

Life Plan

FIVE-YEAR LIFE PLAN

This life plan is designed to be used by juniors in high school to help them figure out their interests, strengths, and future goals. Each life-planning exercise is intended to get students talking and thinking about their plans. There are 28 different exercises, with four activities for each of the 7 Mindsets. The key is to get them thinking about their future, goals, and dreams. There are a number of different opportunities available to students after they graduate high school, and the more they know, the better they can plan.

In the Everything Is Possible life-planning exercises, students will think about their priorities and dreams, and they will write a mission statement. They will also look at different career paths and choose ones that align with their goals.

In the Passion First life-planning exercises, students will explore their strengths, interests, and core values. They will use Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences as a guide.

In the We Are Connected life-planning exercises, students will think about their relationships with everyone in their lives. They will also pair up with a peer to work on interview skills.

In the 100% Accountable life-planning exercises, students will think about empowering activities and things they do to stay positive. They will write down some healthy habits they want to adopt and think about areas in which they could grow. They will also identify and seek out activities that will help them grow and accomplish their goals in the future.

In the Attitude of Gratitude life-planning exercises, students will think about all they are grateful for, treasuring themselves and others, and writing thank-you notes. They will list their available assets, thinking about the resources they have and the people they know.

In the Live to Give life-planning exercises, students will think about ways to stretch themselves, finding causes they believe in, and prioritizing their commitments. They will also learn how to receive gracefully and consider different situations and how they should respond. Lastly, they will think about the legacy they want to leave, what kind of impact they want to have on the world.

In The Time Is Now life-planning exercises, students will focus on the importance of taking purposeful action and making their dreams come true. They will put together an action plan for the next five years consisting of SMART goals. Flexibility is built-in, so they may come up with one main goal or several. We want them to be purposeful in this part of their lives. These activities are designed to get them one step closer to their dreams.

Life Plan



Everything Is Possible

Dream BIG: Exercise

Life Planning Exercise 1.1 – Focusing on My Priorities

This is your time to dream, to consider all the things you love to do, and part of that is knowing what is important to you. What are the things you value most in life?

Step 1 - My Life Priorities – Pick **three** life priorities or things that are important to you. Feel free to add one if it's not listed.

Common Life Priorities

Family
Career
Health/Wellness
Financial Stability
Hobbies

Community
Friends
Children
Philanthropy
Artistic Pursuits

Education
Spirituality
Marriage
Entertainment
Sports/Fitness

Step 2 – My Life Priorities Statement - Enter one sentence for each of your top three priorities, clearly stating why it is a priority to you. Understanding these priorities will help you define your “why” later and allow you to stay committed and focused on your dreams.

Example 1: My family is important to me because they are always there for me even when things are hard, making me feel safe and loved.

Example 2: My health is important to me because I know that my mental, physical, and emotional health are all related, and all will help me reach my goals.

Priority Statement 1

Priority Statement 2

Priority Statement 3

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Everything Is Possible

Embrace Creativity: Exercise

Life Planning Exercise 1.2 – Defining My Why – A Personal Mission Statement

Your *attitude* about your future influences your future. How you see yourself and others in this process is crucial. Making connections with others, talking with mentors, counselors, teachers, parents, and friends of parents can help you decide what courses you may want to pursue after high school.

A critical part of building a life filled with happiness and success is understanding what is important to us, what drives us. A personal mission statement is a tool for focusing your energy, actions, behaviors, and decision-making toward what you are most interested in accomplishing and becoming. It should briefly describe what you want to focus on and achieve in one or more areas of your life, as well as who you want to be in the future. This statement is your “why”. It is the reason for everything you do, and everything you dream of. It may include your professional goals, but more than that, it is about the person you want to be, the life you want to live, and the legacy you want to leave.

Sample Personal Mission Statements:

I will make efforts to succeed in school by paying attention in class and engaging with the subject matter. Doing this will help me become better at absorbing and processing information, which will make me more intellectually well-rounded.

I will strive to be healthy by staying active, exercising, and maintaining a balanced diet, all of which will help me stay energetic and motivated as I get older.

Take a minute to write down your personal mission statement. Your life is a product of your expectations, so dream big and expect great results.

Mission Statement:

“Your students will rise or fall to the level of expectations you set for them.”

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Everything Is Possible

Think Positive: Exercises

Life-Planning Exercise 1.3 – Dreaming Without Limits

You will be making decisions about your future and what you want to focus on in the next five years. What college or technical school do you want to attend? Do you want to go to school? Do you want to get a job? Enlist in the military? Do you want to travel? Do you like the idea of a desk job or one where you are outside all the time? Do you want to be your own boss? Do you want to create something new? What is important to you?

Visualization is a technique many athletes use to picture themselves succeeding long before they ever set foot on the playing field. Visualize your biggest and greatest dreams for each of the three priority areas you identified in Life-Planning Exercise 1. Imagine them as if there were no limits, all of those “but” statements that come to mind, let them go. If anything and everything is possible, and you could have any life you desire, with no barriers or limitations, what would you dream of? Visualize them in detail, and then describe them below.

Example:

My Dream: Health – Since everything is possible, I want ... to be active, healthy, and have a strong mind on my one-hundredth birthday.

Priority 1 Dream

Priority 2 Dream

Priority 3 Dream

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Everything Is Possible

Act and Adjust: Exercises

Life-Planning Exercise 1.4 – Career Path Options

It's hard to know exactly what you want to do when you're sixteen years old. It's important to realize that plans change, and dreams can change. It's important to "act and adjust" during this process of figuring out what you want to do. In choosing five different career paths, you can start to think about jobs that you might like.

Step 1 – Look over the ten fields of study and think about a few that might interest you.

