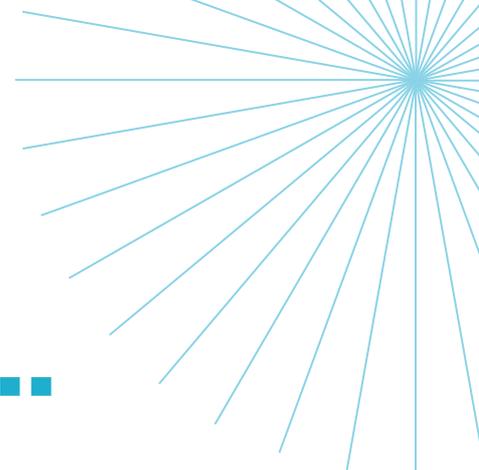


2014

*Power up your goals...
...the LEDs way...*



2014 is Your Year...

The start of a New Year motivates many to reflect upon their current situation and look for ways to improve it. This usually revolves around something *we want to be, do, or acquire*.

What this often leads to is the setting of specific goals that we mold in situations and with perspectives that usually lack a deeper understanding of what may really be going on for us, or how we can realistically change it.

The result: a list of *shoulds* that despite our knowledge of their importance, generate feelings of guilt, shame and obligation. Even if these objectives are inspired by positive motivation, they may present only surface solutions, making them difficult to achieve or sustain long-term.

What I would like to offer here is the very initial step required to better understand your current situation and experience. The *LEDs concept* is my simple summary of a collection of research dedicated to exploring the roots of true happiness, success, fulfillment, and tranquility. It is designed to provide you critical insight so that you can create a **truly effective goal-setting strategy** and establish a **consistent practice** for **sustainable results**.

True transformation requires not just a changing of habits, but a reworking of the underlying beliefs. And as we begin to see progress and reap the joyful benefits of our efforts, a new way of being and experiencing takes root. This is how long-term change is made.

Please note that this takes some time. And it is rarely – if ever – a straight line. It need not be a lot of time but meaningful change is a work in progress and for the very reason that counter-habits have existed for so many years, means that their dissolution and the introduction of newer healthier ones, will take work. But that work can be inspiring.

And if your goals are more externally focused (i.e. get a new job), this exercise can improve your focus and provide insightful guidance for next steps.

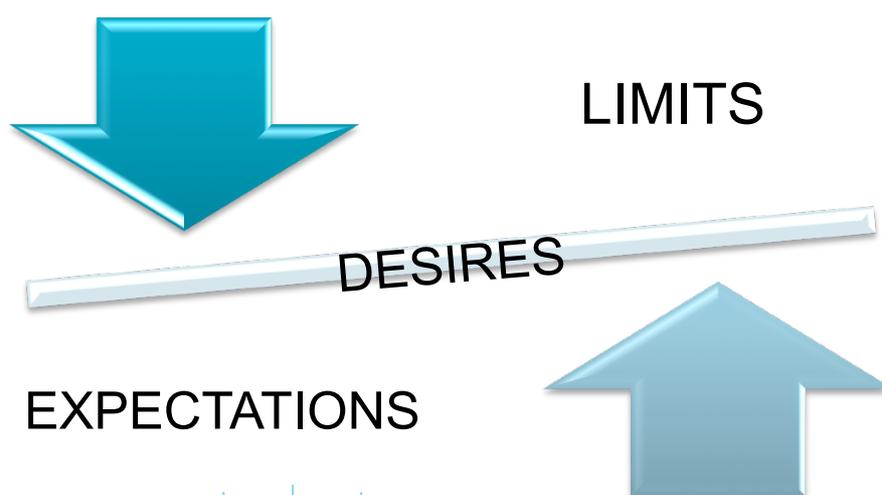
As always, if you would like some support in this process or in achieving lasting results, don't hesitate to contact me at nev@nevcoaching.com for a free consultation or program options.

Keep flying!

LEDs lead the way...

