

# Authenticity at Work



## “Authenticity & Freedoms” Diagnostic Tool™ GUIDANCE NOTES

## What is Meant by Authenticity?

It is helpful to think of authenticity as referring to the **“degree to which one is true to one's own personality, spirit or character, despite external pressures.”** This diagnostic is designed to provide you with an indication of the extent to which you are able to exhibit your true self, and therefore be authentic, at work.

## The Benefits of Authenticity

The benefits that can arise from greater authenticity at the personal level can be significant and can include **higher levels of motivation, engagement and well being** as well as helping **to reduce stress and frustration** with work. At the organisational level, as people increasingly show greater authenticity, benefits arise in terms of greater **innovation and ingenuity**, a stronger culture of **personal accountability** and **higher productivity**. These are just some of the reasons for taking the time to consider your own authenticity.

## Factors Influencing Authenticity

The external pressures that are found in the workplace, that may affect your ability to be authentic, are related to a number of factors ranging from the sector in which you work and the dominant management style that is found there, to the values that guide behaviour and the culture of the organisation. When thinking about the idea of being “true to one's own personality” it is important to remember that not everyone will have the same level of insight and self awareness regarding their own personality – and in this way exhibiting authenticity may involve a process of *discovering*, as well as being, who we are. Furthermore, the personality that we have is not fixed, rather it is dynamic and therefore grows and develops over time. These and other factors have to be taken into account when reaching for greater levels of authenticity.

## Overall Indications

In overall terms, this diagnostic will suggest the degree to which you are currently able to express your authenticity at work on the following spectrum:

- No/very limited scope to be authentic at work (score of 0-40)
- A little/limited scope to be authentic at work (score of 41-80)
- Some scope to be authentic at work (score of 81-100)
- A lot of/wide scope to be authentic to be at work (score of 101-120)

It is helpful to use this diagnostic to understand, in the first instance, where you currently feature on this spectrum, but importantly to use this understanding to explore what might need to be in place for you to be positioned at the higher end of this scale. In addition to the clues given in the 3 Freedoms sections (discussed in the following pages) you may find it useful to use the Notes page overleaf to jot down some general reflections about your result, and to identify specific questions in the diagnostic that you felt were particularly significant.

# Interpreting Your Overall Results

Overall Reflections & Notes:



# Getting Beneath Authenticity

## What are the “Freedoms” Identified in this Diagnostic?

Authenticity is released or constrained in a number of different ways, but there are 3 important drivers that have an affect on your ability to be authentic in the workplace. We might think of this as the engine beneath authenticity. These are called:

1. The Freedom to Operate (F<sub>2</sub>O)
2. The Freedom to Speak (F<sub>2</sub>S)
3. The Freedom to Actualize (F<sub>2</sub>A)

## Claiming Freedoms vs Waiting to be Given Freedoms

Leaders and managers within organisations have a responsibility to engage their employees, to motivate them, to help release their potential and to secure their best possible contribution. Managers will find that if they can raise levels of personal authenticity in the organisation and in doing so facilitate the 3 Freedoms identified here, then significant benefits will arise.

However, the responsibility for personal authenticity sits squarely with the individual. It is your responsibility to undertake the work needed to claim these Freedoms. Waiting for managers to provide the perfect conditions for you to be authentic may, in many circumstances, prove to be a very long wait, and it is for these reasons that you are encouraged to take the lead in acting on the results of this diagnostic.

Please read the following sections and after each jot down, in the Notes section, your ideas about the first steps that you might take to take the lead on claiming each Freedom. You may find it useful to discuss your ideas with colleagues, with your manager, or with a coach to formulate the best plan of action.



## **What is Meant by the Freedom to Operate?**

The Freedom to Operate (F<sub>2</sub>O) involves **employees reaching their own judgments on the best strategies for fulfilling the tasks they face**. In short, the question of how the work should be tackled is one that rests firmly with the employee. But more than this, **the Freedom to Operate may also extend to alternative conceptualisations about what the task in the first instance should be**. In this sense, the individual may find themselves thinking much more broadly about engaging in additional or different tasks in order to achieve the broader objectives of the organisation.

