

Get Your Life Back: The Most Effective Therapies for a Better You

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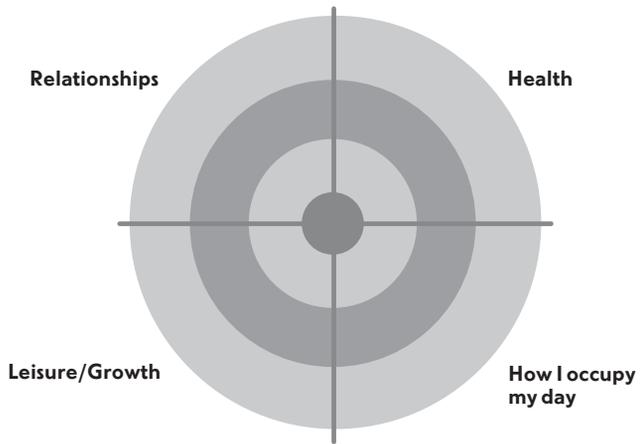
Why Change? Values and Goals

Have a go yourself below by putting a cross in each of the four areas:

My Bull's Eye



Date: _____



If you notice anything about your bull's eye, write it here:



Get Your Life Back

My values

My actions last week



| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Relationships</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In line <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Out of line <hr/> |
| <p>How I occupy my day</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In line <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Out of line <hr/> |
| <p>Leisure/growth</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In line <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Out of line <hr/> |
| <p>Health</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In line <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Out of line <hr/> |

You may notice that many actions we take in life can be seen as steps towards or steps away from our values. For example, Janet scowling at her colleagues is a step away from her values of being understanding and forgiving. Looking at things from her colleague Celia's point of view is a

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step towards this value. Now we are becoming aware that we have many choices, many times each day to work towards or away from our values and goals. We can actively plan to take steps towards our values each day.

5. Taking a baby step towards a value

Choose one life area from the bull's eye. For example, Janet chose the relationships area. She planned to try to see things from Celia's point of view. This made it much more likely that she would actually do it. Janet had to remember her ABC:

- a. I want to be a person who understands and forgives other people (value/goal)
- b. I want to be understanding and forgiving towards my work colleagues (imagine how this would look in reality)
- c. This morning, I'm going to look at things from Celia's (work colleague) point of view (action/baby step)

This was how Janet planned it out. Now it is your turn to fill in your own ABC. Start at (a) with your values words from one area. Then at (b) imagine what this will look like. What would I see if I could be a fly on the wall, watching you acting out this value? Where would you be? Who with? How would you look? What kind of things would you be doing? Write down next to (c) one action you can do in the next day or so to take a baby step towards your value.

- a. I want to be _____
_____ (values words)
- b. I want to be _____
_____ (imagine how this would look in reality)
- c. This morning/today/tonight/this week I'm going to _____
_____ (action/baby step)



Congratulations on trying this technique, which may look easy but it is not. Do not worry about whether you have got it exactly right or not. Like all skills, it takes practice. The most important thing is to have a go.

Homework

For the coming week, do this exercise so that you choose to take one baby step each day. It might be the same baby step or it could be different ones. Write down in your Baby Steps Diary how this goes. Also, make a note of things that get in your way and stop you or almost stop you from taking your baby steps. These could be practical problems (lack of time, money, etc.) or messages from your mind ('What's the point?' or 'This is silly' or even 'I'll fail', etc.). Things that help are important too so make sure they are also written down. For example, remember my value about my relationships (see page 61). I said:

- a. I want to be someone who is respectful towards other people (value/goal)
- b. I would like to show my respect for my mother (imagine how this would look in reality)
- c. I'm going to thank her for the cake she made (action/baby step)

The italics in the diary show my recording of taking this step.

Keep this diary going as you do other exercises in the book. Good luck and remember, we all started walking with baby steps.

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My Baby Steps Diary

| Day | Baby step | Did I do it? Yes/No | Things that got in the way | Things that helped |
|-----------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Example | Thank Mum for cake | Yes | Thought she'd think I've gone soft | Practised saying thank you first before I did it with Mum |
| Monday | | | | |
| Tuesday | | | | |
| Wednesday | | | | |
| Thursday | | | | |
| Friday | | | | |
| Saturday | | | | |
| Sunday | | | | |

Chapter 5

Acceptance and Mindfulness

What is mindfulness and why do I need it?

Mindfulness is focusing on the present moment with awareness and acceptance, without judging. Why do we need to do this? Because we have language, our thoughts come in words as well as images. Human minds are very good at ‘time travel’. Our minds spend a lot of time visiting the past, with thoughts like this:

‘If only . . . (I had chosen differently/done something else/said something, etc.)’

‘I wish . . . (I had done X/given my kids more time/worked harder in school, etc.)’

‘That was a bad thing s/he did’

These words in our thoughts are called ‘ruminations’. They are often at the centre of low mood and depression; there may also be images in our minds of the events or situations we remember. Our minds also spend a lot of time visiting the future. We can easily imagine the worst happening, in words and images, like this:

‘What if . . . (I lose my job/run out of money/get ill/my child gets run over, etc.)’