

Let Your Future Pull You Forward

*Throw your heart
out in front of you
and run ahead to catch it..*
Arab proverb

Psychology spends a lot of time examining the past in order to understand the cause of what's happening in the present. What if the pull of the future exerted just as much power in creating what is happening right now? What if the future could help you overcome all the mistakes of the past? What if, by focusing on the future, you could discover your true destiny?

How much time do you spend thinking about the past? In fact, it is a lot more than you think. Most of the 60,000 thoughts you think each day are the same thoughts you thought yesterday. It is extraordinarily difficult to think or speak totally in the present. Try it! You'll find lots of thoughts are based on judgments - comparisons with experiences you've had in the past. You'll be tempted to discuss what you saw, heard, felt or said yesterday or before... Even as you attempt to describe the present, by the time the words come out of your mouth, you are describing the past of a few moments ago. And what happens when you think about the future? At best, you'll project an image based on hypothetical probabilities. You'll predict the most likely future, based on the past. Is it any wonder that history seems to repeat itself?

What if you could step beyond the usual parameters of your thinking? What if you could think bigger and bolder and brighter - and really stretch into the best possible future imaginable? What if the 'future you' was already beckoning to you, drawing you towards a whole new realm? When you set an outcome, this is the power you could tap into each time. Your desired outcomes right now hold clues to the essence of what your soul would choose for you. It is only habit that keeps us plodding in straight lines towards that most likely, inevitable, predictable, future. In order to turn in the direction of your destiny, you need the courage to create a new map.

Dave's problem was that he didn't know what direction to go in. His whole life was in shambles. Nothing had worked out for him. His job felt like a dead end, and after 14 years, he had decided to end his relationship too. At 30, he felt confused and disorientated, doubting the decisions he had made and unsure about where to go next.

I asked him to dream that at some future time, he would not only have an even better relationship, but he would also be enjoying a satisfying, fulfilling, and successful career. Just imagining this state, all his doubts and confusion vanished. So it seemed obvious that these were not the sort of thoughts he was

currently entertaining. In fact, he confessed that he did nothing but project negative pictures into the future. He thought this would help him avoid making mistakes. Consequently, he ended up feeling hesitant, doubtful and full of gloomy regret about what he might be losing if he made any changes. His future looked worse than his present. No wonder he didn't want to take the next step forward.

So I had him imagine he could float up high and look down at himself sitting in my office - as if he was on a small stage. He described the slouched figure as someone he didn't want to be: 'He should be happier and more upright. He should stop worrying. He does have the ability to take people on and be decisive.' Then I had him look up from underneath where he was sitting in the present: 'He really wants to get out of this position!' Then from the left side of the stage: 'It's amusing that I'm in this state...like a lost kid. I know what the problems are: I'm not man enough to get on and sort things out. I'm not taking responsibility. I'm also too hard on myself'. Finally from the right side of the stage: He's dying to get on with changing, he's so impatient! But he's looking for someone else to tell him what to do instead of trusting his own feelings. He's just scared of the unknown. What would his future be like if he lost what little he's got?'

Next we determined that within 2 years, it was reasonable that he would have sorted things out. So he imagined being able to float out to that future time where he not only had the successful career going, but he was also enjoying the company of a lovely lady with whom he felt he could really be himself. To his surprise, he saw himself in a town house in a coastal location, overlooking the sea, quite unlike his country home.

He asked his future self for advice and guidance: 'Stop wasting time whingeing and moaning! Get off your butt and get busy! Be brave, decide, do your best and take each day as it comes. Go for any good opportunities, but not if your gut says 'no'. Follow your heart if it feels right. If something doesn't feel right, it wasn't meant to be.' Dave opened his eyes wide. His whole demeanor brightened. His direction began to feel much more clear to him. He needed to sell his house, and make a fresh start in a whole new location. He needed time away from his ex-girlfriend in order to get clear on what was true for them. And he also needed to keep his life in better balance, spending more time with friends and family.

Why allow your past to define who you are? Isn't the pull of the future more compelling than the push from the past?

*There is only one thing more powerful than all the armies of the world,
that is an idea whose time has come.*

Victor Hugo

How to let your Future guide you:

Choose one of your desired outcomes. Ask yourself: What would achieving this give me? Write down the answer. Ask yourself again: What would achieving this give me? Write down the new answer. Repeat that question again and again until your answers run out.

Repeat that procedure with several other desired outcomes, large or small. Notice and circle any similar answers that appear. These will give you a clue about the qualities you really want. These qualities may be the essence of your destiny.

Now ask yourself: What would be an even better way to experience those qualities, to live them and give them? Brainstorm all the creative ideas you can think of for new and alternative ways to achieve this higher outcome. Create your ideal future outcome.

Give your new outcome a reality check. If you know the NLP outcome frame, use those questions. Make sure it is possible, that you are capable of doing it, that you have or can get the resources, and that it is ecological. Will making this change be worth the cost? Check the benefits and risks.

When and where could you be achieving this in the future? Mark out a time line on the floor and place a marker on this point in the future.

Stand in this future place and fully associate into what it is like to have already achieved this desired state. What are you seeing, hearing, feeling and saying to yourself?

Look back to the present now. What advice would you give to yourself? What changes need to be implemented? What could make getting to this future place easy and effortless? What qualities and encouragement could you empower yourself with?

Go back to the present, looking towards the future self. Walk slowly towards that future, stopping only briefly to deal with any obstacles on the way. using the guidance of the future you. Walk this walk a few times until a new path is created from your present to your desired future state.

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