## **The Benefits of the Freedom to Operate**

In claiming greater Freedom to Operate you are more likely to build a better understanding of how to deploy your own particular strengths and unique capabilities to the job at hand. After all you are the leading expert in yourself. You are more likely to feel invested in the work you do, accountable for the results and motivated to be successful. And claiming the Freedom to Operate can also inspire innovation and creativity in the role as you bring more of yourself to it.

## **Factors Influencing the Freedom to Operate**

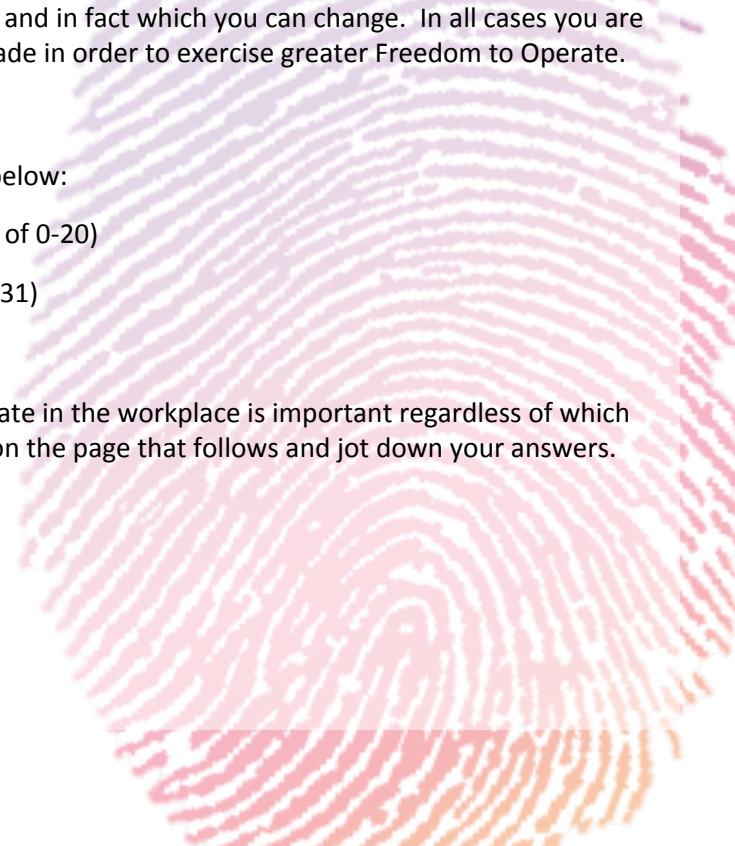
There are constraints in the workplace on the ability to exercise the Freedom to Operate. These can be related to a number of factors ranging from the industry in which you work to the standards to which you are subjected in the role. Practically these may introduce restrictions and requirements in areas as diverse as appearance, working hours, reporting obligations, process requirements and health & safety to name a few. While all of these are real and need to be taken seriously it is important to be aware of which of these are fixed, which can be influenced, and in fact which you can change. In all cases you are invited to creatively challenge the assumptions made in order to exercise greater Freedom to Operate.

## **Indications for the Freedom to Operate**

Your score will fall in one of the three categories below:

- A PRIORITY AREA FOR ACTION (score of 0-20)
- WARRANTS ATTENTION (score of 21-31)
- KEEP IN VIEW (score of 32-40)

Undertaking work to raise your Freedom to Operate in the workplace is important regardless of which category your scores fall in. Read the questions on the page that follows and jot down your answers.



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## Questions to Help You Increase Your Freedom to Operate

1.	What do you feel are the priority areas in your role where you can claim greater Freedom to Operate?	
2.	What are the remaining aspects of your role that, if you could, you would exercise greater Freedom to Operate?	
3.	Looking at your answers to both Questions 1 & 2, what would be the smallest changes you could make to have the biggest advance?	
4.	Looking at your answers to both Questions 1 & 2, what kind of research, exploration or experimentation might need to take place to advance your ideas?	
5.	Which areas and people in particular are most likely to be impacted by the developments and changes you might want to make?	
6.	<p>As you exercise your Freedom to Operate, which of the following obligations might it be useful to pay particular attention to?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the corporate messages and priorities of the organisation so that freedoms are taken in full awareness of these</li><li>• the ethics and values of the organisation when acting on freedoms</li><li>• sharing the success or otherwise of acting on the freedoms</li><li>• undertaking 'de-risking' activity when attempting new and novel approaches</li><li>• Taking responsibility and being accountable for accountability for actions that arise from accepting freedoms</li></ul>	