LEDs represent three key components that strongly influence **how we view and feel about ourselves and others**, and **how effectively we function** in our activities and relationships:

- **Limits** – they are the unique, natural limits to each person's physical, mental, emotional, interpersonal, or any other, *optimal functioning*. When they are respected and abided by, we have increased ease, tranquility, control, patience and joy in our activities and relationships. When they are surpassed, especially on a regular basis, we tend to experience symptoms of stress, frustration, anxiety, exhaustion and self-destructiveness.
- **Expectations** – they are the standards that we place on ourselves for who we *should be*, how we *should act*, and what we *should have*. As such, they strongly impact self-esteem, self-confidence, attitude, behavior, and other fundamentals of ourselves and our life experience. Some expectations are explicit, others may be so deeply internalized that they are almost subconscious. Regardless of the type, they place us in continuous comparison with an “ideal” created by either ourselves or passed down by our families, communities, or cultures.
- **Desires** – they are the unique, specific needs and wants of an individual that represent the critical factors necessary for optimal functioning in our activities and relationships. There are three keys: *knowing them*, knowing how to *fulfill them*, and knowing how to *effectively express them*. If you are denying your core desires on a regular basis, you are essentially chronically denying a part of yourself.





Limits are your wings...

In what areas of your life do you feel *strained*?

It is normal to have “crunch” periods when you are required to push through, endure, and deliver, despite the many challenges that surround us – an important project, a critical transition, a complex personal situation. But when **chronic stress**, **exhaustion** or feelings of **overwhelm** become a regular way of life, they often suggest that we may be unaware of or ignoring our natural limits. In doing so, we train others to push us the same, resulting in difficult symptoms (anxiety, insomnia, pain) or destructive numbing behaviors (excessive drinking, overeating, etc.).

When we recognize and accept those limits – really accept them – we begin to understand the kind of changes we can make to alleviate the core problem and bring more balance to our lives.

The following areas cause me stress and/or exhaustion (be as specific as possible):

Ex: **1) I have too much work volume and I work too many hours.**

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

As you look at your list above, write the specific areas in each that cause you stress or anxiety:

Ex: **1) Too many projects, email, most decisions pass through me and not enough support.**

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

What specific stress symptoms are you experiencing as a result of these areas?

Ex: **1) Loss of sleep, tension, health issues, no time for self and loved ones, exhaustion.**

- _____
- _____

How do you usually alleviate these symptoms?

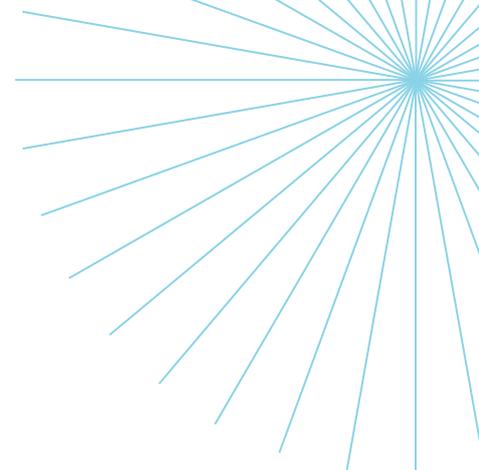
Ex: **1) Swimming, watching TV, having a beer, being with friends/family, overeating.**

- _____
- _____

How would you feel, live and act if you didn't have this stress?

Ex: **1) More relaxed, better mood, more productive, enjoy my work more, sleep better.**

- _____
- _____



Limits...

Start with NO...

No matter what our circumstances, we may feel that we are the only one available or capable to assume certain responsibilities, to *get the job done*. Yet this is rarely true and there is almost always something that can be reduced, made more efficient, delegated or entirely taken out. Always. The challenge is that we have spent years operating under certain beliefs and habits that have, by their very nature, served to maintain these roles preventing us from taking a more objective and even creative look to finding better solutions. So for the sake of the exercise, let's play with this...

