



Five Steps to Getting What you (really) want

an article by Ruth Guy of Taking Steps

You've reached the point where 'something has to change' in your life: you're stuck in a humdrum job, your level of fitness is at an all time low, you don't have time for your friends, nor time to relax and the feeling builds up that you have lost control. Wouldn't it be wonderful to lead a calm, clutter free, confident and controlled life instead?

Step 1 – your ideal life

Our tendency may be to analyse our current situation and then work out, rationally, what to do about it. Why not allow your creativity to flourish by producing an 'ideal life' collage, similar to a mood board used in interior design. Gather together colour magazines and brochures, scissors, glue and a large piece of plain card or paper. Cut out pictures of anything that appeals to you and that you would like in your ideal life. This might be a bottle of designer fragrance, a trekking holiday, a thatched cottage, sports car, a group of friends laughing together, a beautifully furnished room, flowers, exotic fruits. Allow your instinct to choose the pictures you want, and arrange them on the plain card or paper

Step 2- define your values

These are what underpin any goals you choose in life, so it is important to be clear about them. Your collage will show these, for example you may value having a healthy body; protecting the environment; good friends; time for yourself; peace and quiet; adventure; challenge; money. List these values and any others you have.

Step 3 - What do you want?

Be as specific as you can : 'slim enough to walk across the beach in a swimsuit' is better than 'slimmer than I am now'. 'feeling calm as I get ready for work because everything I need is at hand' is better than 'a tidy house'. Keep your thoughts and your language positive. You are giving your brain instructions so that it triggers the behaviour that will achieve your goal and the brain does not distinguish between positive and negative statements. If you have ever tried to overcome nerves before a performance of any sort by telling yourself: 'don't be nervous' 'don't tense up' 'don't let them get to you' you know that the result you get is often 'nervousness' 'tension' and 'being got at'!



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Step 4 - Identify your resources.

You almost certainly have more resources than you think you do and now is the time to make the best use of them. There will be people in your life who can support you. You may have someone you admire who could act as a role model, or a friend who has experienced a situation similar to your own and can pass on to you what they have learned. Your partner can boost your confidence and help you to acknowledge your skills and talents. A coach can act impartially to help you identify your goals and what is preventing you from achieving them.

For the knowledge you need, there are books, the internet, workshops, courses and articles.

You possess your own unique set of skills, achievements, and qualities. You may find it easy to get on with people, or you may have a conscientious approach to work, a great sense of humour, the ability to be flexible. The skills can be transferred from one context to another. If you are looking for promotion you can demonstrate how your interpersonal skills qualities can help your company. If you are wanting to move abroad your careful approach to planning will ensure you make the best decisions you can. It is always a useful exercise to ask other people in your life what they regard as your strengths - the results invariably boost your confidence and it can be a pleasant surprise to become aware of your hidden strengths.

Finally, how much time are you going to devote to your goals? Many people start very enthusiastically, only to fall at the first hurdle of not having enough time. If the goal you have chosen is so important to you then you must allot enough time to it, and there is always a way to find the time, regardless of how busy you are. The key thing is to plan ahead.

Step 5 - Commit yourself.

However inspired and motivated you feel, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that you not only need to be determined to change, but determined to work towards that change. There are no shortcuts and it is important to acknowledge that you may have to give something up in your life in order to pursue your goals. It is common to sabotage our intentions ('I really want to get that qualification but I don't get the time to study as I have a busy social life'). Do you really want the social life more than the qualification? Remember your ideal life collage and start taking the steps that will bring you closer!