Below are programs within those fields of study that may be interesting. Circle five, and add any that you might be interested in that are not on the list. Don't feel boxed in—these are just some ideas of things that might be fun to look into. If it's easier, feel free to start by marking out jobs that you can't see yourself doing.

| ART/DESIGN | BUSINESS | EDUCATION | ENGINEERING/ CONSTRUCTION | HEALTH CARE |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Animation | Accounting | K-12 Education | Architecture and Landscape | Dentist |
| Fashion Design | Business Administration | Early Childhood | Construction | Dental Hygienist |
| Graphic Design | Finance | Educational Administration | Mechanical | Doctor |
| Interior Design | Human Resources | ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) | Electrical | Health Care Administration |
| Photography | International Business | Special Education | Project Management | Massage Therapy |
| Web Multimedia Design | Leadership Management | | | Medical Transcription |
| Social Media Content Creation | Marketing | | | Nurse |
| | Office Administration | | | Physical Therapy |
| | Operations Management | | | Physician Assisting |

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Ultrasound
Technology
Veterinary
Science

| HOSPITALITY/ CULINARY | IT/ TECHNOLOGY | LAW/CRIMIN AL JUSTICE | SOCIAL/BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES | VOCATIONAL |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Baking pastry | Computer Programming | Crime Scene Forensics | Childhood Development | Auto Mechanic |
| Culinary Arts | Network Administration | Law Enforcement | Conflict Resolution | Computer Appliance Repair |
| Event Planning | Software Engineering | Paralegal | Counseling | Cosmetology |
| Hotel and Restaurant Management | Web Development | Public Safety | Organizational Psychology | HVAC |
| | Video Game Development | Forensic Psychology | Political Science | Plumbing |
| | | | Psychology Social Work | Electrician |

Step 2 – Research what kind of degree you will need for each career path.

Examples: specialized program or certificate program, two-year associate of arts or sciences degree (AA, AAS, AS), bachelor's degree (such as BA or BS), master's degree (such as MA, MBA, or MS), specialist, doctoral or related degree (such as PhD, JD, MD, DVM)

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Passion First

Focus On Your Strength: Exercise

Life-Planning Exercise 2.1 – My Strengths Inventory

Writing college essays, learning more about your own specific talents and gifts, and preparing for the next steps in your life all require you to focus on your strengths. Before you say you don't have any strengths, think about your personality. Are you good at making jokes? Making others happy? That's a strength. Do you prefer being behind the scenes, are you good with your hands, or do you love working on computers? Those are strengths. Find yours and showcase them.

Step 1 - Skills and Strengths - Identify the things you do well. Write down at least three strengths from the list below. Feel free to add your own.

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Math/Analytics | Reading/Comprehension | Communicative |
| Critical Thinking | Open-minded | Originality |
| Creativity | Imaginative | Logical |
| Socially Adept | Empathetic | Compassionate |
| Gracious | Generous | Brave/Courageous |
| Persistent | Diligent | Detail-oriented |
| Honest | Integrity | Kind |
| Loyal | Team-oriented | Fair |
| Leadership | Disciplined | Faithful |
| Discreet | Modest | Playful |
| Sensitive | Forgiving | Optimistic |
| Humorous | Passionate | Enthusiastic |
| Artistic | Athletic | Resourceful |
| Reliable | Ambitious | Adaptable |

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Part 2 - Situational Strengths – Identify the situations in which you perform at your best. Do you work well in big groups? Do you perform well under pressure? Are you at your best outside or in a closed room? Know when you are at your best, and begin putting yourself in those situations more often.

| | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Large Crowds | Solitude | Under Pressure |
| Early Morning | Afternoon | Evening |
| Late at Night | After Exercise | Outdoors |
| In Public | With Friends | With Family |
| When Challenged | In Competition | In a Crisis |
| Small Groups | One on One | Hot Weather |
| Cold Weather | Near Water | Bright Lights |
| Dim Lights | Loud Environments | Quiet Places |
| With Music On | On the Move | Learning New Things |

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Passion First

Explore Your Interest: Exercise

Life-Planning Exercise 2.2 – My Interests Inventory

Ever had that feeling, that hum, when things are going great? Loving life? What are you doing? Are you at a concert? Writing a paper? Giving a speech? Think about your interests and what you care about. If you were given one entire day to do whatever you wanted, what would it be? Spend all day with friends? Then, friends and other people are an interest of yours. Love watching movies? There's another interest.

In the list below, we have provided various interests that people have built on to lead extraordinary lives. This is just a sample, and there are many more. Identify and highlight some that apply to you and around which you think you could build your dreams. Use the spaces to add other interests you have that are not listed.

Interests Inventory

| | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Reading | Learning | Musical Instrument | Outdoors |
| Dancing | Singing | Painting | Building Things |
| Sculpting | Crafts | Drawing | Journaling |
| Sports | Politics | Money | Gardening |
| Economics | Science | Human Nature | Socializing |
| Performing Arts | Animals | Children | Magic |
| Elderly People | The Environment | Collecting Something | Playing Games |
| Poetry | Adventure | Extreme Sports | World Affairs |
| Exercising | Computers | Gaming | Languages |
| Social Networking | Fashion | Interior Design | Cultures |
| Yoga/Meditation | Cooking | Diet and Nutrition | Public Speaking |
| Knitting/Sewing | Traveling | Photography | Writing |

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Passion First

Take A Stand: Exercise

Life-Planning Exercise 2.3 – My Core Values

What are your core values? How do you give back? Do you have strong feelings about something? Why? What's important to you? When you think about these things, you will know what matters to you, and you will always be your strongest when you are acting from your values.

