

Your Key to Lasting Happiness – Your Personal 10-Year Plan

There is a big difference between short-term happiness and long-term happiness. Short-term happiness is fleeting and momentary while long-term happiness is sustainable and a permanent part of your life.

Long-term happiness tends to elude most people because they are addicted to making short-term choices rather than long-term choices. Long-term happiness doesn't just happen but rather it is part of a long-term strategy, either conscious or unconscious.

The following exercise is designed to create a decision-making framework that will greatly increase your chances of experiencing long-term happiness.

Imagine I have a bucket filled with sand and some large rocks. I empty out the bucket in front of you and ask you to place everything back into the bucket.

Most people will fail at this exercise. They will fill the bucket with the sand and then try and place the big rocks on top. They will fail because many of the big rocks simply won't fit. The only way to fit everything back into the bucket is to arrange the big rocks carefully and then let the sand seep in between.

This is an analogy of how most people run their life. The majority of people make decisions based on three drivers; a) The desire for short-term happiness, b) The desire to avoid short-term pain and c) Other people's priorities. None of these three drivers are aligned with creating long-term happiness.

Your framework for long-term happiness – Your personal 10-year plan.

1. Brainstorm

Imagine yourself in ten year's time. You run into a friend you haven't seen for a while who asks, "How are you going?" Your response is an emphatic "I am really great. My life couldn't get any better". Start to brainstorm all the reasons why your life is so great.

- a. Where do you live? Do you live in a house or an apartment or a condo? Is it small or big? What are the features?
- b. What is your level of health and fitness?
- c. Are you married or single? Do you have children?
- d. Do you work fulltime or part-time or are your retired?
- e. How much money do you have?
- f. Which places have you visited along the way? What experiences have you had?
- g. What do you own that makes you happy?
- h. List all of the reasons why you feel so happy.
- i. The reason we use a ten year time frame rather than three or five years is to allow yourself to dream. In ten years almost anything is possible. Allow yourself to dream. If you want to be a billionaire write it down. If you want to completely change your career write it down. If you want to find a partner and have five kids write it down.
- j. Keep brainstorming until you reach the third dry spot. A dry spot is defined as at least a minute of no new ideas. The reason we keep going to the third dry spot is because some of the most important reasons are so deeply buried in your unconscious that they take time and effort to retrieve.
- k. You should end up with at least fifty items on your list.

2. Gain Clarity

Now take a short break to clear your head. Then rewrite your list to combine related ideas (e.g. All items related to your living conditions, everything related to your relationships, etc)

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3. Your Top Three

Now imagine you could pick three items from your list and guarantee that these conditions would be present in ten year's time. Which three items would you pick?

- a. Take your time and choose carefully. You are identifying the three items most important to your long-term happiness.

4. Your Ten Year Goals

Turn each of the three chosen items into a ten-year goal. A goal must be SMART.

- a. S – specific
- b. M – measurable
- c. A – achievable (Stretch goals are ok. You have ten years)
- d. R – relevant (It must be a major contributor to your long term happiness)
- e. T- time bound (The time frame is ten years.)

5. Your Reasons Why

You now have your three most important goals. There will be plenty of sand (bills to pay and other things to take care of) but these are the three big rocks most important to you and your long term happiness. For each of your three ten year goals write a short paragraph explaining WHY this is so important to your long-term happiness. Use emotional language. If you don't feel emotionally motivated when you read your reason you have either picked the wrong goal or written down the wrong reason(s). This short paragraph will provide you with the emotional leverage to keep going over the coming year's when you feel like giving up on your goal or making it less important.

6. Your One Year Goals

- a. Turn each of your three 10 Year Goals into one year goals.
- b. Your one-year goal should be tailored so that when you check on your progress in one year's time you feel comfortable that you are on track to reach your ten-year goal.

7. Your Monthly Goals

- a. Now create monthly goals for your yearly goals.
- b. You have twelve months (12 mini-goals) to help you reach each yearly goal. Be flexible. You can adjust your monthly goals. You may not even be in a position to list all 12 monthly goals just yet. Creating goals for the next three months is sufficient.

8. Your Summary Page

- a. Place all of the vital information on a single large summary page.
- b. List your three 10-Year Goals
- c. List your Reasons Why for each 10-Year Goal
- d. List your three Yearly Goals
- e. List your monthly goals

9. Your Daily Reminder

- a. Review your summary page every morning on awakening.
- b. This will keep both your conscious and your unconscious focussed on what is important to you.
- c. The daily reminders will focus your creative powers and create magical connections that will assist you in manifesting your dream goals.