## **What is Meant by the Freedom to Speak?**

The Freedom to Speak (F<sub>2</sub>S) is about **employees being able to articulate their views, ideas, feelings, hopes and concerns within the organisation, and all of this happening without censorship or constraint** . But this is not only that this *can* happen, but contained in this idea is a **strong encouragement that this *should* happen, and often, and to deep level.**

## **The Benefits of the Freedom to Speak**

In claiming greater Freedom to Speak there are benefits that fall to individuals and to the organisation. You are more likely to feel engaged, valued and included if you are able to freely offer your input. And flowing from this are benefits related to greater productivity and well being. Being able to discuss the 'elephant in the room' will help to protect your organisation from being blindsided or missing important risks. Holding conversations at a deep level, will enable you to better appreciate the value in the work you do and how this intersects with the work of others. Talk is the engine of successful organisations and those that talk freely and with courage about the issues that matter, stand a much greater chance of success.

## **Factors Influencing the Freedom to Speak**

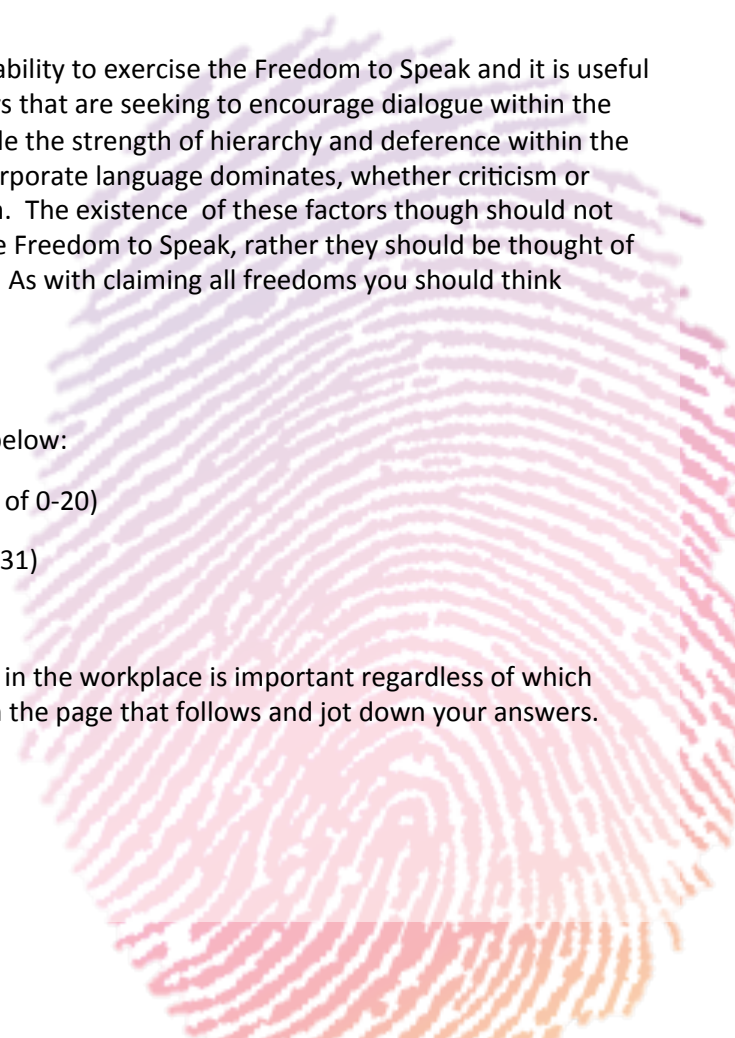
There can be constraints in the workplace on the ability to exercise the Freedom to Speak and it is useful for you to be aware of these and also for managers that are seeking to encourage dialogue within the organisation. Some of the constraints might include the strength of hierarchy and deference within the organisation, the extent to which technical and corporate language dominates, whether criticism or blame are strong cultural characteristics and so on. The existence of these factors though should not offer a reason to avoid or give up on exercising the Freedom to Speak, rather they should be thought of as data/intelligence to help navigate the process. As with claiming all freedoms you should think creatively about how best to do this.

