



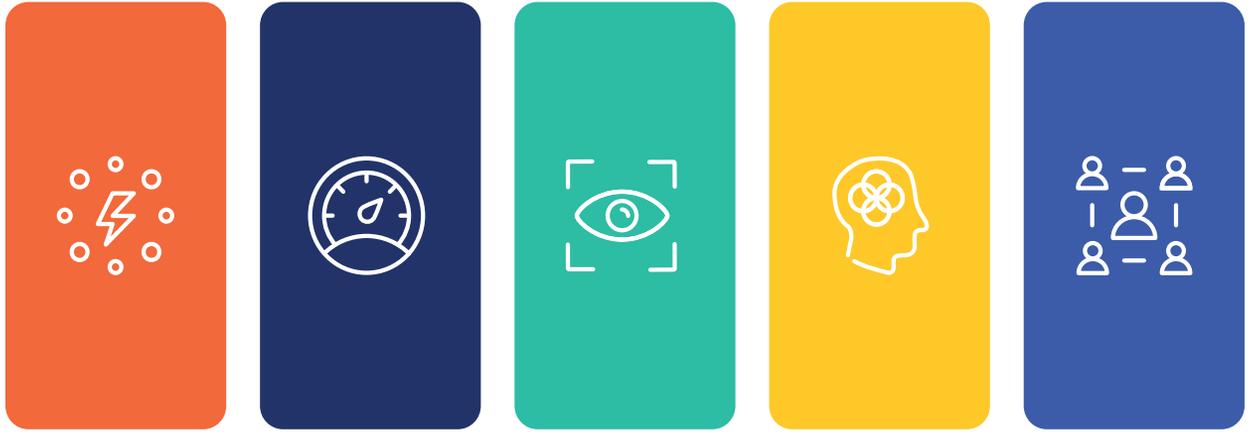
Mastering Resilience

FUTURE FOCUS TOOLKIT



Introduction

Wraw is founded on the 5 Pillars of Resilience, a validated and evidence-based model, offering a holistic view of five key elements that support wellbeing:



ENERGY Sustaining and renewing physical energy to have the capacity to keep going through challenging times.

FUTURE FOCUS Having a clear sense of purpose and direction to help to move forwards without getting stuck or feeling held back.

INNER DRIVE Sustaining self-belief when times get tough, displaying confidence, motivation and perseverance.

FLEXIBLE THINKING Having an open and optimistic mindset, enabling a positive and adaptive response to change and challenges.

STRONG RELATIONSHIPS Building open and trusting relationships, and being willing to call on these for help and support if facing a challenge.

We hope you enjoy working through the exercises and reflections in the Energy Toolkit. There is a Toolkit for each of the 5 Pillars.



The Future Focus Pillar

It's much easier to feel resilient when you have a sense of purpose and direction, when you know where you want to go and have an idea of how you're going to get there. Often when we're not feeling resilient, it's because we feel stuck in the present. We've got a problem or issue and we can't see a way out or we're simply not happy with our lot – we feel a bit rudderless, without a real sense of purpose and meaning in our lives.

Our future focus draws on our sense of purpose and direction. It's much easier to feel resilient when we know where we want to go and have ideas of how we're going to get there. Having a clear future focus helps us move forward, whether in a work or home environment.

This pillar is about focusing on the future; thinking about where you want to be next week, next month, next year, in three years' time and so on – and why. Why is that important to you? Note also, it's about you. Often relationship issues stem from unfulfilled dreams and ambitions. We tend to subsume our own wants and needs for others – kids, partners, elderly parents, bosses – we don't take the time to make them happen. But they're important.





Purpose

Having a clear sense of purpose and direction



Personal Control

The degree of personal control you seek and believe you have over your situation

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Future focus is a very important aspect of resilience. Future focus enables us to see beyond the here and now. Having a purpose and meaning motivates us to find solutions to everyday problems, cope with major life challenges and embrace change. When we know what it is we want and we set goals, it gives us hope – not blind hope but what we call realistic optimism – and therefore the motivation, drive and energy to think big, overcome hurdles and excel in our lives.

Future Focus comprises two key areas: purpose and personal control.



PURPOSE AND RESILIENCE

Understanding what's important to us, and why, can enhance our capacity to deal with adversity and setbacks. Aligning what we do with our values can provide a sense of congruence, helping us to remain focused when times are tough.

