

## 52. Future perfect

***Next stop, your future life. Have serious fun creating a compelling vision for your future that's creative and inspiring. Your future lies in your hands.***

A really good starting point is to begin with the end in mind. Think about where you want to be and begin to work your way backwards.

I hope that right now you're feeling empowered and inspired to take charge of your one beautiful life. By now you should be in a flow and feeling confident about making time to hang out with yourself. It's now time to design your future. Here's what I want you to do. This is as much an adventure in your creativity as it is in introducing more play and fun into your life.

Go to an art or stationery shop and purchase a large sheet of poster paper, probably covering at least the size of eight A4 sheets and some glue. Gather together a range of magazines from health and lifestyle women's magazines and home and garden magazines to computer and men's lifestyle magazines. It's important if you're buying your magazines off the shelf to have a flick through the magazines first to make sure you like the kinds of images they carry. Set aside an hour or more. Clear a space in a room and get everything out. Make sure you're wearing comfortable clothing so you can move around easily. You're going to make a collage of your future. Start off by leafing through the magazines

and tearing out images, words and ideas that move you and inspire you. You don't have to worry about why you've been inspired but it might get you thinking about what areas of your life you would like that image to reflect. As you relax into the exercise you'll build up momentum. When you're doing your collage you'll probably experience what psychologists call the flow, being totally involved in an activity and totally focused on what you are doing in the present moment. Once you have a pile of images, start putting together your collage, using the images to reflect how you would like your life to be in the future.

Think big, think outside the box and push your own expectations about what is really possible for you. I love making collages. I get lost in the activity and it always leaves me feeling uplifted, energised and inspired. Over the years I have made several collages, marking different stages of my life, and it's quite amazing how much of the stuff that I depicted in them has come true. I think creating a collage is a really magical experience.

The next step is often overlooked and yet it is an important one. What you do with your collage does make a difference. I had a friend who turned one half of a wall in her living room, from ceiling to floor, into a huge vision map. It was

*Here's an idea for you...*

Solution-Focused Coaching came up with the idea of the miracle question. The miracle question bypasses your problems and challenges and invites you to project yourself forward into what they describe as the 'Future Perfect'. Ask yourself the miracle questions.

"Suppose a miracle happened tonight: what would be different about your life?" Get specific by digging further. What will you be doing? What will you be saying? What will other people notice that's different about you? Keep probing what your miracle will look and feel like. Get as specific as you can. See whether there is more by asking, 'What else?'

wall in her living room, from ceiling to floor, into a huge vision map. It was breathtaking to look at. Think about where you'll display your collage, preferably where you can see it every day. Now the work begins of programming these images into your mind so that they become a part of you. Imagine yourself in front of your vision map. Choose one particular image or scene from your vision map. Close your eyes and imagine yourself feeling, seeing, tasting, sensing and hearing everything associated with that particular scene. When you have made your connections, imagine yourself walking backwards from the scene from your vision map into this present moment. Ask yourself what new steps and actions you will need to take to move this area of your life on to a whole new level.

*I looked always outside of myself to see what I could make the world give me, instead of looking within myself to see what was there.*

Belle Livingstone, adventurer and writer

## *How did it go?*

**Q. *I did the collage, as suggested, which I really enjoyed and then when I did the miracle question I ended up with two different visions. Which one should I go with?***

A. Which one do you feel most drawn to? Your vision may not unfold in exactly the way you have illustrated it on your collage or expressed in your responses to your miracle questions. But from what you've shared it sounds like there are lots of options available to you and that is what is being reflected back. I would just get started on one action and see what happens. I don't think it will be long before you know what path to follow.

**Q. *My family loved the vision collage I made on a course at work. Now they all want to do one. Is it best to do one as a family or should we all do our own?***

A. It's great that your family loves the idea of vision maps. What about doing both? This could be a great activity for your family to plan and get engaged in. Why not make a whole event out of it? Get to work collecting magazines from schoolmates and colleagues. Set yourself a budget (say, £20) and purchase magazines, paper and a glue stick (very important). When the collages are complete, create a simple ritual. You could invite each member to talk about what the collage means to them. Have everyone write something to accompany the collage. Have the family decide where in the home the collage will be displayed.