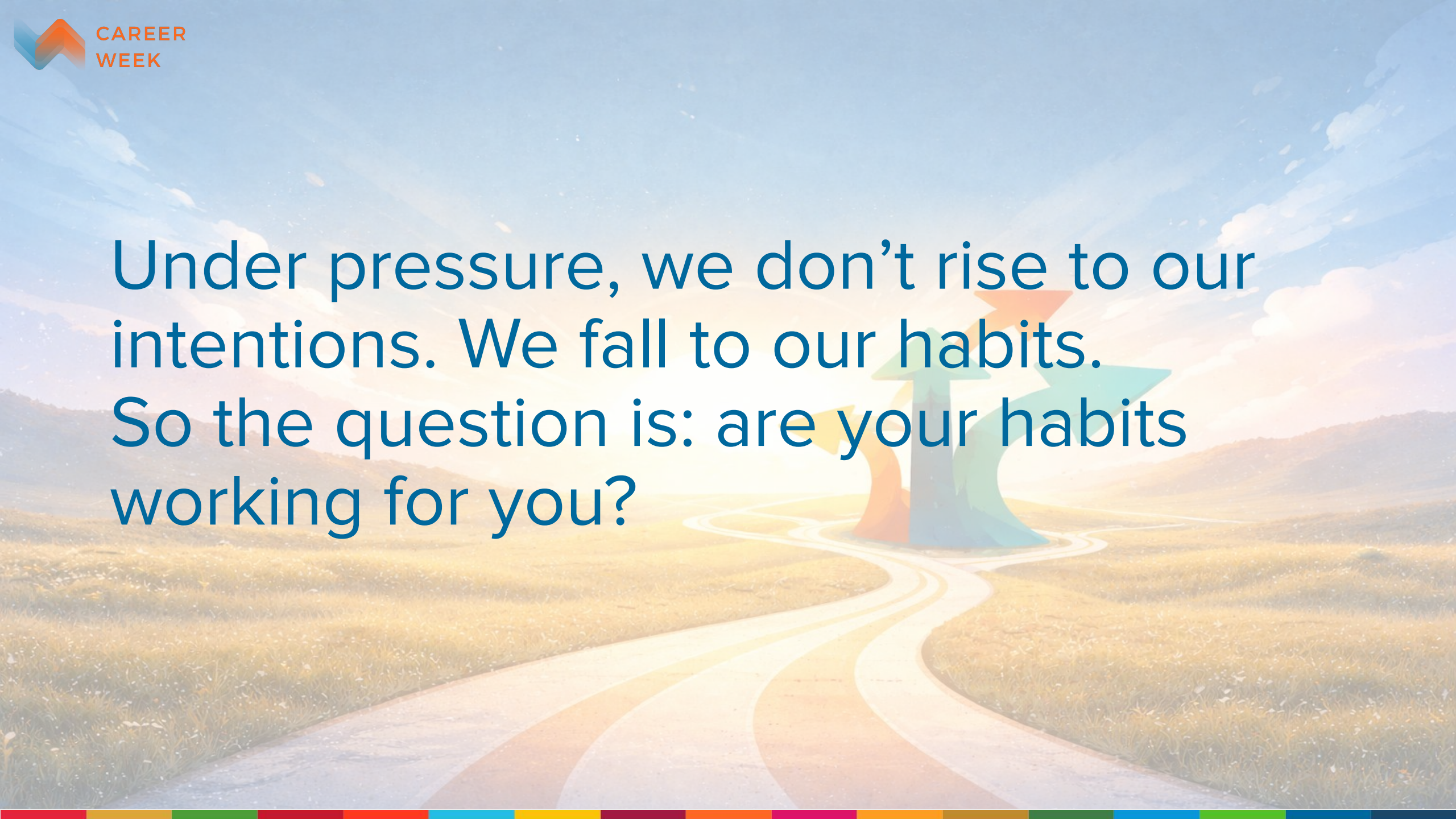
Mini Habits That Shift the Needle

- 2-minute breath
- I'll decide tomorrow,
- saying no with kindness
- Speaking up with care
- Pausing before responding
- Digital boundaries
- Naming your 'parts'
- Feedback not failure
- What would I do if I wasn't scared?
- Connecting with self
- Allowance for intuition
- Space for something else
- Confidence, integrity
- Clarity on goals
- Headspace and focus
- Self compassion
- Growth mindset & enjoying the journey
- Creativity & purpose
- Building your network



Habit Hacks: how to add what matters

- Why?
- Anchor
- Shrink It
- Rewards
- Reminders
- Self talk audit
- Track it
- Rehearse success
- Structure - not motivation
- Consistency not intensity



Under pressure, we don't rise to our intentions. We fall to our habits. So the question is: are your habits working for you?