Part 1 – Identify Your Core Values - To live our dreams, we must be at our best and act from a position of commitment and strength. Below is a list of values. Identify those that define you, taking note of the most important ones.

| | | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Accomplishment | Customer Satisfaction | Honesty | Perseverance | Simplicity |
| Accountability | Decisiveness | Honor | Persistence | Skill |
| Accuracy | Democracy | Humility | Personal Growth | Social Intelligence |
| Adventure | Discipline | Humor | Perspective | Solving Problems |
| Appreciation | Discovery | Improvement | Playfulness/Fun | Spirit in Life |
| Authenticity | Diversity | Independence | Pleasure | Spirituality |
| Beauty | Ease of Use | Individuality | Power | Stability |
| Calm/Peacefulness | Efficiency | Ingenuity | Practicality | Standardization |
| Caution | Empathy | Inner Peace | Preservation | Strength |
| Change | Enthusiasm | Innovation | Privacy | Teamwork |
| Cleanliness | Equality | Integrity | Progress | Tolerance |
| Collaboration | Excellence | Intensity | Prosperity/Wealth | Tradition |
| Commitment | Fairness | Justice | Punctuality | Trust |
| Communication | Faithfulness | Kindness | Reliability | Unity |
| Community | Family | Knowledge | Resourcefulness | Variety |
| Compassion | Forgiveness | Leadership | Respect for Others | Wisdom |
| Competence | Freedom | Love | Responsiveness | |
| Competition | Friendship | Loyalty | Safety | |
| Continuous Improvement | Generosity | Meaning | Satisfying Others | |
| Cooperation | Global View | Modesty | Security | |

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| | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|---------------------|--|
| Courage | Good Will | Openness | Self-Control | |
| Creativity | Gratitude | Optimism | Self-Reliance | |
| Critical Thinking | Hard Work | Patriotism | Self-Thinking | |
| Curiosity | Harmony | Peace | Service (to others) | |

Part 2 - Your Core Values Statements – Now that you have a list of values that describe you, narrow the list down to three that are most important. Take time to consider which are the most critical to who you are. Once you have narrowed the list to three, write one or two sentences about why each value is so important to your life and your dreams.

Example: Empowerment – My life is about helping other people achieve more. By doing this, I believe I can make the world a better place and maximize my impact on the world.

My Core Value Statement 1

My Core Value Statement 2

My Core Value Statement 3

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Passion First

Be Authentic: Exercise

Life-Planning Exercise 2.4 – I Know Myself

Being authentic means getting to the core of who you are and what you believe in. When you know your values and priorities, everything else falls into place. Knowing yourself takes time and perspective. It's who you are when no one else is around. Sometimes it takes you until your junior or senior year in high school before you know who you really are, and you stop trying to be somebody else, whether it's to please a friend or your parents. Your authenticity is always best. Knowing yourself is an important part of knowing what you want to do with your life and what you have to offer others. Have you ever been told you are really good at working with others? Which of these intelligence speaks to you?

Use the link below to take a quick quiz to determine the intelligence you connect with.

<https://www.literacynet.org/mi/assessment/findyourstrengths.html>

- **Linguistic Intelligence (Language):** The ability to find and understand verbal and written words
- **Logical-Mathematical Intelligence (Logic/Math):** The ability to quantify things, making hypothesis and proving them
- **Spatial Intelligence:** The ability to see the world in 3-D
- **Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence (body movement):** The ability to coordinate your mind and body
- **Musical Intelligence:** The ability to discern sounds, their pitch, tone, rhythm, and timbre
- **Interpersonal Intelligence (social):** The ability to sense people's feelings and motives
- **Intrapersonal Intelligence (self):** The ability to understand yourself, what you feel, what you want
- **Naturalist Intelligence:** The ability to understand living things and read nature

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| Verbal-Linguistic (Language) | Logical-Mathematical (Logic/Math) | Visual/Spatial (Spatial) | Bodily/Kinesthetic (Body Movement) |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| attorney | accountant | 3D modeling & simulation | actor |
| comedian | auditor | architect | athlete |
| communications specialist | computer analyst | artist | carpenter |
| curator | computer technician | computer programmer | computer games |
| editor in publishing | computer programmer | engineer | designer |
| historian | database designer | film animator | craftsperson |
| journalist | detective | graphic artist | dancer |
| lawyer | economist | interior decorator | doctor of sports |
| librarian | engineer | photographer | firefighter |
| marketing consultant | lawyer | mechanic | forest ranger |
| newscaster | mathematician | navigator | jeweler |
| poet | network analyst | outdoor guide | mechanic |
| politician | pharmacist | pilot | personal trainer |
| songwriter | physician | sculptor | Phys Ed teacher |
| speech-pathologist | physicist | strategic planner | physical therapist |
| talk-show host | researcher | surveyor | recreation specialist |
| teacher | scientist | truck driver | surgeon |
| language translator | statistician | urban planner | yoga instructor |
| writer | bookkeeper | webmaster | |
| curator | technician | | |
| Radio or TV announcer | | | |

| Musical (Musical) | Interpersonal_ (social) | Intrapersonal (self) | Naturalist (Nature) |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| audiologist | actor | actor | air quality specialist |
| choir director | administrator | artist | animal health technician |
| disc jockey | communications manager | career counselor | anthropologist |
| music conductor | manager | consultant | astronomer |
| music camp counselor | conflict resolution specialist | counselor | botanist |
| music comedy actor | specialist | criminologist | biologist |
| music critic | cruise director | energy healer | dog trainer |
| music lawyer | customer service rep | futurist or trend | environmental lawyer |

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| | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| music librarian | dental hygienist | predictor | farmer |
| music publisher | group mediator | intelligence officer | forest ranger |
| music promotor | human resources manager | personal counselor | gardener |
| music retailer | marketing specialist | philosopher | geologist |
| music teacher | nurse | program planner | landscaper |
| music therapist | Peace Corps | entrepreneur | meteorologist |
| musician | politician | psychic | nature photographer |
| orchestra director | psychologist | psychologist | park naturalist |
| piano tuner | religious leader | program planner | veterinarian assistant |
| recording engineer | salesperson | researcher | water conservationist |
| singer | social director | small business owner | wetlands ecologist |
| songwriter | social worker | spiritual counselor | wilderness doctor |
| sound editor | teacher | theologian | wilderness guide |
| speech pathologist | trainer facilitator | therapist | wildlife illustrator |
| voice actor | travel counselor | writer | |
| voice instructor | waiter/waitress manager | wellness counselor | |
| conductor | personnel worker | | |

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We Are Connected

Embrace Everyone: Exercise

Life-Planning Exercise 3.1 – Embrace Everyone

You never know who may come into your life at particular times and really change the course of your life. We all need each other, and building relationships with others helps in the long run as you prepare for your career, future schooling, or even marriage and family. Finding ways to serve others and learn from them is one of the best things you can do for your life.