Our values inform our moral compass: in other words, our sense of what's right and wrong. Having a clear purpose affords a sense of direction, meaning that we are better able to prioritise our efforts and channel our strengths, even during times of challenge.

A sense of purpose which is aligned with our values can provide us with a 'buffer' against physiological and psychological stress.

Studies show that that workers who express a sense of purpose in their work and other activities may be more resilient during an organisational crisis than those workers who do not.

Source: S. Maddi, "Hardiness training at Illinois Bell telephone," Health Promotion Evaluation, 1987.

Research shows that thinking about personal values can reduce perceptions of threat and the defensive response to these, as well as decrease rumination after failure.

Source: Source: A. Masten and M. Wright, "Resilience over the lifespan: Developmental perspectives on resistance, recovery, and transformation." 2009, pp. 213–237.



PERSONAL CONTROL AND RESILIENCE

During times of flux or change, establishing a sense of personal control can restore clarity and calm. When we are able to clearly identify what is realistically within our personal control, we are less likely to spend valuable time and energy trying to influence or change what is outside our current reach. When we direct our efforts and energies into what we can influence or change, to improve our situation, we feel more resourceful.

Research shows that those individuals who demonstrate a strong sense of personal control are more able to navigate challenge and respond positively to adversity.

Source: P.C. Winwood, R. Colon, K. McEwen, A practical measure of workplace resilience: Developing the Resilience at Work Scale, Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, 2013.

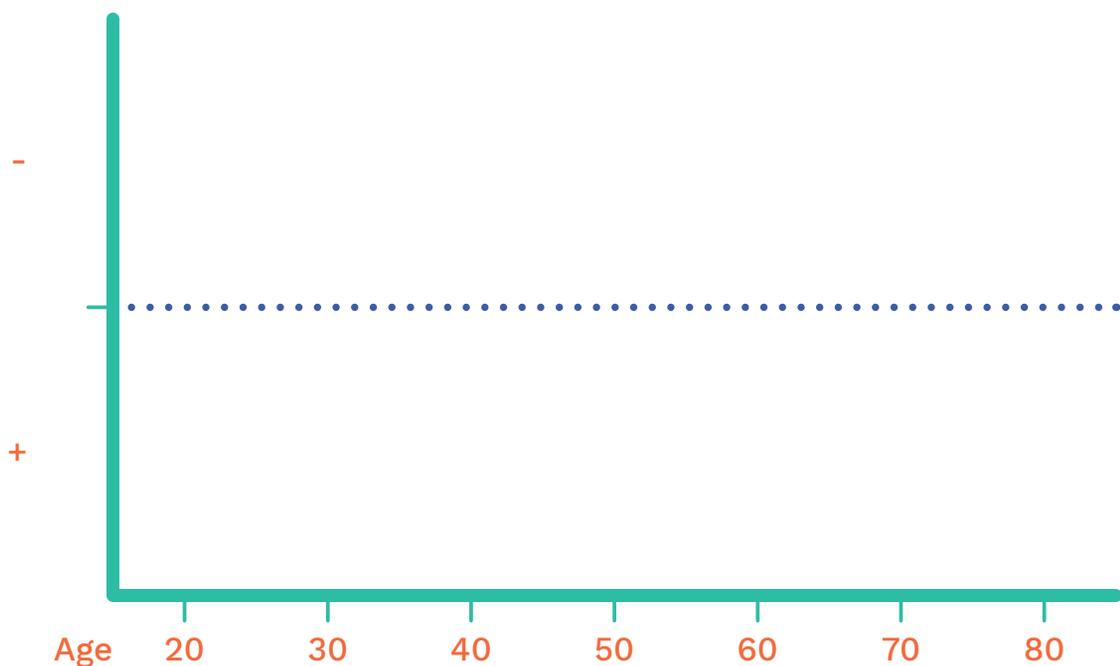
PRACTICAL EXERCISES

EXERCISE 1A – CAREER LIFELINE REFLECTION

In this reflection exercise, take a bird's eye view of your career to date. The purpose is to identify patterns that will help you to create a future career focus that is based on what you want for the next phase of your life.