- Lally, P. et al. (2010). *How are habits formed? European Journal of Social Psychology.*
- Duhigg, C. (2012). *The Power of Habit.* Random House.
- Clear, J. (2018). *Atomic Habits.*
- Fogg, B.J. (2019). *Tiny Habits.*
- Deci, E. & Ryan, R. (1985). *Self-Determination Theory.*
- Duckworth, A. (2016). *Grit.*
- Imai, M. (1986). *Kaizen: The Key to Japan's Competitive Success.*
- Palmer & O'Riordan (2016). *INSIGHT Model for Resilience*

Inter- Agency Career Week 2026 Agenda

04 - 08 May

	Monday, 04 May	Tuesday, 05 May	Wednesday, 06 May	Thursday, 07 May	Friday, 08 May
03:00-04:00 (New York) 09:00-10:00 (Europe) 10:00-11:00 (Nairobi) 14:00-15:00 (Bangkok)	Pres (E) - From the UN to the Private Sector: Skills that enable Career Transition	Pres (E) Thriving in Uncertainty	Pres (E) - Career Trend Coaching: Preparing for What's Next	Pres (E) - Habits under Pressure: working more intentionally	Pres (E) Behavioural Science for Career Development: Evidence-Based Steps for Action
04:30-05:30 (New York) 10:30-11:30 (Europe) 11:30-12:30 (Nairobi) 15:30-16:30 (Bangkok)	PD (E) - Inside the Recruiter's Mind: How Hiring Really Works in the UN and Beyond	Pres (E) - From Sat Nav to Compass: Navigating Your Career in a Changing UN System	Pres (E) - Upskilling for the Future: How to Stay Marketable Inside and Beyond the UN	Pres (E) - Becoming a UN Volunteer; What is in it for you? The Hidden Benefits of Volunteering.	PD (E) - Beyond the UN Blue: Navigating Your Career Transition to Other IGOs
06:00-07:00 (New York) 12:00-13:00 (Europe) 13:00-14:00 (Nairobi) 17:00-18:00 (Bangkok)	PD (E) - Talent on the Move: Growing your career through mobility	Clinic (F) - Recherche d'emploi optimisée par l'IA : éthique, sécurisée et tournée vers l'avenir	Clinic (E) - AI for Your Career: Practical Tools and Prompts for Career Management	Pres (E) - Leading from Within	Pres (F) - Réussir les entretiens basés sur les compétences : un guide avec des conseils pratiques pour se préparer
07:30-08:30 (New York) 13:30-14:30 (Europe) 14:30-15:30 (Nairobi) 18:30-19:30 (Bangkok)	Clinic (E) - Mapping Your Motivators for Career Choices	Pres (E) - Mapping Professional Achievements to Job Application and Interview	Pres (E) - Breaking Down Job Descriptions	Pres (E) - What remains when everything changes: A Counselling Framework for global nomad staff facing adversity and transition	Pres (E) - The skills shift: What skills-based hiring and AI agents might mean for a UN career
09:00-10:00 (New York) 15:00-16:00 (Europe) 16:00-17:00 (Nairobi) 20:00-21:00 (Bangkok)	Pres (E) - Your Career, Your Conversation	Pres (E) - Strengthening Your Adaptability Muscles - AQ: The Adaptability Quotient	Pres (E) - Managing Your Saboteurs: Removing Barriers to Your Career Growth	Pres (E) - Use Your Strengths to Boost Your Career	Pres (E) - Activating Inner Resources in Uncertain Times
10:30-11:30 (New York) 16:30-17:30 (Europe) 17:30-18:30 (Nairobi) 21:30-22:30 (Bangkok)	Pres (E) - A Mind-Blowing Tour of AI Tools to Accelerate Your Career	Pres (E) - From Sat Nav to Compass: Navigating Your Career in a Changing UN System	Pres (S) - Construye tu Asistente de Carrera con IA	Pres (E) - Building a winning profile from application to interview	Pres (E) - Mentoring 2.0: From Top-Down to All-Around
13:00-14:00 (New York) 19:00-20:00 (Europe) 20:00-21:00 (Nairobi) 00:00-01:00 ⁻¹ (Bangkok)	Pres (F) - Opportunités de carrière aux Nations Unies pour les jeunes professionnels et conseils pour réussir sa candidature.	PD (E) - Thriving Globally - The human side of relocation	Pres (E) - Career Development: How you can turn a Psychosocial Hazard into a Thriving Strategy	Pres (E) - Youth Engagement: Put in Practice! (Young Talents in the UN System)	Pres (E) - Working for Justice
14:30-15:30 (New York) 20:30-21:30 (Europe) 21:30-22:30 (Nairobi) 01:30 ⁻¹ -02:30 ⁻¹ (Bangkok)	Pres (E) - Navigating Competency-Based Interviews: A Practical Preparation Guide	Pres (S) - Entrevistas basadas en competencias: guía práctica de preparación	Clinic (S) - Desarrollo de habilidades y redes profesionales a través de la mentoría		