For each one of your areas, think creatively about what can be improved, delegated or eliminated:

Ex: 1) Train staff to assume workload, set limits on email and appointments, set conditions for accepting new work, review cost-benefit analysis of certain projects, just say NO!

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

Now set a first step towards alleviating the stress in each area:

Ex: 1) Call a meeting with my staff, draw a list of priorities, reorganize workload, delegate.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

WE are the challenge...

The hardest part of this is recognizing that what often keeps us doing the same is the fear that if we don't continue, something bad will happen. These imagined consequences often prevent us from making big (or small) key decisions that can greatly improve our way of life and work. The good news is that can change and once you start looking for solutions, plan and communicate them effectively, things find a way of flowing in a new direction.

My fear for each area is that if I don't continue doing it, this will happen:

Ex: 1) Lose clients, projects will lack quality, I will have less control, things won't get done.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

Now challenge each fear or propose a solution that doesn't include you doing the same as before:

Ex: 1) My team is competent and with the right structure/training can take responsibility for their work and results.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____





Not-so-great Expectations...

What do you expect of YOU?

A common barrier to identifying and acknowledging our limits are the expectations we put on ourselves. Many of us are not aware that we carry certain standards because they are so internalized in our way of being and acting that it can be hard to consciously recognize them.

We all have them. On the one hand, they can reflect our values and our hopes for what we want to be and achieve. But often times they go beyond that. They set arbitrary deadlines and irrelevant (though seemingly relevant) comparisons and pressures that instead of positively motivating us towards our goals, keep us ever mired in what we haven't yet done, haven't yet become. They judge us, in one form or another, leading to fearful fantasies of what may occur if we don't continue "being good, doing the right thing".

But everyone of us has our own story, our own *history*, context, definitions, challenges, hopes, and ways of doing things. We have the right – even the obligation – to be ourselves, and decide what ultimately makes the most sense for how we want to participate in our lives. It is ultimately the best chance we have of **becoming and giving our best**.

Yet deciding to ignore outside pressures (family, society, culture) feels difficult and complicated. But if you can find the strength to insist on what makes sense for you, be it and live it, becoming ever more comfortable with those choices, others will eventually have to accept it, or fall away. This can be a difficult consequence to contend with, but the alternative is feeling that you, as you are, are not enough or doing enough. And that has even deeper consequences (depression, anxiety, frustration, low self-worth, unrealized dreams, etc.).

What are the 5 top expectations you have of yourself?

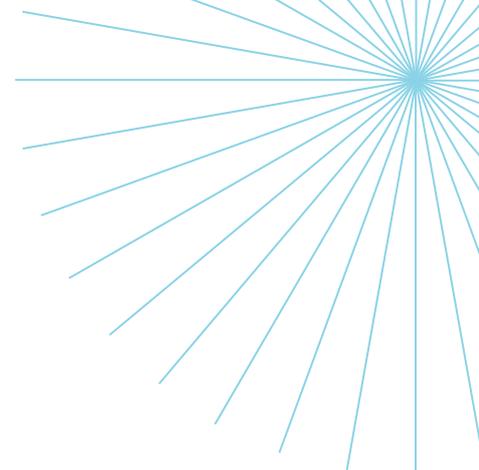
Ex: **1) I should earn more money to be able to support myself and my family.**

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

What are you doing to fulfill those expectations?

Ex: **1) I work a lot, am always reviewing my accounts, careful about my spending.**

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____



Expectations...

How well are you fulfilling those expectations?

Ex: **1) I make some money but I need to make more to buy a new home, pay off my debt, etc.**

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

What worries are you experiencing around your expectations?

Ex: **1) I'm afraid I won't make enough money to get the financial independence I want.**

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

What do you think you need to accomplish to fully achieve your expectations?

Ex: **1) I should be making X amount of money regularly.**

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

What is preventing you from fully achieving your expectations?

Ex: **1) I can't work much more because I already work a lot of hours, I don't have enough clients, I have other obligations that take my time, I lack focus or organization, etc.**

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

How do these expectations make you feel?