Step 1 – Identify an individual you met recently. Ask yourself why he/she may have come into your life, and how meeting this person could be a positive thing. Then consider what service you might provide to them to help them live their dreams.

Example: I met John at a concert. He likes the same music I do, and we're both singers. Instead of viewing him as a competitor, I will reach out to see if I can help him find opportunities. Who knows what positive things may come of it?

New Relationship

Step 2 – Identify an existing relationship you perceive as negative or challenging. Examine it and try to decide how something positive might emerge from it.

Example: My classmate is very competitive, and we do not get along. I will let this become a healthy competition that will motivate me to do more.

Challenging Relationship

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We Are Connected

Maximize Positive Relationships: Exercise

Life-Planning Exercise 3.2 – My Core Team

Surrounding yourself with people who build you up is one wonderful way to reach your dreams. There will always be those who try to tear you down, but you want to have positive people in your life to keep you on the right path. Invest in others who build you up right now, in high school. You know who those people are. If you are in an unhealthy relationship, it's best to cut off ties.

There is something in psychology known as the “law of five,” which says that we are the average of the five people with whom we spend the most time. It is very important to surround ourselves with the people who'll empower us the most. In this exercise, you will begin to define the empowering people in your life and develop strategies to build on these relationships.

Identify at least five of the most empowering relationships you have and use them as the foundation from which to expand your life. For each of the five, identify ways that you can expand the positive impact you have on one another.

Example: My brother and I share a common vision for our lives. I will spend more time with him and will try to match his confidence and positive outlook that has helped make him successful.

Empowering Relationship 1

Empowering Relationship 2

Empowering Relationship 3

Empowering Relationship 4

Empowering Relationship 5

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We Are Connected

Build Your Dream Team: Exercise

Life-Planning Exercise 3.3 – My Dream Team

Think about all the people in your life and who would be part of your personal dream team. What three dreams do you want to focus on for the next three years? Who can help you with those dreams? Can you make it a priority to develop those relationships?

You may already have friends, family, teachers, coaches, or mentors who will help you along the way to living your dreams, and you likely mentioned them in the previous exercise. Now it's time to identify the new individuals you must meet to help you live your dreams. List out the top five people on your dream team and how they can help you make your dreams a reality.

Example – I want to choose a career. I need to find experts in fields that interest me and talk to them, which will help me determine the best way to utilize my strengths on my new career path.

Dream Team Member 1

Dream Team Member 2

Dream Team Member 3

Dream Team Member 4

Dream Team Member 5

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We Are Connected

Lead With Value: Exercise

Life-Planning Exercise 3.4 – First Impressions

Leading with value means being your most authentic self and treating others with compassion and respect. How are you nurturing the relationships you have with others? Are you positive and upbeat when you meet someone new?

Whether you are getting ready for an interview, taking a new class, or meeting a potential mate for the first time, first impressions matter.

Interview Tips:

- Wear the proper attire
- Research the company and find commonalities with the interviewer.
- Remember that the interview starts the minute you make eye contact with the interviewer, so even small talk counts.
- Shake hands with vigor and look up.
- Maintain suitable eye contact and nod when listening.
- Keep a confident, upright posture.
- Don't complain, ever (not even about the weather).
- Think positively, smile, and engage the interviewer.
- Vary your pitch to convey enthusiasm.
- Praise yourself and the interviewer.

Also, know that recruiters look you up. Your digital profile matters, so be careful what you are putting out there in the digital world. Look back through your social media sites, and make sure your profile is clean.

Activity: Choose a partner, and have one person ask questions while the other answers them. Be sure to start the “interview” with a firm handshake and make eye contact.

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Interview Cards

| | |
|--|--|
| Tell me about yourself. | What are your strengths? |
| What is your greatest weakness? | Why are you interested in this opportunity? |
| What do you consider your biggest achievements? | What do you do in your spare time for relaxation? |
| How do you handle stress and pressure? | Why are you the best candidate for this opportunity? |
| Describe a difficult work situation/project and how you overcame it. | What are your goals for the future? |

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100% Accountable

Own Your Life: Exercises

Life-Planning Exercise 4.1 – My Empowering Activities

Use your time well, and focus on the dreams you set for yourself. It's easy to get caught up in others' dreams for your life, but at this point, it's all on you. You are not your parents or your best friend. It's all you and what you want to get out of this life.

Each of us has the same 24 hours a day that the most creative, productive, and successful people in the world all have. We all engage in numerous tasks and routines each day. Some give us energy, others make us stronger, and many are productive steps in our daily lives. Unfortunately, we also engage in activities that have no benefit, or worse, may be counter-productive to living a great life. How we use our time determines whether we get the most out of each day, which in turn affects our future. It is important to maximize our time doing things that energize and fulfill us because those activities will help take us to our best possible lives.

Below is a list of ways people spend their time. Identify and highlight the top three that you feel you should be doing. Once you've chosen your top three, describe why each is important to you living your dreams. List any additions in the blank cells.

Empowering Activities Inventory

| | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Being Creative | Helping Others | Exercising |
| Meditating | Practicing Faith | Learning |
| Developing Relationships | Organizing/Cleaning | Enjoying My Friends |
| Thinking/Planning | Being Outdoors | Enjoying My Family |
| Working | Resting | Playing Games |
| Reading | School | Listening to Music |

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Example: Meditation – It is important for me to meditate so that I can clear my mind and have the focus I need each day.

Empowering Activity 1

Empowering Activity 2

Empowering Activity 3

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100% Accountable

Overcoming Limiting Beliefs: Exercises

Life-Planning Exercise 4.2 – No Excuses

You sometimes place limits on what you think is possible for your life, based on your personal background and stories from your parents. You are the author of your own life! You get to write the book of how you want things to go, so don't limit yourself to what others believe about you or your abilities. Show them the possibilities by writing your own unique story.