Activity

Using the timeline below, take a moment to consider your career to date: Plot the highs and lows of your professional journey, including each position you have held. Think about the skills, experiences and challenges that accompanied each role.



Looking over your career line, use the following prompts to explore and reflect:

- In which roles did you feel most motivated?
- What do you see as your greatest strengths? When were your skills best utilised?
- What do you see as your greatest limitations? When were you most challenged?
- Where did you have the greatest impact?
- When did you learn the most?
- How did each fit (or not) into your larger developmental plan?



EXERCISE 1B – IDENTIFYING PATTERNS

When you have done that, consider these questions:

- Looking through your career lifeline, can you identify any patterns?
- As you look ahead, what would you want to have in place?
- What one or two areas could be goals for your future focus?

The answers to the above questions can help you to build a picture of what's important to you and why. You can also start to understand your inherent strengths and how you can leverage these to exercise greater control over events and situations both now and in the future. You may also notice that there are some recurring themes – either positive or negative – and being aware of these will support greater selfawareness. Consider how you can use this knowledge to reflect on and plan your approach going forward.



EXERCISE 2A – DEFINING YOUR VALUES

What do you value in life? Sounds like a big question doesn't it, but it's a really important one to stop and think about. Sometimes we're all so busy on the treadmill of life that we don't actually stop to think if what we're doing is actually rewarding, or if it's what we want to be doing at all.

Activity

Take a few moments to write down the top five things you value most in your life: the things that give you most purpose and meaning. These might be family members, friends, home, work, study, holidays, playing a sport, health, religion etc.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

When you've done this, think about what you value most about these things. So, for example, if number 1 was your relationship with your partner, the things you value most in that relationship might be loyalty, honesty, love, friendship, intimacy etc.

Here's an example of how you might approach this activity:

Most important things in my life	What i value most about them
1. Partner	Being loyal, supportive and loving
2. Friends	Being caring, a good listener and fun
3. Work	Being loyal, hard-working and a team player
4. Study	Learning, growing, meeting new people
5. Holidays	Exploring, relaxing, re-connecting

Now have a go at your own:

Most important things in my life	What i value most about them

Don't worry if you find this quite hard initially. It's probably not something you can complete straightaway as it requires some reflection and consideration. However, it's the start of a process of thinking about what's important to you, so treat it as work in progress and keep coming back to it, adding to it and refining it until you feel you've really captured both aspects.

Building clarity around our values can help us make informed decisions as to how we channel our energy and remain focused, even when under pressure.



EXERCISE 2B – UNDERSTANDING WHAT’S IMPORTANT

Another good exercise along similar lines is to think forward in time to a big birthday, such as your 70th or 80th, or to a set point in the future, such as your retirement. Imagine your friends, colleagues and family members – what will they admire about you? How do you want to be remembered? What lasting impression will you have made on others, and why?

Activity

Consider a key point of time in the future and how you would like to be thought of - maybe write a few ideas down here. It definitely tends to focus the mind on what’s really important to you.

Finally, having been through all these exercises, can you determine what your top five values are? Did you notice patterns across different areas in your life? Did some really resonate with you when you thought about them and wrote them down? Which ones re-appeared on your headstone or in your eulogy?

The appendix at the back of this toolkit might offer some ideas and vocabulary to help you to shape your list.



My top five values are:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

EXERCISE 2C – REVIEWING YOUR VALUES

So now you know what your top five values are in life, which is a really important starting-point.

Our values are like the touchstones in our lives. They're our moral compass, if you like. They mean a lot to us and are an incredibly important part of our lives; we often expect everyone else to hold them in the same regard, however we all have different core values and hence different priorities.

Often when we are feeling at our least resilient it will be because we are not living in accordance with our values; that for whatever reason we are compromising them.

Example: Anita had been unhappy in her job for several years and couldn't work out why. Eventually she realised that she was having to compromise her core values pretty much every day of her life. She applied for a transfer, changed business units and subsequently never looked back!

Activity

Having determined what your core values are, it can be really useful to think about where in your life you're living them to the full and where in your life you're compromising them. Think back to the most important areas of your life that you identified earlier, plus any others that spring to mind, and be quite specific.

My top five values	Living to the full	Compromising

- How did you do? Are there certain values you're compromising more than others?
- Are there certain areas in your life where you're able to live according to your values and other areas which keep appearing in the compromise boxes? What does this tell you?