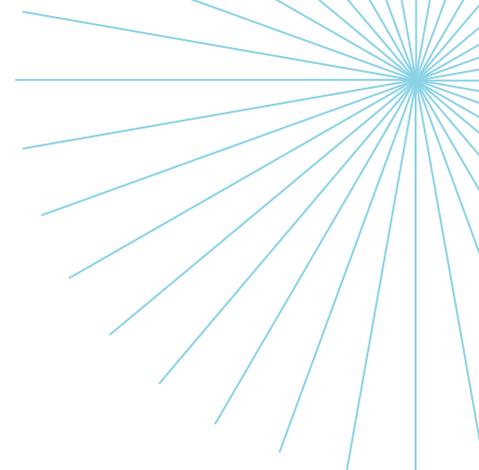
Ex: **1) I worry a lot sometimes, I feel overwhelmed and tired, like I can never do enough, I feel chronic anxiety every time I look at my accounts, I fear I may end up on the street one day.**

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____





Expectations...



How our Expectations fail us...

The problem with expectations is that even when we continue to achieve the goals to fulfill them, they rarely fall away. Because once we advance to a new level, the expectation itself adjusts to keep us expecting more, achieving more, like a glass that can never be filled.

The reason for this is that **our expectations are often rooted in an external comparison for what achieving them might look like, instead of any internal faith and confidence in ourselves**. The result: as we grow, so do they, as does the anxiety of never being enough, never doing enough.

One effective way to dissolve this cycle is to focus inward, challenging them directly, and identify positive evidence for how we ARE enough, and ARE doing enough. We take these expectations out of the equation and oddly, when we do so, it can actually make it easier to identify ways we can improve our situation and make useful changes to fulfill our goals.

So let's make these expectations disappear, and the feelings associated with them.

How would you be, act, and function differently in these areas?

Ex: 1) I would enjoy my work more, focus better on what I think is most important, feel less pressure to work long hours, feel more confidence in my potential to achieve my goals.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

Look at your initial expectations and reverse them into positive statements (*take out the should*)

Ex: 1) I earn enough money to be able to support myself and my family.

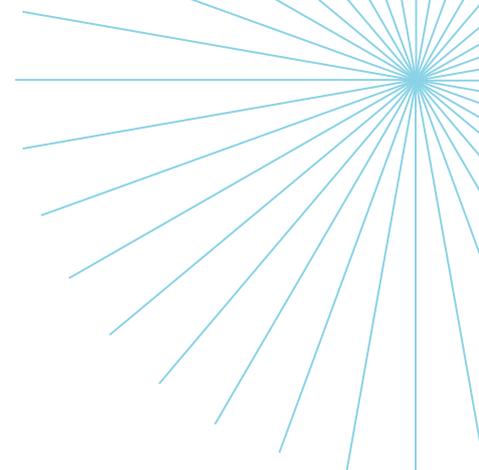
- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

Now write evidence of these positive statements.

Ex: 1) We have a home, good food, the kids go to school, we are not on the street.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

Expectations...



Now that you know you are enough, and already doing enough, consider some adjustments that could help you function more optimally in each area.

Ex: 1) I could focus on work that has higher impact/results, get some advice on how to get more clients, consolidate my debt payments, start a small savings plan, etc.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

Now set a first step towards accomplishing these solutions.

Ex: 1) Create a strategy for making more money/getting more clients, find a quality financial advisor, look for resources on how to increase self-acceptance and reduce anxiety.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____





Declare your Desires...

What do you need and want?

While many of us know fairly well (or very well!) how to do our jobs and raise our kids and what is needed to do these things effectively, we often lack clarity on how to communicate *our own needs* or achieve them in the midst of other competing obligations. In fact, it is usually our dedication to other people and responsibilities that leads us to put ourselves last and assume that we can just keep plugging along, no harm done.

