

## How we build and live into our future is critically influencing our quality of life now!

Let's start with two contrasting ways we might be thinking about our lives right now:

1. **Noticing what's missing and focusing on that.**
2. **Focusing on what we can appreciate regardless of what's missing.**

The first of these perspectives is like looking up at the top of a mountain from the bottom, as if you couldn't be any lower, feeling in awe of the summit and about how great life would be if only you could get to the top and everything was ok. Life will be ok once you get to the top. This way of living is a struggle and limiting, as we are focusing on what's missing and what stops us in life, rather than on what we already have, what we can do for ourselves and who we can be, not seeing what inspires and can move us forward. It also puts the focus squarely on external things - our circumstances, other people, conveniently removing us from the equation and absolving us from taking any responsibility for the way our lives turn out.

The second way is to contemplate the view from the mountain top, as if you're sitting there now, drinking in all you can survey and appreciating your life in this moment just as it is (and isn't). In this perspective, time stops and there's nowhere you have to go or anything to fix, just to be fully where you are now. Let's develop this idea further, using our existing resources and the idea that we already have what we need because it's our inner strengths and intuition that guide us most, whatever our external circumstances.

Imagine yourself already there at the summit. What can you see, what does it feel like, how do you feel as you relish in the culmination of your efforts and everything you put into getting there?

This process is all about envisioning a future state as if you've reached that future state, as if you're already standing there, rather than trying to ponder and predict your future vision from where you are presently. Notice the different impact it has when you imagine and stand in the future now, compared to trying to look at the future from where you are currently.

A predicted future is coloured by past limitations such as previous results and your own view of your past performance. You might say, well I never managed to do that before so how will it be different in future? I might say, unfulfilled possibility is still possibility, so just because you haven't succeeded yet doesn't mean you can't or won't.

Whereas starting from creating the future powerfully as something inspiring and moving based on what excites us as we reflect on what's possible, rather than predictable, creates an opening for something new beyond our past experience. And, a created future is informed by our past experiences, rather than being limited by them.

Creating a powerful future picture and then working back from the desired future to the present helps to free us from the constant “but how will I do that?” question, giving us a glimpse beyond the constraints of our present view of the world and what’s possible for us. This way we allow ourselves space to consider bigger ideas and be open to things when we might normally be too challenged and would quickly say “yes, but...”

It’s much more than just a mental, thinking exercise to contemplate the future from a blank sheet, blue sky thinking perspective. The process engages our emotions and the senses too. Imagine you always dreamt of having a place by the sea, perhaps a holiday home or a forever home. As well as the beautiful images of the scenery, beach, cliffs, sun shining on the water, moon reflecting on the sea at night, think of breathing in the fresh air, the sounds of the waves and the seagulls, the smell of the sea, the feel of the sun on your skin, the bracing cold as you wade in to go for a swim, the sand moving between your toes. I could go on and on, because the sea is something I love and feel a deep affinity with that goes beyond thinking.

You may have no connection to the sea and this example, so in that case imagine something you do yearn for that really speaks to you, a dream you regularly contemplate for your future. Take that idea, consider what moves you about it, with all the impulses, triggers and impact that brings. Do a similar reflection, by letting yourself connect with each impulse, trigger, imagining that you are now living that future. What starts to show up for you? It could be your dream job, your preferred sport, playing an instrument and a piece of music you always dreamed of being able to play. Unfettered by anything about how you’ll do it, just feed your motivation. Connect with your deeper self by finding a dream that speaks to you powerfully on multiple levels, one you can’t just dismiss and put on the too difficult pile.

If I was coaching you around living your future vision for your life, I’d likely be spending a lot of time at the start on keeping you focused on building that powerful sense of connection between you and your dream future. A visualisation process in which I gently holding you to keep your attention focused on experiencing and building what you see, rather than attending to the voice in your head that wants to formalise and define how you’ll realise it. That action stage is an important component of realising a future in reality, of course it is, but it comes later..

This is a big subject, creating a future and designing a powerful structure to keep it alive and ensure you stay in action living into it. I’m just scratching the surface here to give you a glimpse of something important that is deep and impactful to work on, so you can reflect a little and see if this is something that you want to explore further personally or professionally.

As now is for many a time for summer holidays, vacating your life for a while, maybe taking some time to reflect on what you love about your life now and what you'd like to explore as your path forward is something to focus on during these calmer moments? Whichever metaphorical mountain top you discover when you take a moment to appreciate your life and imagine yourself directly standing in that future that inspires you, I wish you a happy breathing space that will give you a recharge and provide a new view of what's possible in your life, right now.

Just remember, as with the 2 contrasting ways of seeing your life at the start of this helpsheet, what you focus on expands. Fills your awareness. So, notice what you're focusing on and then you can shift it to something more appealing right now or whenever you decide to.

I provide one to one and team coaching for leaders and their organisations. If something resonates in what I've outlined here and you would like to check out what support options could be helpful for you and your team, please get in touch.