



# **Check-Up: Intentional Career Development in Motherhood**



It's great that you want to take a closer look at what is going on with your career! It's the first step to empowering yourself to be professionally content, or even better *thriving*. Don't forget that not only *you* will benefit from feeling and doing better, from being more aligned with your values. It will also make a difference to your kids and your family. **If you are more fulfilled, they will be too!**

This check-up provides the basis for you to self-assess in how far your **career has been affected by motherhood**. It will **empower you** to take charge **to change** what needs changing, and **to fully embrace what is** already **there**.

We start off by looking at your career status quo: The *size of your organization* and *your own current career level* within the organization are important points to consider. You briefly reflect on *how actively and intentionally you chose this current career trajectory*, before you move on to a table that lists *common reasons why your career maybe stalling*. Not all of these reasons may apply to you, or apply to you but with a different priority. You may also *identify additional reasons* that affect your individual career adversely which you should add in the blank rows.

A second table allows you to consider *common reasons to actively pursue career development opportunities*. Again, I am leaving some blank rows for you to fill in with additional reasons that apply to you individually.

Lastly, we are *tying everything back together*: You assess how much overall your career seems to have been adversely affected, this includes how you *feel* about where you are at in your career right now. This overall assessment will influence, how urgently you may want to *push for more career development opportunities*, or not. It allows you to intentionally decide, whether or not, or within which timeframe you want to actively pursue career development opportunities.

Please remember, there are probably always a lot of reasons to 'not do it'– **change always takes courage** and sometimes we also need some extra help. *The fact that you have decided to do this check-up tells me, that you want more. More you, not more to do.* Let's do this together.



# Your Career Status Quo

- **How big is the organization you are working for (number of employees)?** The bigger the organization, the more likely you can develop within the organization, which is often easier, even if you want to change tracks.
  - 1-10 (start-up, or micro business)
  - 11-50 (small business)
  - 51-250 (medium business)
  - 251-1000 (large business)
  - 1001+ (enterprise, or corporation)
- **Which career level matches your current position** (regardless of your own experience that you bring to the job)? The higher up in the hierarchy your job ranks, the harder additional development will be (especially within the same company). To help you match your job, I have added some loose guidance on required qualifications/experience for each level.
  - entry level (little to no prior experience)
  - intermediate/associate level (bachelor's degree and/or 2-4 years of prior experience)
  - mid level (master's degree and/or 5-7 years of prior experience)
  - senior level (master's degree and/or 8-12 years of prior experience)
  - executive level (master's degree and more than 10 years experience)
  - c-suite (master's degree and more than 12 years experience)
- **How actively and intentionally did you choose your career?** Did you end up getting the job, or career trajectory that you dreamed of as a child already? How aligned did the job feel before having kids vs now? Did you just go from one job to another based on interest and development opportunities? Or maybe you are following the dream your parents had for you? **What else got you to where you are now?**

I'll leave an empty page for you to jot down your thoughts before we move on to the table.



# Your Career Status Quo



## Reasons why your career maybe stalling

In the first column, I list the reasons that in my experience commonly affect career development during motherhood – as mentioned above, please list any additional individual reasons in the blank rows below. This list is supposed to get you started as you do the self-assessment. If the reason applies to you, you check the column labelled ‘relevant’, if you feel this reason is especially relevant for you, you *also* check the column labelled ‘prio’. You can use the ‘notes’ column as you see fit, but I recommend that you make notes when a reason does not apply to you, why it doesn’t, or conversely, if you check a reason as ‘prio,’ you also note here why.



Reason	relevant	prio	notes
<b>During pregnancy...</b>			
<p>I noticed that once I had told my employer that I was pregnant, I was not given as many interesting and important projects/as much responsibility.</p>			
<p>My work had been affected by physical changes during pregnancy already (e.g. brain fog, fatigue etc.), but only I noticed this.</p>			
<p>My work had been affected by physical changes during pregnancy already (e.g. brain fog, fatigue etc.) and my colleagues/boss/clients mentioned issues with my work to me.</p>			
<p>I was put on bedrest during pregnancy and could not even handover to somebody else before leaving. I am worried, that this will affect me when I come back to work.</p>			



Reason	relevant	prio	notes
<b>During pregnancy...</b>			



Reason	relevant	prio	notes
<b>Time off post-partum</b>			
<p>I am taking/have taken time off post-partum briefly only, but feel/felt that as a result, I can't/couldn't perform to my usual levels (broken nights, hormonal fluctuations, general post-partum aches and pains).</p>			
<p>Complications during pregnancy/delivery meant that I am taking/had to take more time off work than originally planned. This affects/affected how confident I feel about going back to work.</p>			
<p>I am taking/have taken more time off post-partum (6 months and up). I am uncertain what to expect when I get back to work and how much will have changed./When I got back to work so much had changed, that it felt like starting from scratch and it took me a while to get back on top of things. I have felt less confident as a result.</p>			





Reason	relevant	prio	notes
<b>Time off post-partum</b>			



Reason	relevant	prio	notes
<b>Back at work</b>			
I have noticed that since coming back to work, I have not been given as many interesting and important projects/as much responsibility than before.			
I have noticed that since coming back to work, colleagues have seemed less supportive, because they had to pick up the slack during my maternity leave.			
When I am out of office, because my child is sick, <i>I feel</i> uncomfortable coming back to the office knowing that colleagues had to pick up the slack.			
When I am out of office, because my child is sick, I feel uncomfortable coming back to the office knowing that colleagues had to pick up the slack <i>and I notice that they resent me for it.</i>			



