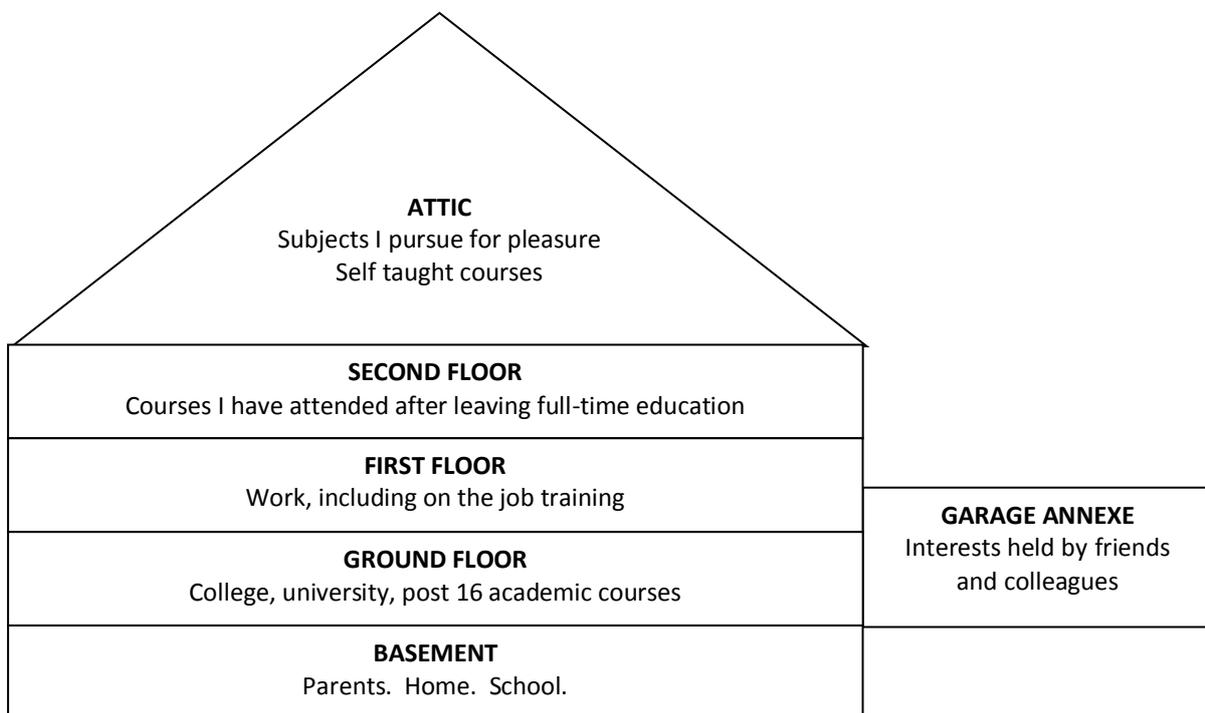


## UNDERSTANDING THE VALUE OF YOUR KNOWLEDGE

This exercise helps you to identify, record, value and communicate the things you know about. It is also a vital step to help you identify your areas of interest that may provide strong links to your fields of work. What we choose to learn about is a vital part of who we are.

What do you know about? Ask that question to someone on the train or in the pub and they will talk firstly about the areas of knowledge most frequently used in their job. They will often talk about their educational specialisation. Therefore “my degree was in Spanish but I’m an accountant now”, merely scratches the surface.



Look at the house. It has a ground floor, first floor, second floor, attic, basement and a garage at the side. Each level represents something of what you know.

1. Begin with the basement, firm foundations provided by your home, school, what you learnt from your parents.
2. Complete the list of the ground floor, first and second floor. Start with straightforward information that appears in your CV. Then try to remember the things you forgot about.
  - What subject did you enjoy most at school? (This is not the same as the ones you did best at in terms of qualifications.)
  - What was the first thing you wanted to read when you put down your textbooks? What was it about?
  - When were you so enthusiastic about a subject at school or college that you went off and found more to read about in your own time?

- Think about the training courses you attended that you got the most out of. What were they about? What did you learn?
  - What subjects led you to turning points in your life (that night school pottery class that made you change your degree course...)?
  - Which subjects have you enjoyed training others in?
3. Move on now to your leisure pursuits, areas of personal interest and things you have taught yourself. This is your attic - the parts of your brain where you store all the old junk you have forgotten you had. Stuff you never thought you would find a use for. What areas of knowledge are hidden in those trunks? (Some prompts below.)
- Given a free choice, what would you choose to talk about over a relaxed meal?
  - If you could teach a workshop on any subject in the world, to any audience and given unlimited preparation time, what would that subject be?
  - If you could learn about any subject in the world from any teacher what would that be?
  - When your Sunday paper arrives, fat with different sections, which part do you turn to first? Which is second?
  - When do you find yourself reading, talking or thinking about a subject and others have to shut you up? When do you find yourself so engrossed in an article or book that time goes by unnoticed?
  - Think of a time when you have enjoyed learning about someone else's favourite subject or hobby? What was the subject?
  - If you are an internet user which pages do you have bookmarked?
  - If you were accidentally locked in a bookstore for the weekend, in which section would you camp out? Once you got bored where would you go next? (Write down the bookshelf headings.)
  - If you won the lottery and didn't have to work, you'd spend a few months indulging yourself and eventually you would get bored. What would you do to fill your time?
4. Last, but not least. The garage. It's on the side because it's about vicarious interest, living life through the eyes and minds of other people. Think about close friends whose interests you share.
5. Look at your complete house, what have you missed out? It'll be things you consider 'trivial', such as cooking, homemaking or family history, if you enjoy it include it.

It's important to remember what you are really interested in and to remember all the things you have chosen to know about. This tells you a great deal in terms of motivation and subject interests and can lead you onto potential areas of work (moving from personal subjects of interest to fields of work). This step is important because it's about recovering parts of your past which you undervalue, and interests that will give you energy and enthusiasm in the future.