Here is just a sample of a few positive habits you may want to adopt. Feel free to add some of your own. Come up with three habits (or choose from the list), and write them below.

| | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Wake up early | Live to learn | Prioritize | Develop resilience |
| Practice gratitude | Motivate yourself | Visualize | Think positive |
| Learn to say "no" | Read | Adopt a beginner's mindset | Set goals |
| Meditate | Exercise | Network | Simplify your words |
| Ask more questions | Make room for something new | Eat healthy | Spend less than you earn |

Think of three positive habits you would like to adopt:

Habit 1:

Habit 2:

Habit 3:

"Your students will rise or fall to the level of expectations you set for them."

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100% Accountable

Focus Your Energy : Exercises

Life-Planning Exercise 4.3 – Focus Energy on Areas for Growth

One of the things that most juniors in high school realize is that it's all on them. You must take responsibility for your grades, your actions, your friendships, and your decisions. As you start driving and getting real jobs, the reality of accountability really hits home. You cannot allow another person to control your life; you are the one in control. It's scary, but it's real.

The 100% Accountable Mindset guides you in your search for the best ways to expand who you are. Having defined your dreams in the previous activities, you will want to seek growth in areas that will help you live this new vision of your life.

As you think about what career path you might choose and which college, technical school, apprenticeship, or military service you may want to get into, think about some areas in your life where you could grow.

Example: I think I want to be a pediatrician. I have worked with kids, but I've never had any experience in a hospital. My area for growth will be gaining medical experience by finding an internship in a doctor's office or a hospital setting.

Area for Growth 1

Area for Growth 2

Area for Growth 3

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100% Accountable

Grow Through Life : Exercises

Life-Planning Exercise 4.4 – Action Steps for Growth

In order to live your dreams, you must grow and expand toward them. Now it's time to determine what you need to do to take yourself to a whole new level and become the person who can live your dreams.

Identify the most critical skills or strengths you must develop in order to live your dreams. Put a plan in place to start the process. What strengths and skills will be most critical for you? What can you do to get to the next level in each of those skills?

Note: Some dreams will have more than one Next Level Activity associated with them.

Example: Public Speaking – Take a class on presentation and communication.

My Next Level Activities

Skill or Strength #1

Next Level Activity #1

Skill or Strength #2

Next Level Activity #2

Skill or Strength #3

Next Level Activity #3

“Your students will rise or fall to the level of expectations you set for them.”

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Attitude of Gratitude Treasure Yourself: Exercise

Life Training Exercise 3.1 – Treasure Yourself

It's important to hold yourself in high esteem, recognize all that you are capable of, and know the talents you need to share with the world. It's okay (and necessary) to forgive yourself for past transgressions, realize you are human, and value yourself for all the wonderful things you bring to the world.

In this exercise, you will think about the things you have and how they will lead you to your ultimate life and a fulfilling future.



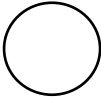
= something you love about yourself



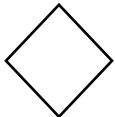
= something you've done that you're proud of



= a friend/parent/ teacher who values you



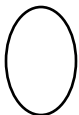
= a hobby you love



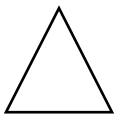
= subject you love or exceed in



= an award you've gotten or would like to get



= best compliment you ever got

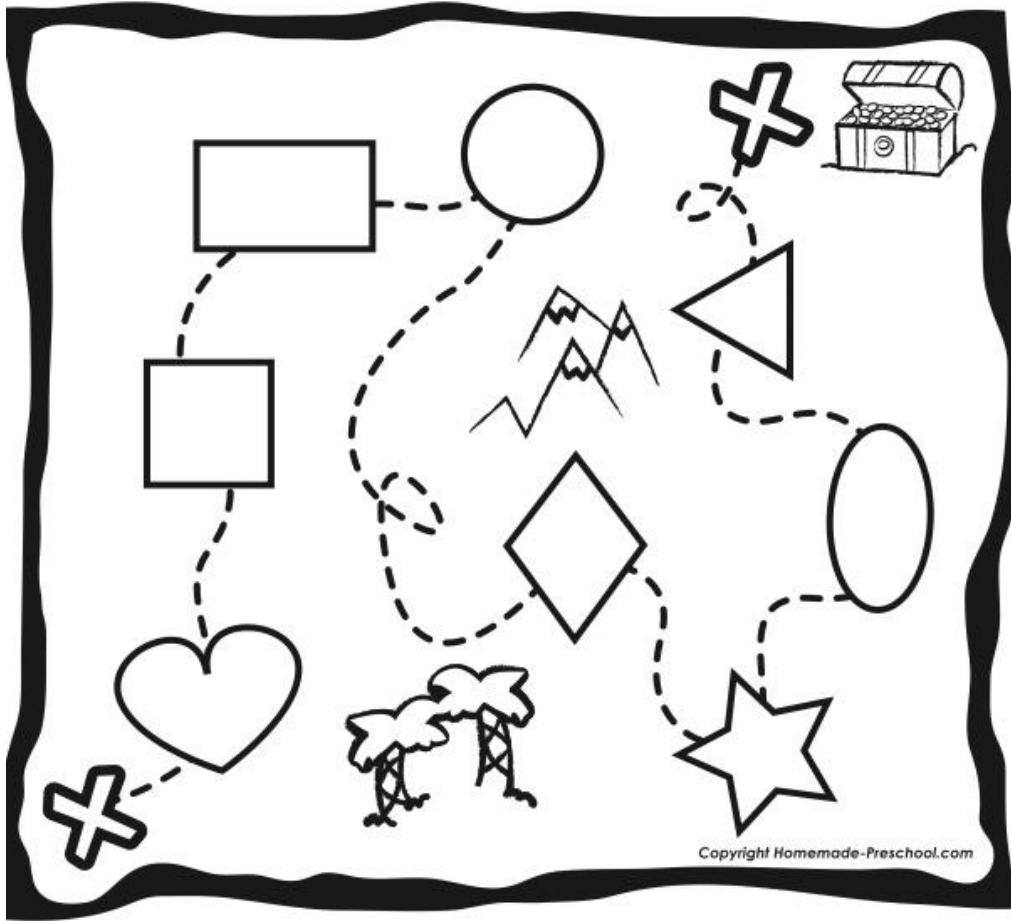


= favorite character trait

Draw a treasure map like the one below, filling in the shapes with positive things about

you.