When you've had time to thoroughly review and reflect on your answers, come up with some specific actions you can take to enable you to live more in accordance with your values and to compromise them less often. When you do, you'll be amazed by how much more resilient and resourceful you feel.

EXERCISE 3A – GOAL SETTING

Renowned NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) expert and author, Robert Dilts, defines a goal as “a tangible expression of your values” and this is certainly what your most motivating and potentially rewarding goals will be, hence why we started this pillar looking at your values.

Goal-setting is a really important element of future focus, especially when the goals are aligned with our values. Goals help us prioritise what’s important to us, give our lives a sense of meaning and purpose, and show us where we want to focus our limited time, attention and resources. Moreover, they give us the motivation, momentum and energy to persist in making improvements to our lives and driving positive change.

Another definition of a goal is as follows:

“A condition or state to be brought about by a course of action.”

Thus, critically, goal-setting isn’t just about the end goal, it’s also about the journey or the process and the actions you take in order to get you there.

Activity

Having reviewed all the work you completed in the earlier exercises, think about a goal you’d really like to work on; one that will make a major difference in your life. As you formulate your goal, have a quick read of the top tips for goal-setting below:

Setting great goals:

1. Make it positive i.e. something you want rather than don’t want

- ✓ I want to be more confident
- ✗ I want to stop feeling anxious in meetings

2. Ensure it is about you and not somebody else

- ✓ I want to improve my relationship with my boss
- ✗ I want my boss to stop bullying me

3. Make it something that is within your control

- ✓ I want to achieve all my objectives so I secure my bonus
- ✗ I want a pay rise

4. Make sure it’s stretching but achievable

- ✓ I want to weigh 10 stone
- ✗ I want to look like Kate Moss!

5. Be sure to put a deadline on it or make it time-specific

- ✓ I want to be in contact with my best mate at least once a week
- ✗ I want to be in more regular contact with my best mate



Make a note of your goal below:



EXERCISE 3B – VISUALISATION

Setting clear and realistic goals, which are aligned to your values, is a great way to power your future focus. Making sure these become a reality will require motivation. A really good way to motivate yourself to achieve your goal is to visualise yourself doing it. Most athletes and sportsmen use what they call ‘mental rehearsal’ and as World Champion golfer Jack Nicklaus once said:

“I never hit a shot, not even in practice, without having a very sharp in-focus picture of it in my head.”

There’s no single theory as to why visualisation works so well but neuroscience has shown that the brain cannot differentiate between what is real and what is imagined. Thus, when you simply imagine performing a task to the best of your ability, the relevant parts of the brain and hence the neural pathways are still activated. The brain and body are acting as if you were really doing it and you tap into a system that triggers biochemicals, making you feel happy, rewarded and confident.

A number of studies have been undertaken over the years including one in 2004 where scientists divided 30 volunteers into two groups. One group did physical training of their little finger for 15 minutes, five days a week over 12 weeks. The other group simply imagined doing it. Whilst the main group increased their muscle strength by 53%, the group who simply imagined they did it still increased their muscle strength by 35% even though they had undertaken no additional physical activity!

So now you know it works, try it out on your own goal.

I will know when I have achieved my goal because

I will see

I will hear

I will feel

My life will be different because



EXERCISE 3C – IMAGINARY HINDSIGHT

Now you've got a strong sense of what it will be like to achieve your goal, it can be useful to imagine how you got there.

Looking back from where you are now, having achieved your goal, what did you do to get there? What steps or actions did you take and what behaviours did you change? What were your milestones? It's important when you do this exercise to stay mentally in the future looking back, having already achieved your goal.

Sometimes goals, and especially long-term goals, can feel a bit far off and thus a bit unreal and potentially unachievable. Chunking down how you achieved the goal and what your mini goals and milestones were helps to make it feel more within your grasp and provides you with a clear pathway forward.

Here's another example by way of illustration:

The goal that you have visualised achieving is: I weigh 10 stone in three months' time.

With Imaginary Hindsight you have identified the following steps/milestones that helped you reach this goal:

1. Planned meals and bought healthy food – week 1
2. Signed up for regular exercise class with friend – week 2
3. Started walking to work every day – week 3
4. Hit 10st 7lbs - week 4
5. Started to take healthy lunches into work – week 5
6. Started having an earlier supper in the evening – week 6
7. Hit 10st 4 lbs. – week 8

And so on.