## **Indications for the Freedom to Speak**

Your score will fall in one of the three categories below:

- A PRIORITY AREA FOR ACTION (score of 0-20)
- WARRANTS ATTENTION (score of 21-31)
- KEEP IN VIEW (score of 32-40)

Undertaking work to raise your Freedom to Speak in the workplace is important regardless of which category your scores fall in. Read the questions on the page that follows and jot down your answers.



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## Questions to Help You Increase Your Freedom to Speak

1.	What do you feel are the particular opportunities and workplace scenarios where you could comfortably claim greater Freedom to Speak?	
2.	What do you feel are the particular opportunities and workplace scenarios where it would be a challenge to claim greater Freedom to Speak, but it would nevertheless be important to do so?	
3.	Looking at your answers to both Questions 1 & 2, what would be the smallest changes you could make to have the biggest advance?	
4.	Looking at your answers to both Questions 1 & 2, what kind of research, exploration or experimentation might need to take place to advance your ideas?	
5.	Which areas and people in particular are most likely to be impacted by the developments and changes you might want to make?	
6.	<p>As you exercise your Freedom to Speak, which of the following obligations might it be useful to pay particular attention to?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the corporate messages and priorities of the organisation so that freedoms are taken in full awareness of these</li><li>• the ethics and values of the organisation when acting on freedoms</li><li>• sharing the success or otherwise of acting on the freedoms</li><li>• undertaking 'de-risking' activity when attempting new and novel approaches</li><li>• Taking responsibility and being accountable for accountability for actions that arise from accepting freedoms</li></ul>	



## What is Meant by the Freedom to Actualize?

The Freedom to Actualize (F<sub>2</sub>0) is the freedom to **assume and realize an identity & perspective that may be different from others and reflects your own emergent personality and values**. When we think of the Freedom to Actualize it is helpful to picture this as having four aspects with associated freedoms. Firstly, is the idea of **Being** where you are able to assume & express your identity and personality at work. This may be manifest in a number of ways ranging from how you dress to the way that your individual skills are brought into work. Secondly is the act of **Discovering**. This refers to the opportunity that work allows for you to gain an appreciation of your unique preferences, skills and interests, as well as to discover at a deeper level the meaning of what you do. Thirdly is the role of **Imagining**. This refers to the extent to which works provides a space and the encouragement for you to develop possibilities, explore ideas and to imagine how you might develop and grow. Fourthly is the task of **Becoming**. This refers to the encouragement, acceptance and facilitation that work offers you to re-shape your identity and practically realise your potential as an individual.

## The Benefits of the Freedom to Actualize

There are typically a deep set of benefits associated with claiming the Freedom to Actualize. These can include a greater sense of well-being, happiness and engagement at work. Organisations where people do not feel alienated from their work, where they do not feel psychological dissonance (between work and their true selves), and where they can become fulfilled through learning and growth, generate a greater sense of well-being and happiness. We also see people within organisations developing a broader set of capabilities which reflect their journey towards growth. The Freedom to Actualize often engenders greater self-awareness and mindfulness and of course it is an approach that supports diversity. Organisations that cherish the Freedom to Actualize perform well on talent attraction and retention, and organisations that support a deep exploration of the meaning of the work people do and the values they adopt, is much more like to be seen as an organisation that is authentic and can be trusted .

## Factors Influencing the Freedom to Actualize

Much of the work that is undertaken when claiming the Freedom to Actualize occurs within the thinking of employees. In this sense, many of the constraints we might imagine are self-imposed. However, there will be a differences between organisations in their willingness to encourage employees to work in this way or even to commit the time that this may imply. As with all the freedoms, The existence of these factors though should not offer a reason to avoid or give up on exercising the Freedom to Actualize, rather they should be thought of as data/intelligence to help navigate the process.