TREASURE YOURSELF TREASURE MAP



“Your students will rise or fall to the level of expectations you set for them.”

My Treasure Map

Life Plan



Attitude of Gratitude

Be More Grateful In A Nutshell: Exercise

Life-Planning Exercise 5.2 – Being More Grateful

Focusing on all that you have to be grateful for is a daily routine that makes a big difference. It focuses your energy on the positive and not the negative. If you constantly complain about or share all the negative things going on in your life, then more of that seems to come to you. If you are thankful for all the blessings, just for the food you are able to eat, the clothes on your back, whatever it is, then more will come to you.

While it’s important to take time each day to write things down, it is equally important to recognize good things as they are happening to you. When you can do both, gratitude will become a powerful force in your life.

List as many things as possible that you’re grateful for. Include major items in your life, as well as some smaller, less obvious ones.

Common Things to Be Grateful for:

| Big Things | Little Things | Things I Take for Granted |
|------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| My family | I slept great last night. | Meals every day |
| My friends | It’s beautiful out today. | Having all my limbs |
| My house | My favorite pajamas | The ability to see |

My Gratitude List:

| Big Things | Little Things | Things I Take for Granted |
|------------|---------------|---------------------------|
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“Your students will rise or fall to the level of expectations you set for them.”

Life Plan



Attitude of Gratitude

Thank It Forward: Exercise

Life-Planning Exercise 5.3 – My Thank You Notes

Doing something for someone else has the additional benefit of making you feel good, as well. Showing appreciation for a friend or helping out a neighbor is another great way to focus energy on the positive, not the negative side of things.

Simply saying “thank you” each day is powerful. One way to expand the power of gratitude is to write someone a note. You can send it as an email or text, but a handwritten note is the most powerful, since it is the most personal. There are many ways to write thank-you notes, but one very effective and simple structure is this:

- Simply say “thank you” for whatever the person did for you.
- Explain why it was helpful or how you will benefit from it.
- Say something complimentary about the person.
- Express a wish to stay connected and perhaps help this person in the future.

Example:

Carla,

I want to thank you for your sincere, constructive feedback on my performance. It is not always easy to hear, but I value your opinion, and know that it can help me learn and grow. I hope you’ll always feel comfortable giving me your thoughts and perspectives on how I can be better.

Now it’s your turn. Think of a person who has been particularly helpful to you recently. Take out a thank-you card or sheet of paper. Writing as neatly as you can, express your gratitude to that person, following the structure above, if you’d like. As you do this, notice how it makes you feel. Then be sure to deliver it. Take time to write more thank-you notes, emails, or texts over the coming days. Constantly express gratitude to others, and you’ll begin to notice the wonderful things that doing so will bring into your life!

Life Plan



Attitude of Gratitude

Elevate Your Perspective: Exercise

Life-Planning Exercise 5.4—Available Assets

Attitude is everything. Learning from others and from your own mistakes is a great way to live a richer, fuller life. When you don't get the job that you were hoping for at the coffeehouse, but do get the one at the clothing store, focus on what you can learn and how you can grow.

Think about who you are and what is important to you. What have you learned in the last seventeen years? What resources do you have available to you that can help you get what you want? Dad's business? Websites? Organizations that you or friends belong to? What assets do you have in place that can help you?

List of available assets, such as people you know, friends, books, websites, connections, jobs, organizations.

Asset 1:

Asset 2:

Asset 3:

Life Plan

Life-Planning Exercise 6.1 – My Impact

It's okay to put yourself out there, apply to your dream college, try for the position, set goals for yourself, and follow through. It's good to have big dreams.

The Live to Give Mindset is about using our talents and gifts to help others and the world. The best gift you can ever give to the world is to be the best *you* that you can be. We have talked about you, your dreams, and the wonderful things they can bring to your life. By living your dreams and maximizing your potential, you will find that others will also benefit greatly from you living your best possible life.

Consider the tremendous impact you can have simply by living your authentic dreams, and then think of some things you can do to stretch or challenge yourself in some new way. Doing this will increase your value, both to others and to yourself as you pursue your dreams. Below, list some activities you can undertake to stretch yourself, and then describe the positive impact doing so might have on others.

| Stretch Yourself Activity | Impact |
|--|--|
| Example: I will take a graphic design class to help me become more well-rounded as a businessperson. | This will help me as I pursue my dream of owning my own business. It will also give me some design skills I can use to help friends and family with their own businesses and projects. |
| | |
| | |
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Stretch Yourself Activity:

Impact:

Life Plan

Life-Planning Exercise 6.2 – Pay it Forward

What do you care about? How do you spend your weekends? Are you at rock concerts? Work? Home babysitting your little brother? How can the interactions you have with others impact them in a meaningful way? How are you making a positive difference in the life of another person?

One of the most powerful things any of us can do is to start helping others. It is something we can all begin doing today, and it is even more powerful if the cause is something important to us.

In this activity, you will identify and describe issues about which you are passionate. The list below shows many social, political, medical, and environmental causes to which people dedicate their time. Highlight those that you have strong feelings about, and use the empty cells to list others you think of.