There's no set number of steps/milestones.

ACTIVITY

Incorporating the visualisation process above, take your own goal and imagine you've reached it - note down what you did, by when, in order to achieve it.

My goal:

My steps/milestones:

By drawing on a combination of visualisation and imaginary hindsight, you can effectively draw up your own personal action plan.



EXERCISE 3D – YOUR SUPPORTERS

Finally, a really good thing to do is to think about who will support you on your journey and how they will do it.

Is it your line manager giving you feedback? A friend to do things with? Your partner to give you encouragement?

ACTIVITY

Once again, just think about your own goal. Who will be your most valuable supporters and how can they best help you?

Supporter	How they can help

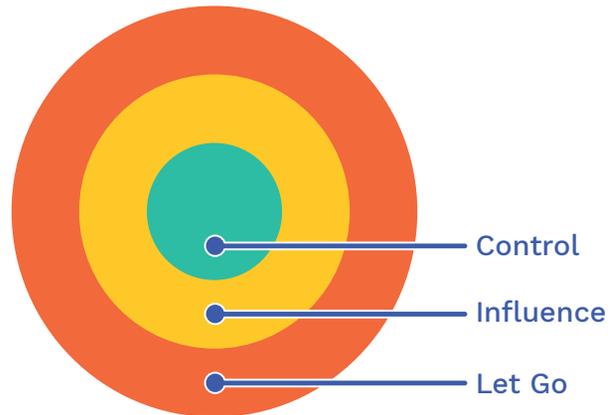
Then be sure to let them know their role!

With all these elements in place you are now in a position to create really motivating, intrinsically rewarding goals that you are highly likely to achieve and that will make a massive difference to your life.

EXERCISE 4 – CONTROL, INFLUENCE OR LET GO?

One of the typical ways we waste our energy with negative thinking is dwelling on things or trying to change things over which we have little or no control.

In Stephen Covey's highly-acclaimed book 'The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People' he states that positive, proactive people who recognise they are responsible (responseable) for their actions focus primarily on their circles of control and influence and let go of other concerns.



ACTIVITY

For this next exercise, write down three things that are causing you concern right now.

1.
2.
3.

Then identify where they sit on your circle of influence:

- If you think it's something over which you have a lot of control, put a 'C' by it.
- If it's something you don't control but feel you can influence, put an 'I' by it
- If it's something about which you have little control/influence, put an 'L' by it.

If you put a 'C' or an 'I' by the area of concern, come up with three specific actions you can take in the near future and put a timeline against them, i.e. when you will do them by. If you put an 'L' against any of them, well it's time to stop wasting your energy, let it go and consider a different response (see our Case Study on next page).

Concern No. 1

Actions	By when
1.	
2.	
3.	

Concern No. 2

Actions	By when
1.	
2.	
3.	

Concern No. 3

Actions	By when
1.	
2.	
3.	



CASE STUDY

A brother was finding he was feeling extremely angry and frustrated by his sister's situation. She was going through a divorce (filed by her husband) and the proceedings leading up to the separation and divorce were very acrimonious. He called her regularly as he knew she needed his support but every time they spoke all they talked about was how wrong and unfair the turn of events was and what a horrible guy the ex-husband was. Unsurprisingly the call rarely made either of them feel better about the situation as all they focused on were the negatives.

One day the brother decided to try a different tack. He realised that these conversations were pretty futile and that he was allowing the situation to dominate his thoughts and his life. Ultimately he had no control over the divorce and it wasn't even happening to him personally, it was happening to his sister! However, he found it very hard to simply 'let go' as he was so emotionally involved. He therefore decided to change his response to the situation which he knew would help him to feel more in control again.

The next time he rang his sister he empathised with her situation but didn't allow the conversation to spiral downwards again. He offered practical support arranging to take her out for lunch somewhere nice, offering to look after the kids one evening so she could go out with her friends and have a laugh and reminding her that in a year's time this would all be over, and she would be able to plan a better future for herself and the children.

When he came off the phone, he felt totally different. By changing his response, becoming more pragmatic and recognising what he could influence and control, he had let go of the anger and frustration and would prove to be a far greater support for his sister.