## Indications for the Freedom to Actualize

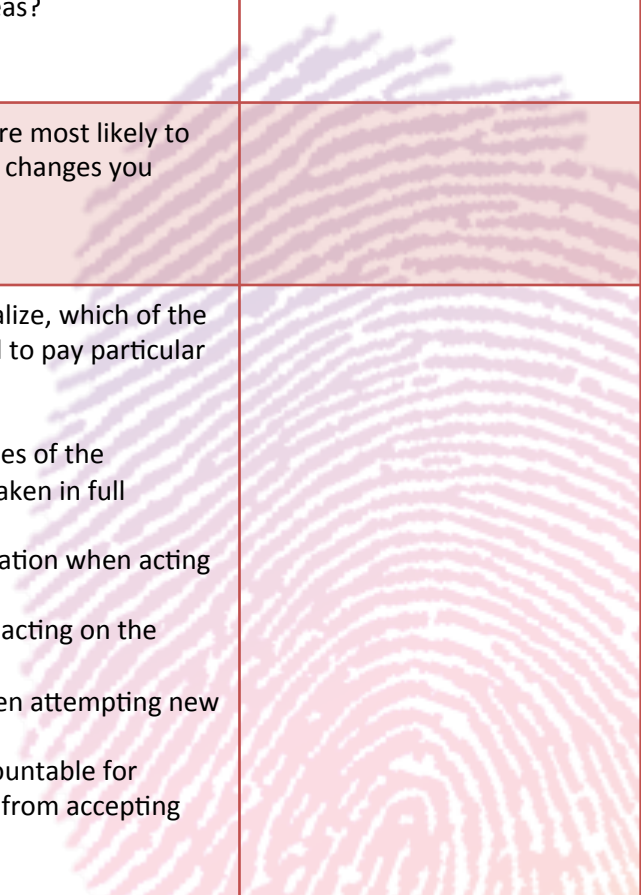
Your score will fall in one of the three categories below. Please add your thoughts overleaf in light of your score:

- A PRIORITY AREA FOR ACTION (score of 0-20)
- WARRANTS ATTENTION (score of 21-31)
- KEEP IN VIEW (score of 32-40)

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## Questions to Help You Increase Your Freedom to Actualize

1.	What do you feel are the particular elements of the Freedom to Actualize that you would like to make progress with first?	
2.	If you could wave a magic wand and make a real difference to the areas that you think would be toughest to change, what would they be?	
3.	Looking at your answers to both Questions 1 & 2, what would be the smallest changes you could make to have the biggest advance?	
4.	Looking at your answers to both Questions 1 & 2, what kind of research, exploration or experimentation might need to take place to advance your ideas?	
5.	Which areas and people in particular are most likely to be impacted by the developments and changes you might want to make?	
6.	<p>As you exercise your Freedom to Actualize, which of the following obligations might it be useful to pay particular attention to?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the corporate messages and priorities of the organisation so that freedoms are taken in full awareness of these</li><li>• the ethics and values of the organisation when acting on freedoms</li><li>• sharing the success or otherwise of acting on the freedoms</li><li>• undertaking 'de-risking' activity when attempting new and novel approaches</li><li>• Taking responsibility and being accountable for accountability for actions that arise from accepting freedoms</li></ul>	



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Thank you for completing this diagnostic. If you would appreciate further support in securing greater authenticity at work, or in exploring how you might claim the benefits outlined in this diagnostic, we provide one-to-one coaching, consulting and taught sessions – and we would love to hear from you.

Please free contact us using the details above.



# Authenticity at Work



## “Authenticity & Freedoms” Diagnostic Tool™ QUESTION PAPER

# Authenticity at Work

This diagnostic instrument is based on work undertaken by Robin Ryde and Lisa Sofianos and expanded upon in the book *“Creating Authentic Organizations: Bringing Meaning and Engagement Back to Work”* (Kogan Page, 2014).

Research shows that authenticity is an important driver of personal engagement & satisfaction and of organisational success. The two sets of benefits (personal and organisational) go hand in hand and it should be of interest to leaders, managers and workers alike to explore how authenticity might be developed at work.

This diagnostic offers a point of entry to this important topic. Complete the following questions honestly and without ‘overthinking’ your answers. Follow the instructions to transfer your answers to the charts at the end of this diagnostic.

Thank you for participating.