But our best chances of giving our best to everyone and everything else is first ensuring that we, ourselves, come first. The biggest challenge to this concept is that it is essentially selfish. Another typical response is often “but I don’t have time/money/energy”. Yet what this is really saying, quite simply, is that you are not as important. And even if you accept that, it is still greatly limiting your potential to get where you want to go.

There are many people out there with incredibly demanding schedules – even worse than our own – that manage to find time for themselves, take necessary breaks, do some exercise and fully enjoy time with their loved ones. How? Because at some point they really internalized, *FELT*, that this is their priority and what they want and need in order to feel well. In short: **they decided that they matter just as much as everyone and everything else.**

So let’s explore your desires.

Think of specific situations (relationship, activities, etc) and general needs that you desire to have or increase in your life:

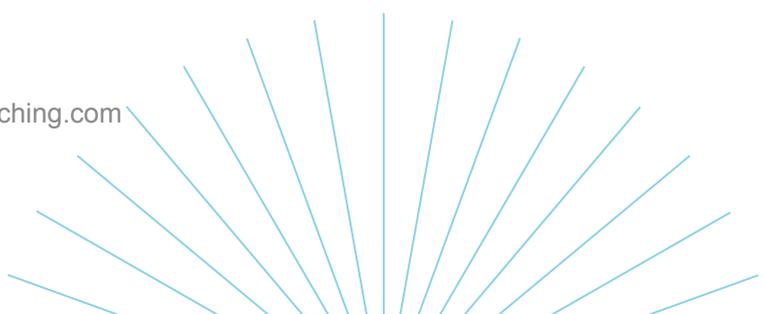
Ex: I want to spend more quality time with my children without thinking about work.

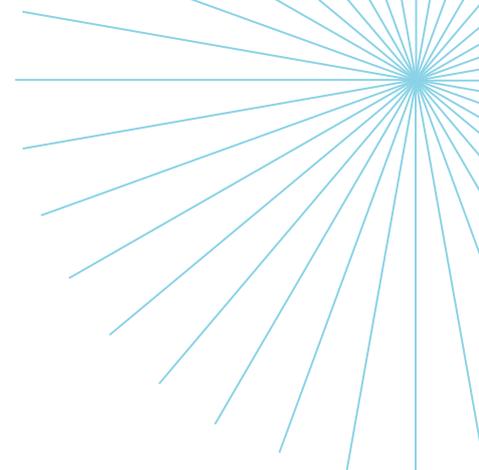
- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

What is blocking you from achieving these things?

Ex: I just have so much work that I constantly keep thinking of everything I have to do.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____





Desires...

What underlying belief is keeping you from getting your needs met?

Ex: **1) There is no one capable/available enough to get the work done, other than me.**

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

Now assume that there are options – because there *always* are – and challenge your own beliefs:

Ex: **1) There are capable people in my team or that I know who, with proper instruction, can take over this work and leave me to do the most important stuff.**

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

Who needs to know?

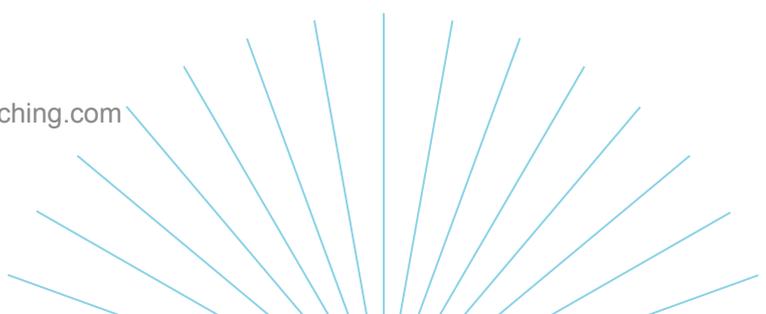
Part of what prevents us from getting what we desire is just learning how to communicate it effectively. Often times we may bottle up our needs, dismissing them as small or unimportant, until one day they overwhelm us and come out in ways that may not get us the results we want (emotional blowups).