Reason	relevant	prio	notes
<b>Back at work</b>			
<p>When I came back, I wanted to work part-time, but my employer couldn't/didn't offer me my old role back in part-time. As a result, I now have less responsibility than I did before.</p>			
<p>When I wanted to come back in part-time, my employer didn't have any part-time positions available. I had to apply for a <i>new job with a new employer</i> and have not had the same level of responsibilities since.</p>			
<p>I decided to keep my full-time role, because I was hoping to pick-up my career where I had left off. Ever since coming back there hasn't been an opportunity for career growth and this is not due to lack of options within the organization. I feel completely left out.</p>			



Reason	relevant	prio	notes
<b>Back at work</b>			



Reason	relevant	prio	notes
<b>Childcare</b>			
<p><i>Quality</i> of childcare has forced me to reduce my hours since my partner earns more than I do.</p>			
<p><i>Cost</i> of childcare has forced me to reduce my hours since my partner earns more than I do.</p>			
<p><i>Availability</i> of childcare has forced me to reduce my hours since my partner earns more than I do.</p>			



Reason	relevant	prio	notes
<b>The others (society, family, friends etc.)</b>			
I want to pursue my career, but I feel like I can't be a good mother, if I do.			
My mother stayed at home with us until we were older, so I think I should also do that with my kids.			
I worry that I won't meet the expectations, if I were to apply/ask for a promotion since I have all the household chores, the kids' appointments, afternoon activities etc. to manage as well.			
If I outsource any of the tasks like household, childcare etc. beyond what I am already doing, I feel like I have failed at being a mother/wife.			



Reason	relevant	prio	notes
<b>The others (society, family, friends etc.)</b>			
<p>When I talk to other mothers, we only talk about the kids and what's best for them. Many others stay at home. I always feel like the odd one out, because I am back at work.</p>			
<p>All the other mothers also work full-time/part-time, but still manage to get everything else done including fun afternoon activities. I am struggling as it is and couldn't cope with more responsibility at work. I already feel like I am doing worse than all the other mothers.</p>			



Especially the last part of this table could potentially be endless. I strongly encourage you to add here all the ‘voices in your head’ that keep you from pursuing an intentional and fulfilling career. You have probably noticed that some of the reasons may need more ‘unpacking’ as they allude to a belief of your own, about yourself, or about you as a mother. The self-assessment cannot achieve this, but it is still worth noting that they are there.





## Reasons why you should more actively pursue career growth

The column labels are the same as above – is the reason relevant to you and is it a priority reason to more actively pursue career growth at this point in time. Again, please use the notes section as you see fit, but especially for reasons that are not relevant for you, or that you identify as a priority. Add any reasons that affect you individually.

Reasons	relevant	prio	notes
<p>I don't feel seen/appreciated by my boss/employer anymore since coming back from maternity leave. I don't think they will approach me about my next career move. I definitely need to be the one who pushes for more.</p>			
<p>I no longer feel like my current job is a good fit since becoming a mother. As a consequence I am struggling to keep up my performance. I need to actively find a new career path that works better for me.</p>			
<p>I am really worried about the amount of money I will get after retirement and don't want to rely on my children to support me.</p>			



Reasons	relevant	prio	notes
<p>I have lost all/many benefits since returning to work, because I had to settle for a different position.</p>			
<p>When my parents, or my in-laws get frail, I want to be at a job level where I can work more flexibly. If flexibility is not an option, I at least want to have the financial means to make arrangements that work for us all (moving them closer to me, moving closer to them and working remotely etc.).</p>			
<p>I am over 30 years old and know that perimenopause can already start within the next 5 years or so, possibly affecting my career.</p>			
<p>I am over 40 years old and have probably started perimenopause even though I don't experience any (severe) symptoms yet. I might still develop more severe symptoms that could adversely affect my career.</p>			



Reasons	relevant	prio	notes



## What's your conclusion?

Remember, this is a self-assessment, so you have to draw your own conclusions from the analysis above. Some of the following observations might be helpful. Please do reach out to me at [hello@bodyfulminds.com](mailto:hello@bodyfulminds.com), if you need additional pointers or help with this.

- How big is the company, you work for and what does that mean for career development opportunities?
- How good is my organization at developing staff?
- What is your own position currently within the company?
- How intentionally did you choose your career and does it still suit you now?
- How many reasons for why your career maybe stalling apply to you? How many of those have you marked as 'prio'?
- How many additional reasons for why your career may be stalling did you find? How many of those have you marked as prio?



## What's your conclusion?

- How many reasons are relevant in total and how many 'prio' in total?
- How many of the reasons why you actually should actively pursue career growth are relevant to you? How many of those have you marked as 'prio'?
- How many additional reasons for pursuing your career have you identified? How many of those are 'prio' for you?
- How many reasons to actively pursue career growth are relevant in total and how many 'prio' in total?
- How do you feel going to work at the moment? Is it a hassle (it is for everyone once in a while, but shouldn't be continuously draining)?
- How do you feel about your career at the moment?
- How do you envisage your professional future?
- Do you want to feel empowered and take charge of your career? How can you achieve that?



## Your additional notes