



Women, your labour market needs you!

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A report published by the Fawcett Society this week tells us that women are being disproportionately impacted in the labour market, with unemployment amongst women standing at a 25 year high. This is contrasted with a decrease in unemployment amongst men over the last 2 and a half years.

The result is thought to be due to a combination of job cuts in the public sector (which employs a 65% female workforce), and an increased number of women being classified as unemployed due to recent changes in benefit conditions for single parents. Furthermore, growth opportunities have been seen in the private sector in 'male-dominated' industries and the private sector is often seen as less attractive option for women, where the gender pay gap is larger and companies typically offer less flexible working and part time opportunities and inferior maternity benefits.

This might be a concerning read if you're a woman currently seeking employment or considering the next step in your career. Well these are the (admittedly rather depressing) statistics and they do confirm what we already knew- there is further work to be done to help women to achieve an equal position in the workplace. What can you do today to give yourself the best chance of achieving the life you want in the current climate?

1. **Plan for success:** ever heard the saying that everything worth having is worth fighting for? Well, to achieve your perfect life, you're going to need to put in the hard graft to get there.
2. **Create your vision:** Your first step is to decide what you want. What is your vision of your future? Close your eyes and imagine your day in your new life, where are you, who are you with, are you inside or outside? What clothes are you wearing? How does a typical day play out? Think more broadly about your ideal life, what else does it include aside from your work?
3. **Focus on your strengths and values:** Forget gender stereotypes and focus on your strengths and values. Getting the opportunity to use your strengths and align your work with your values will help you to find work that is both engaging and rewarding. Need some help identifying your values? What areas of the paper do you flick to first, which section of the bookstore draws you in, what issues are you passionate, ask a trusted friend for their view of you.
4. **Define your goals:** now that you have a clear vision of where you want to be, you need to pin this down into actionable goal. Keep your goals SMART: Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound.
5. **Put it into action:** This is going to be the toughest part, you are going to lose motivation and will probably suffer a few knock-backs along the way, prepare for this. Schedule short-, medium- and long-term actions and reward yourself when you achieve these. Recording your progress in an action plan will give you a visual representation of what you have achieved and will give you the motivation to keep going.