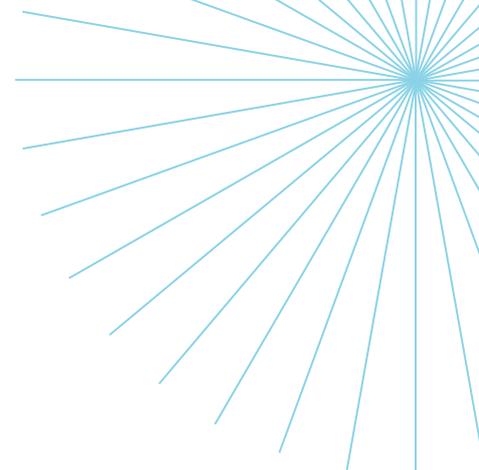
So to make sure that doesn't happen, we can train ourselves to communicate these needs, as they occur, in calm, confident and specific ways that allow others to understand exactly how they can support us in making it happen.

So who do you need to talk with to get the right support for getting *your* needs met:

Ex: **1) My partner, my business partner, my assistant, my team, mySELF.**

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____





Desires...

Now set a first step towards effectively communicating and fulfilling your needs.

Ex: 1) Meet with my partner/secretary/web designer/etc.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

To ensure that your communication is as effective as possible, set some objectives of what you want to achieve with the conversation:

Ex: 1) Communicate my gratitude for their work, ask for possible solutions, set dates, objectives and specific deliverables to successfully fulfill what I want.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

Make yourself believe you are worth it...

If you've struggled for a lot or a little time with voicing your desires, chances are the typical blocks to doing so will arise once again. Why? Because underneath it all, we may struggle to believe that we deserve to have needs, that others deserve to hear them, and that fulfilling them is not a selfish act but the ultimate expression of our self-awareness, self-worth and emotional maturity.

We may also struggle with being surrounded by people who cannot or will not listen, accept or be willing to help us in this respect. The only way to insist on this, is to remember why you are truly worth it.

Look at each one of your needs/wants and write why you believe you deserve to fulfill it.

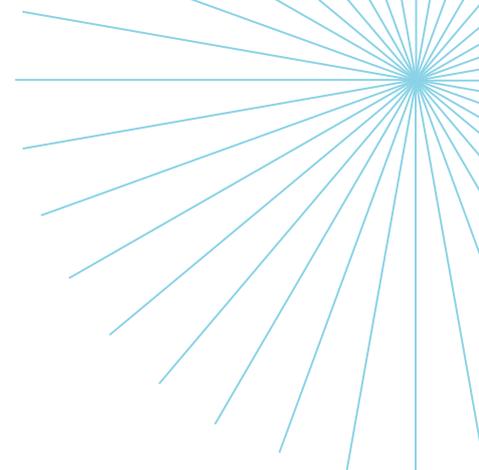
Ex: 1) My family is my stronghold and I love them deeply. They and I deserve to enjoy each other because in the end, this is what I will remember the most.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____





Launching YOU...



Now that you have done your LEDs analysis, go back and review the action items in each area (They are the ones with examples in **red**).

What CORE positive changes can you make that with help you respect your Limits, calm your Expectations and fulfill your Desires?

The key is to set sustainable goals, phrased as positive choices (not shoulds) towards fulfilling a big vision (not expectation). Then identify an immediate next step for each that will allow you to start your progress NOW and keep building upon it in a way that quickly brings you benefits and wins, to motivate you in your development.

What this does is shift the power of your situation back to you and open up an expansive world of creative problem solving and opportunities, separate from your self-worth as a person. When this occurs, it is also easier to more honestly and positively assess your mistakes and set-backs and see them as part of a journey towards truly creating the life and work that you want and deserve. So let's go for it.

My CORE visions and next steps are:

Ex: ***Vision #1: I want to earn enough money to feel secure in my work and life situation.***

Step #1: Make an appointment with a business expert to get advice on how to get more clients and increase my sales/profits.

