

In this month's blog, we debunk some myths about busyness and career progression.

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## Beyond Busy: Debunking Myths About Climbing the Career Ladder for Women

Climbing the career ladder can be intimidating for many women. We often hear statements like, "I don't want a promotion because I'm already swamped!" or "I can't handle any more stress in my life! At Crossing Thresholds, we've noticed that lots of women assume that moving up means a heavier workload and overwhelming responsibilities. Now let's be clear, we're not saying that promotion is the right path for everyone, at Thresholds we think the most important thing is that you get in touch with what YOU really want and that might or might not include promotion. But we don't want you to rule it out, if it's something you desire, because you're fearful of it making you more busy or stressed, because that's not necessarily the case.

In fact, stepping into more senior roles can bring more job satisfaction and a better work-life balance for many women. Here are three reasons why.



Moving up in your career often creates more access to resources and support. Many senior positions come with larger teams, greater access to technology and other expertise and support.

Learning how to effectively delegate tasks and responsibilities to others can free up some of your time and maybe even reduce your workload; leaving you with more time to focus on the big picture strategy.

## 2. More seniority = more influence and ability to make a difference

A more senior role is likely to give you more autonomy and decision-making power. This offers a real opportunity to shape the direction of your team and your organisation, making strategic decisions that align with your values and goals. This sense of control can actually alleviate stress and boost job satisfaction. As you become more invested and engaged in your work, you'll witness the direct influence of your decisions, leading to positive outcomes.



*"Promotion enabled me to step into my superpower as a strategic thinker. I was so much more fulfilled and so much more effective when the point of my job was to bring the helicopter perspective, rather than understand all the detail."*

Kate Sturdy, Senior Civil servant  
Department of Work and Pensions

## 3. More responsibility = more control

More control comes with increased freedom to structure your day in a way that suits you – maybe you want to start work earlier in the day to accommodate family commitments or choose to work from home for part of the week to reduce commuting time. You can use your senior position to be a role model for good work life balance and really influence the culture of your team or even your department.

*"One of the best things for me about being in a more senior role was influence. Influence over what I did but really importantly also how I did it! Long before working at home was the norm, I was able to do this and fit my working day around my life (not the other way around). I often hear people say promotion means more work, but it actually means working differently - and definitely having more influence!"*

Jacqueline Baker, Thresholds facilitator and former civil servant

## Roles at all grades can vary drastically!

It's important to acknowledge that moving up can also come with additional responsibilities and pressures, but so can moving sideways or staying exactly in the role you are already feeling busy and stressed in! Roles vary drastically, different positions come with different and often more complex problems and the need for you

expectations aren't mutually exclusive to promotion, nor are they inevitable and can be managed by setting clear boundaries and getting the right resources and support.

## Focus on choosing roles wisely. Do your research!

Do your research before you apply for any role, speak to the manager and other team members, find out about the culture, challenges, and priorities, and decide if it works for you. And yes, rule it in or out based on that insight, but don't rule it out just because it's a higher grade.



*"I've been in very busy and stressful G7/G6 roles, but I've also had very manageable and enjoyable senior roles too, it's more about the role and my own boundaries rather than the grade. In fact, the best work life balance I've had in 23 years as a civil servant was in a G6 role. My most stressful roles were probably at HEO/SEO level when I had less control over what was expected of me. As a senior leader, I was able to push back about what my team could realistically do and positively role-model and influence the busyness culture and I felt much more empowered to make a positive impact."*

Jo Wood, Thresholds facilitator and former civil servant

## Check your assumptions!

We encourage you to connect with what you truly want, not what you think you should want; not what other people may expect or want for you and certainly not because you are assuming what you want will make you busier. While there are certainly challenges that come with senior positions, having more women in senior positions can only be a good thing. So don't let assumptions about increased busyness discourage you from pursuing your career goals. It really is possible to enjoy a fulfilling and rewarding career, regardless of your position on the corporate ladder.



## What do you think? We'd love to hear from you

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