

Deciding your own future: *what life can give you*

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To begin, I'd like you to engage in a brief reflective exercise. Ask yourself the following question: *What qualities do I find admirable in another human being?* It's important to note that this is less about analysing or problem-solving, and more about allowing yourself to be present with the question. There's a distinction between thinking *about* a question and *contemplating* it. When you contemplate, you're creating space for insight to emerge organically, rather than trying to arrive at an answer through logic alone. Often, if you sit with the question patiently, thoughts or feelings will begin to surface—these can be meaningful indicators of your values or aspirations. As these responses arise, take a moment to write them down, without judgment or the need for completeness. As simple as this exercise is, there is more to it than you probably think.

I'd like you to imagine yourself as a light in the darkness—a steady, guiding presence that reaches beyond the horizon. Often, meaningful growth begins not with answers, but with a question—and most importantly, a question we ask ourselves. When individuals start to inquire inwardly, especially around themes of self-development or their future self, it often reflects an intuitive understanding that aiming beyond the ordinary can open the door to personal transformation. A helpful starting point in this process is to write a brief personal autobiography. It doesn't need to be lengthy—just enough to capture the key experiences, values, and perspectives that define who you are at this moment in time. The purpose of this exercise is to establish a clear sense of your current self. After all, it's difficult to chart a meaningful path forward if you don't know where you're starting from.

Once you've taken time to reflect on your present, I encourage you to shift your focus to the future. Begin writing about the kind of person you want to become and the life you envision for yourself. This helps create direction. As I often remind clients, we rarely move toward meaningful goals by accident—you have to identify a destination in order to begin the journey. And importantly, much of the emotional satisfaction we experience in life doesn't just come from achieving goals, but from the sense that we are moving toward something that truly matters to us. When your actions align with your values and long-term vision, each step can feel purposeful and deeply rewarding. Many people are afraid to aim because if you specify what you want, you've specified your conditions of failure, which means you know when you fail. Therefore, for many people it's best to keep it foggy because you don't really

know if you're succeeding or failing because there isn't that clear aim. It's basically taken the easy way out, and most human beings prefer the easy way when it comes to self-development.

Setting an aim is, in many ways, an expression of your evolving character—just as reflection is. Asking yourself, *Who am I?* invites a deeper exploration of your identity and lived experience. This process can help you begin to organise your life into meaningful phases or chapters, highlighting the events and relationships that have significantly shaped who you are. As you engage in this kind of reflective writing, you may notice strong emotional responses emerging. It's not uncommon to feel a sense of vulnerability, particularly when revisiting past experiences that still carry emotional weight—especially those tied to pain, loss, or unresolved challenges. These emotional reactions are important signals and can be a valuable part of the healing and self-understanding process.

When doing reflective writing, it can feel like part of your soul is stuck back there, what I mean is the reason why you still experience the emotion is because you have not yet solved the problem that situation has faced you with, therefore your brain is still pegging it as a threat. Meaning its part of your territory that you did not master, yet. Therefore, taking it apart reduces the threat, but if you don't, then you're not going to be free from its grip. There will be times when you need to engage in activities that may not align with your immediate desires, but these actions are often what are necessary for your growth and well-being. It's important to gently push yourself toward things that may feel uncomfortable, as they can be key to your progress. Now that you have a clearer understanding of who you are, the next steps to consider are:

Ask yourself these questions if you were actively looking after yourself and others in 3-5 years down the line:

1. What would you want from your friendships?
2. What would you want from your intimate relationship?
3. How would you like to structure your family?
4. What do you want from your career?
5. How are you going to use up your free time?
6. How are you going to regulate your mental and physical health?

These are all thoughtful and relevant questions to consider. You're beginning to shape a vision of the life you want, which directly connects to your goals. It's important to bring awareness to the internal or external barriers that may be preventing you from fully engaging with and responding to these reflective questions in a constructive way. Try to reframe your perspective by considering where you'd like to be in 3–5 years. When you begin to clarify your values and envision the future version of yourself, you start building a mental framework—a kind of guiding structure—for how to move forward.

What tends to follow is a natural emergence of positive emotions. These feelings are often not the result of having already achieved something, but rather from the sense of progress and alignment with what you truly value. Achievements can be fleeting; once a goal is reached, attention often shifts to the next challenge. What sustains a deeper sense of fulfilment is the ongoing process of growth—the consistent movement toward meaningful goals.

But remember, always be conscious of continuous work. One insight I've found helpful is that happiness often comes not just from resolving problems, but from maintaining momentum—continuously setting intentions and taking steps toward them. This forward motion supports not only emotional well-being but also a sense of vitality and purpose. So, set your sights on a goal that is meaningful, attainable, and personally resonant. It should be something that challenges you—something that requires growth—because true development rarely comes from pursuing what is easy.

There are two key aspects to this process. The first is the external aim: working toward the specific outcome you desire. The second, often less visible but equally important, is the internal development that occurs as you strengthen your capacity to pursue meaningful goals. In doing so, you build motivation, resilience, and a greater sense of agency.

As you become more aligned with your intentions, you'll often notice that other areas of your life begin to shift as well—opportunities, relationships, and personal insights may start to emerge. It can feel as though you're actively shaping both your inner world and your external environment. And it all begins with reflection. Asking yourself honest, intentional questions is often the first step toward meaningful change.