Top tips for strengthening your future focus

- Set personal and professional goals – what do you want to be different in your life and by when?
- Ensure your goals are aligned with your values and designed to improve your sense of meaning and purpose in life.
- Use visualisation techniques to help your future focus. What will it be like when you achieve your goal? What will you see/hear/feel when you get there? What will be different in your life?
- Create milestones for your goals – mini goals if you like – which act as stepping stones and way-markers so you can measure your progress and maintain motivation.
- Drawing pictures, writing things down or talking things through often helps you express your ideas and goals more clearly, whilst making them more tangible too.

SUMMARY

Future focus is an incredibly important element of resilience. What is it that we want in the future? What gives purpose and meaning to what we do? With constant change we can lose our sense of future focus as circumstances shift and fluctuate around us. Setting goals helps us think about what's important in the here and now, review how we're doing in those areas, adapt and make changes for the better. At the same time, building an understanding of what we can control and what we can actually make happen, can bring us greater clarity and direction. We can channel our efforts and resources more effectively. Moreover, when what we're looking to achieve is aligned with our core values, this gives us a real sense of purpose and meaning, feeding our Inner Drive – the name we've given to our next pillar, pillar 3.

Appendix

VALUES LIST

Accountability	Discipline	Honour	Rigour
Accuracy	Discretion	Humility	Security
Achievement	Diversity	Independence	Self-actualization
Adventurousness	Dynamism	Ingenuity	Self-control
Altruism	Economy	Inner Harmony	Selflessness
Ambition	Effectiveness	Inquisitiveness	Self-reliance
Assertiveness	Efficiency	Insightfulness	Sensitivity
Balance	Elegance	Intelligence	Serenity
Being the best	Empathy	Intellectual Status	Service
Belonging	Enjoyment	Intuition	Shrewdness
Boldness	Enthusiasm	Joy	Simplicity
Calmness	Equality	Justice	Soundness
Carefulness	Excellence	Leadership	Speed
Challenge	Excitement	Legacy	Spontaneity
Cheerfulness	Expertise	Love	Stability
Clear-mindedness	Exploration	Loyalty	Strategic
Commitment	Expressiveness	Making A Difference	Strength
Community	Fairness	Mastery	Structure
Compassion	Faith	Merit	Success
Competitiveness	Family-orientedness	Obedience	Support
Consistency	Fidelity	Openness	Teamwork
Contentment	Fitness	Order	Temperance
Continuous Improvement	Fluency	Originality	Thankfulness
Contribution	Focus	Patriotism	Thoroughness
Control	Freedom	Perfection	Thoughtfulness
Cooperation	Fun	Piety	Timeliness
Correctness	Generosity	Positivity	Tolerance
Courtesy	Goodness	Practicality	Traditionalism
Creativity	Grace	Preparedness	Trustworthiness
Curiosity	Growth	Professionalism	Truth-seeking
Decisiveness	Happiness	Prudence	Understanding
Democracy	Hard Work	Quality-orientation	Uniqueness
Dependability	Health	Reliability	Unity
Determination	Helping Society	Resourcefulness	Usefulness
Devoutness	Holiness	Restraint	Vision
Diligence	Honesty	Results-oriented	Vitality



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The Career Lifeline activity is taken from (and slightly modified) Happy at Work, by Sophie Rowan (Prentice Hall, 2007).

The Resilience Factor: 7 Keys to Finding Your Inner Strength and Overcoming Life's Hurdles, by Karen Reivich (Broadway Books, 2003).

The Resiliency Advantage, by Al Siebert, PhD (BK Publishers Inc, 2005).

The Inner Game of Work: Overcoming Obstacles for Maximum Performance, by Timothy Gallwey (Texere Publishing, 2000).

How To Set Goals

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/notes-self/201308/how-set-goals>

The Robert Dilts quote can be found in the NLP University Press

<http://nlpuniversitypress.com/html/G22.html>

Head Games: The Use of Mental Rehearsal to Improve Performance, an article by Dr Scott Williams, Wright State University, Ohio, USA. <http://www.wright.edu/~scott.williams/LeaderLetter/rehearsal.htm>

TED Talk, Try Something New for 30 Days, by Matt Cutts

http://www.ted.com/talks/matt_cutts_try_something_new_for_30_days?language=en



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