Once you have identified all the causes that interest you, select the three about which you are the most passionate. Then, on the next page, describe why each of these three is so important to you.

| | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Cerebral Palsy | Global Warming | Political Reform |
| Autism | Adoption | Cancer |
| Visual Impairments | Animal Abuse/Welfare | Dementia & Alzheimer's |
| Learning Disabilities | Corporate Monopolies | Epilepsy |
| Unemployment | Blood Banks | Heart Disease |
| Natural Disasters | Child Labor | HIV/AIDS |
| Drug and Alcohol Abuse | Child Abuse | LGBTQ Rights |
| Tobacco Use | Orphans | Mental Illness |
| Education Reform | Homelessness | Organ Donation |
| Art/Music in Schools | Human Trafficking | Personal Health |
| Career Counseling | Youth Empowerment | Spiritual Health |
| Mentoring | Parkinson's Disease | Support Groups |
| Environment | Social Responsibility | Housing/Shelter |
| Water Pollution | Physical Disabilities | Land/Property Development |
| Plastic Pollution | Hearing Impairments | Small Business Resources |
| The Rainforests | Stem Cell Research | Traffic Pollution |
| New Fuel/Energy Sources | Health Insurance | Urban Development |
| Local Business Support | India | Green Buildings |
| Foreign Aid | Africa | Public Transportation |
| Bullying | Latin America | Micro-Financing |

"Your students will rise or fall to the level of expectations you set for them."

Life Plan

| | | |
|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Civil Rights | Central America | Middle East |
| Immigration | Poverty | Gender Equality |

List your top three causes below and explain why they are important to you.

Example: I do not believe anyone should ever go hungry when some of us can help. I will donate my own food, money, and time to help fight hunger.

My Causes

My Cause 1

My Cause 2

My Cause 3

Note: If you want to take it to the next level, begin identifying organizations you can get involved with that support your causes.

Note: Volunteermatch.org is a great resource to find various volunteer organizations with which you can get involved and join a cause.

Life Plan



Live to Give

Receive Gracefully: Exercises

Life-Planning Exercise 6.3 – I Am Worthy

It's okay to get stuff. It's okay to be happy. It doesn't make you a bad person. Say "thank you." Appreciate all that you are given. Don't limit yourself by not accepting gifts that come your way.

Part of learning to live your dreams is becoming part of the cycle of giving by receiving gracefully. When you do, you enable those who want to give to experience the positive feelings that the act of giving fosters. You also open yourself up to all of the new and wonderful gifts that life is waiting to provide. Even so, this is one of the most difficult things for many people to do. Sometimes it's because they don't feel worthy, or it may be simply that it makes them uncomfortable.

Think of times when you were offered something, and you refused it. Use the space below to describe what happened and why you might have turned it down. What good might have come of accepting? How might you have handled it differently, which could have continued the cycle of giving? Understanding the power of not just giving, but also receiving, will prepare you for all that living your dreams will be sending your way.

Example: I used to insist on picking up the bill when going out with friends to coffee or a meal, often arguing with them if they tried to pay. I see now that my doing so prevented them from being able to enjoy the same good feeling I got from treating them. Realizing this, I will now just try to say "thank you" when a friend offers to pay.

Receiving Gracefully Situation 1

Receiving Gracefully Situation 2

Receiving Gracefully Situation 3

Life Plan



Live to Give

Create a Legacy: Exercises

Life-Planning Exercise 6.4 – Leaving a Legacy

What kind of legacy do you want to leave? This may sound strange when you've had fewer than eighteen years on this earth, but I bet many of you have already thought about ways you could impact the world. Think about how many people you've impacted so far. How can you continue to do the best for yourself and for others?

Imagine it's the future. Your family, friends, and colleagues are celebrating your 37th, 57th, or 77th birthday, and they're asked to describe the impact you've had on their lives. Your parents and siblings speak. Your spouse and children are asked to speak. Some of your friends speak. What is the story you want them to tell? In one or two sentences, express the story of your life as told by the people you have impacted during your life.

Example: Friend – (Your Name Here) is one of the most giving people I have ever met. (Your Name Here) cares so much for others and always does what is best for everyone else.

Parents

Siblings

Children

Friends

Other

Life Plan



The Time is Now

Embrace Every Moment: Exercises

Life-Planning Exercise 7.1 – No Regrets

High school feels like a long series of moments in time. You can think back over the past three years or so and come up with a million little tiny moments that will forever leave an imprint on who you are. If you've experienced a loss, you've also experienced love, and those emotions are all part of life. It's not about avoiding the pain and the hurt that life brings; it's about working through those emotions. Embrace the moments as life experiences.

Sadly, most people die with regrets about their lives. This is often the result of living a life that was not filled with passion and meaning. The Time Is Now Mindset reminds us that dreams only come true when we take *purposeful action*. Success requires that we do small but significant things every day to take steps on the path toward the lives of our dreams. This will ensure our lives are full and we have no regrets.

Five of the most common regrets people express are written below. Begin to think about these now and frequently throughout your life, and you will be able to take the steps necessary to avoid and eliminate regret. In the spaces below, identify some actions you can begin taking to prevent these kinds of regrets in your own life.

Five common regrets:

1. I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me.
2. I wish I hadn't worked so much.
3. I wish I'd had the courage to express my feelings.
4. I wish I had stayed in touch with my friends.
5. I wish I had let myself be happier.

Example: I will find work that I love and am passionate about. I will start planning for this today. My work will be more than work; it will be part of my life's purpose.