**At work, to what extent do I feel able to...**  
*(Circle the corresponding number on the right for each question)*

Not At All

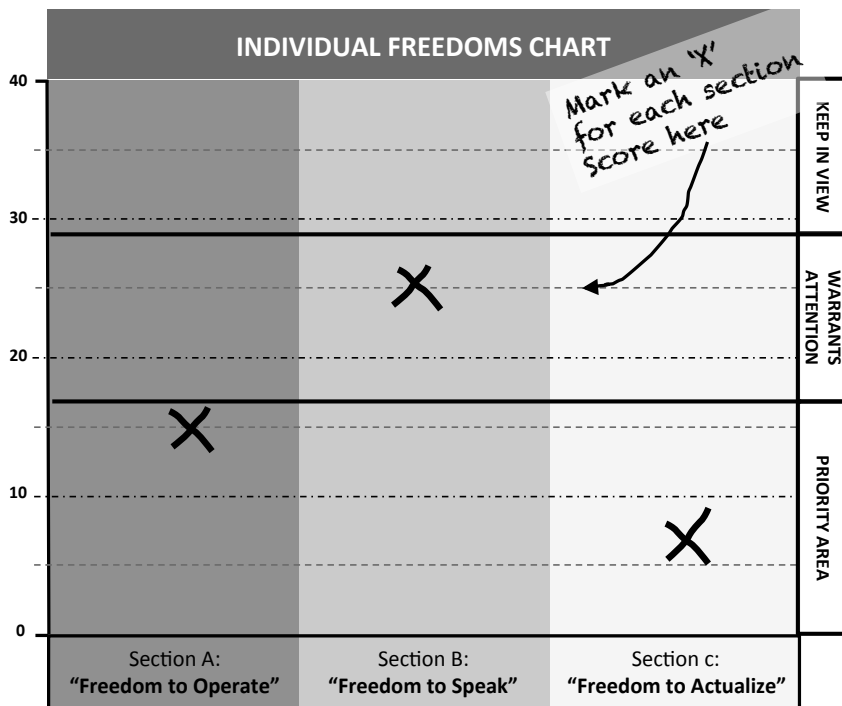
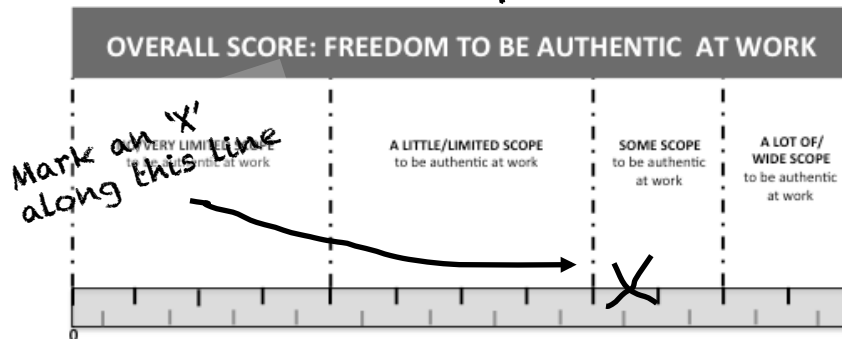
1	Organise my working day and manage my time as I judge appropriate to the job	0	1	2	3	4
2	Raise concerns/highlight potential risks to the organisation, particularly those risks that some may not wish to hear e.g. 'the elephant in the room'	0	1	2	3	4
3	Discuss the opportunities and scope for me to be authentic at work (to be true to myself)	0	1	2	3	4
4	Have discretion to take everyday decisions without involving more senior members of staff (within reasonable limitations)	0	1	2	3	4
5	Talk about my feelings and how they relate to my work (including being able to show vulnerability)	0	1	2	3	4
6	Arrange my physical workspace in a way that reflects who I am and the way I like to work	0	1	2	3	4
7	Solve problems and settle disputes on my own initiative (within reasonable limitations)	0	1	2	3	4
8	Talk to people more senior to me on an adult-to-adult basis and in doing so be honest, direct and authentic	0	1	2	3	4
9	Choose my own appearance (within reasonable limitations)	0	1	2	3	4
10	Identify and exploit new opportunities when they arise	0	1	2	3	4
11	Get enough access and time to speak to the right internal people	0	1	2	3	4
12	Allow my personality, e.g. sense of humour, to be expressed in my work	0	1	2	3	4
13	Formulate my own working practices/modus operandi	0	1	2	3	4
14	Speak against the accepted narrative (the 'party line').	0	1	2	3	4
15	Believe that my values are in harmony with those of the organisation	0	1	2	3	4
16	Vary my place of work in order to work more effectively e.g. working from home, coffee shop, office, train etc.	0	1	2	3	4
17	Engage colleagues, at any level, in a conversation about the deeper drivers of organizational behaviour, e.g. culture, ethics, colleague behaviour etc.	0	1	2	3	4
18	Integrate aspects of my personal life, eg. values, hobbies, family, skills etc., into my working life	0	1	2	3	4
19	Create working partnerships and collaborations at my discretion and without seeking approval from others	0	1	2	3	4
20	Use the words, expressions and speech patterns that feel most natural to me (within reasonable limitations).	0	1	2	3	4
21	Evolve, grow and realize my potential as an individual (to be applied more broadly than the workplace alone)	0	1	2	3	4
22	Make an honest mistake without fearing blame or criticism	0	1	2	3	4
23	Throw out suggestions as a basis for discussion without feeling the need for them to be fully formed e.g. 'spitballing'	0	1	2	3	4
24	See, hear and know the value that my contribution makes in the organisation	0	1	2	3	4
25	Undertake considered experiments or trials to explore better ways to get the work done	0	1	2	3	4
26	Use the methods of communication that best suit my style e.g face-to-face, email, text etc.	0	1	2	3	4
27	Engage colleagues and managers in conversation about the meaning of the work I do and the value it delivers	0	1	2	3	4
28	Alter or adapt my outputs where I feel that outcomes can be delivered more effectively in different ways	0	1	2	3	4
29	Hold meaningful dialogue with colleagues at all levels without feeling 'shut out' or disempowered by the use of technical language/corporate jargon	0	1	2	3	4
30	Learn and develop in the way that best suits my style	0	1	2	3	4