Vision #1: _____

Step #1: _____

Vision #2: _____

Step #2: _____

Vision #3: _____

Step #3: _____

Vision #4: _____

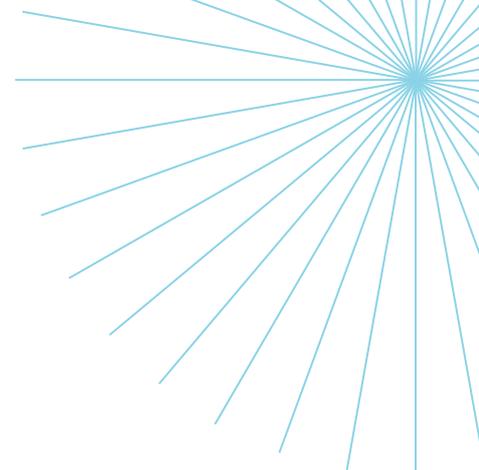
Step #4: _____

Vision #5: _____

Step #5: _____



Launching YOU...



As you create your strategies, plan your goals and launch into execution, keep in mind some of the following best practices that can help you stay motivated and get results:

- ❖ **Steady work** and dedication in fulfilling your goals will get you farther than making a one-time effort without follow-through.
- ❖ **Be specific** in your objectives instead of general – this gives you critical information on what exactly to work on and how to move forward.
- ❖ **Write things down!** This is a proven and widely used method to organize, develop, and keep track of your ideas.
- ❖ **Reflect** – make time for regular moments to assess your progress, check-in with your emotions and impressions, and simply create space for healthy revision.
- ❖ **Share and connect with others** – don't be alone in your development. There are so many people out there who can help and support you and who will want you to succeed. Find them and select them careful, then enjoy the flood of mutual inspiration.
- ❖ **Be patient** – some efforts (like building a network of contacts) will not yield immediate results but if you continue planting the right seeds towards your vision, they will blossom.
- ❖ **You can change your mind** – a gift of the human intellect is that we can be creative, flexible, and adaptive. And this means that sometimes we will decide to change directions. That is not only ok, but fundamental for critical thinking and active participation in your development. Even when you do so because of a mistake.
- ❖ **Be kind to yourself** – don't forget that you are already enough and each of us has our own unique preferences and limits. So stretch and push past your comfort zones, but without doing damage to yourself.
- ❖ **Fulfill your potential**, simply by showing up and offering the best of yourself that you can, in any moment. Your best will vary with other circumstances and that is ok.
- ❖ **There will be discomfort** – challenging your fears, breaking old habits, and managing the reactions of others is not an easy process. When you feel this discomfort, breath through it instead of pushing it away. Then continue on your way.
- ❖ **There will be JOY** – don't restrain your joy and excitement when you triumph or feel hope. Doing so will not prevent good things from happening or make it any less painful if you get disappointed. There is no such thing as false joy and you deserve to revel in it.

Launching YOU...

And here are some highly recommendable books for you to enjoy:

- ✧ **Brene Brown, “The Gift of Imperfection: Let Go of Who You Think You’re Supposed to Be, and Embrace Who You Are”**
- ✧ **Sir Ken Robinson, “Finding Your Element: How to Discover Your Talents and Passions and Transform Your Life”**
- ✧ **Lynn Twist, “The Soul of Money: Reclaiming the Wealth of Our Inner Resources”**
- ✧ **Daniel Kahneman, “Thinking, Fast and Slow”**
- ✧ **Mihaly Csikszentmihalyim, “Flow: The Classic Work on How to Achieve Happiness”**
- ✧ **Robert L. Leahy, “The Worry Cure: Seven Steps to Stop Worry from Stopping You”**
- ✧ **Robert Maurer, “The Kaizen Way: One Small Step, Can Change your Life”**
- ✧ **Steven Covey, “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People”**
- ✧ **Stuart Brown, “Play: How it Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul”**

Now, you are already on your way.

Always count on me for any help that I can give you.
You have my very best wishes for you and yours.

Happy 2014!