No Regrets Action 1

No Regrets Action 2

No Regrets Action 3

Life Plan



The Time is Now

Get in the Zone: Exercise

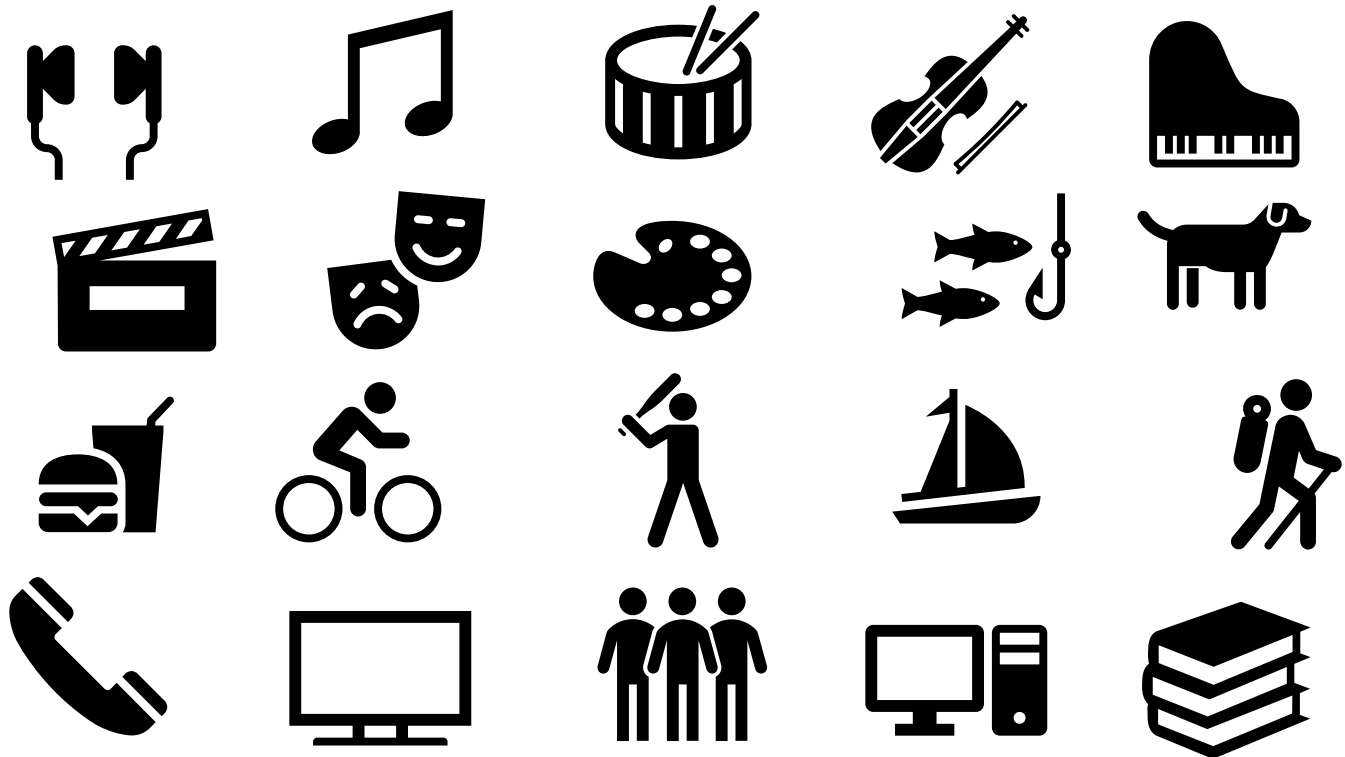
Life-Planning Exercise 7.2 – My Zone Bank

There are moments when you don't feel like yourself, you are acting from a bad place and you may not like how you're feeling. It's important to feel those emotions but figure out a way to get into a better mindset. It's hard but important to always think before you act.

Just like world-class athletes, legendary actors, and the most powerful political figures in the world, we all can live and perform at an optimal level. When we feel our best, we do our best, and that's what being "in the zone" is all about.

Your "Zone Bank" consists of tools and mental devices you can tap into for an infusion of motivation, enthusiasm, and power. For some individuals, this could be a few moments to meditate. For others, it might mean blasting their favorite high-energy song. Look at the pictures below and circle some of the things that you enjoy and help you get in the zone.

MY ZONE BANK



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Life Plan



The Time is Now

Let Yourself Be Vulnerable: Exercise

Life-Planning Exercise 7.3 – Taking Action

You are being vulnerable when you do something like ask a girl to go to prom or apply for a job. Many people don't love this state, but it's one of the strongest of human traits. What are some ways you have been vulnerable? Do you think there will be more in the future? Enjoy those moments. You're taking a risk, and some of your greatest moments in life will come when you're being vulnerable.

To create the life you've always wanted and dreamed of, you must put yourself out there and accept being vulnerable to grow. This will mean learning to attack your fears, taking risks, expressing your emotions, and doing things that may make you uncomfortable. No, this isn't easy. But it's vital to push against the mental boundaries we all set for ourselves, because opportunity lies on the other side of vulnerability.

Think of three things you can do to put yourself out there. They may be a little scary, but they will help you on your path to accomplishing your goals and dreams for the future. Think about finding a job, writing the college essay, retaking the ACT. What are three things you can do in the next month of two that may be a little scary but necessary to accomplishing your dreams for the future.

Scary Action Step 1:

Scary Action Step 2:

Scary Action Step 3:

Life Plan



The Time is Now

Act with Purpose: Exercise

Life-Planning Exercise 7.4 – My Five-Year Action Plan

It's time to create an action plan with SMART goals. These are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely. Think back over what you want to accomplish in the next five years. Do you want to go to college? Technical school? Join the military? Take a year off? Work a full-time or part-time job? Live at home or move somewhere else?

Think back over the five possible career paths you were interested in. Look over your strengths/smarts/gifts/talents. Think about getting yourself ready to interview and what you have to bring to a potential employer.

S (Specific) What do you want to accomplish?

M (Measurable) How will you know when you have accomplished your goal?

A (Achievable) How can the goal be accomplished?

R (Relevant) Is the goal worth working hard to accomplish? Explain.

T (Timely) When will the goal be accomplished?

Life Plan

| | |
|---|--|
| Aim: | To Do: |
| <p>BE SPECIFIC</p>  | <p>After graduation, I will go to _____ (college, tech school, job, mentorship, military—be specific—list out which schools/jobs/military you are applying to) to get training in _____ (career interest).</p> |
| <p>Measurable</p> | <p>I will spend ____ years there and get my ____ degree/training/experience.</p> |
| <p>ACHIEVABLE</p> | <p>Do I have the grades/skills/abilities to achieve this goal? yes/no Who can help me? _____ Is this goal attainable? How do I know? _____ _____</p> |
| <p>Relevant</p>  | <p>Is this goal consistent with other goals you have for your life? yes/no Does it fit with your immediate and long-term goals? yes/no</p> |
| <p>Timely</p>  | <p>I will complete this by ___/___/___.</p> |

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