# Creating Your Profile

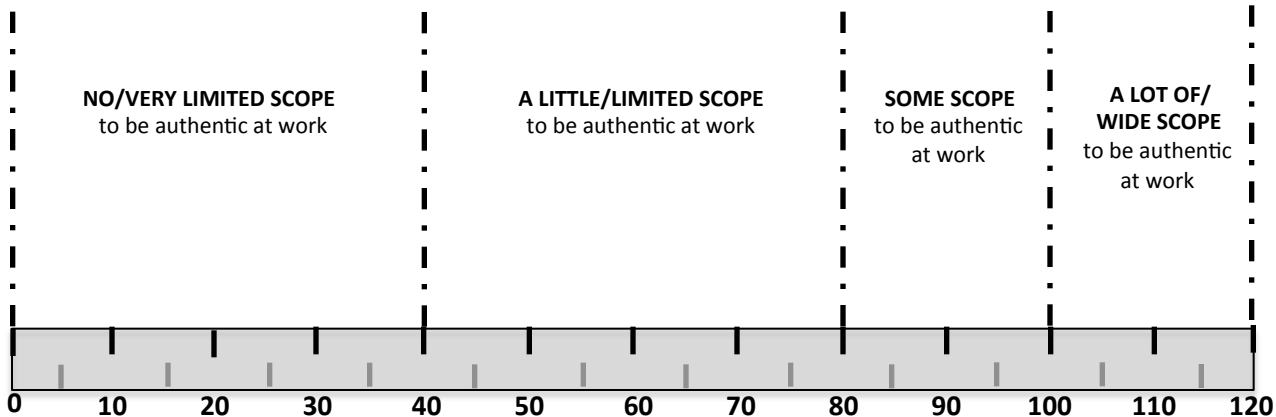
		<b>INSERT SCORE BELOW</b>
Add up all of your scores in the rows shown in Section A (shaded in dark grey)	Section A	
Add up all of your scores in the rows shown in Section B (shaded in medium grey)	Section B	
Add up all of your scores in the rows shown in Section C (white background)	Section C	
Add up all your scores from Sections A, B and C	<b>TOTAL/ OVERALL</b>	

## Example

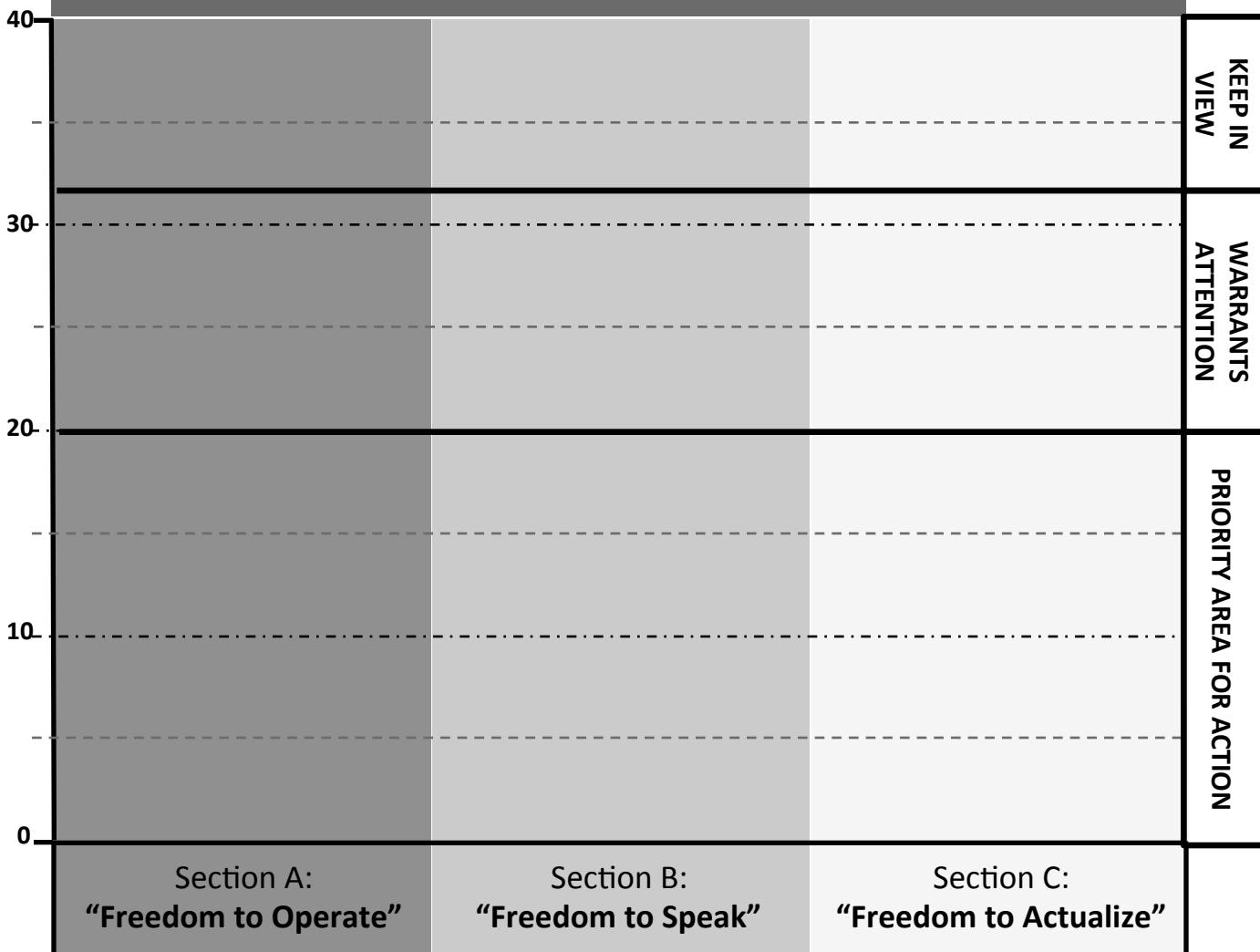
Once you have completed your scoring above, transfer the information to the following page using the example opposite as a guide.



## OVERALL SCORE: FREEDOM TO BE AUTHENTIC AT WORK



## INDIVIDUAL FREEDOMS CHART





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