

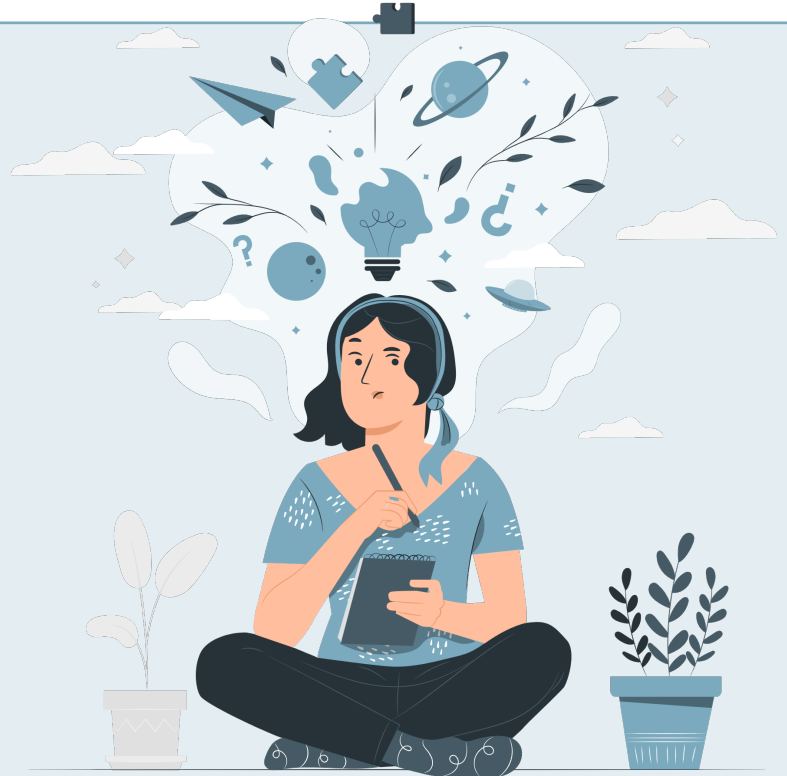


## A Step-by-Step Guide to Creating a Life You Love

By Joanne Edmond – Psychologist

### Introduction

You're about to embark on a transformative journey that will help you get what you most want in life and flourish in every sense of the word. This workbook serves as your personal compass and step-by-step guide, steering you through a labyrinth of self-discovery and personal growth. We'll use Appreciative Inquiry, Positive Psychology, and Neuroscience principles to explore the four D's—Discover, Dream, Design, and Destiny. So, grab a cup of herbal tea, find a cosy spot, and let's get started.



### What to do

Read through this mini workbook to get a sense of what's ahead. Then, gather a journal or open a new digital document where you'll record your responses.

## The power of imagination: Your five-year fantasy

### Purpose

Before we start to reflect and plan, let's unleash the power of your imagination. This warm-up exercise aims to help you break free from self-imposed limitations and ignite your enthusiasm for the journey ahead.

### Instructions

Imagine that you've just woken up from a deep sleep and it's five years from now. All your desires and goals are actualised.



Describe your vision in your journal with as much detail as possible. Take 30-40 minutes for this exercise. Approach your vision as something that delights you. Imagine without hesitation or questioning how it will materialise. Feel free to include sketches or doodles to make it more vivid.


### Example

*I wake up feeling incredibly rested and at peace. I first notice the scent of fresh ocean air wafting through the open window. I'm in my dream home, a beautiful beachfront property. I put on my tailored yoga outfit and head to my private yoga studio for a morning session.*

*My husband brings me a cup of herbal tea, and we share a quiet moment together, appreciating the sunrise. Our children are thriving; one is off to college and the other is excelling in high school. We've instilled in them the values of kindness, resilience, and mindfulness.*

*Professionally, I've reached new heights. My mindfulness app has helped millions find peace and mental clarity, and I've just published my third book on mind health.*

*I spend the afternoon volunteering at a mental health awareness event, something I'm deeply passionate about. As I lay my head on the pillow, I feel a deep sense of accomplishment and gratitude.*



Let yourself be silently drawn by the strange pull of what you really love. It will not lead you astray.

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## The Power of Reflection

### Purpose

To flourish, it's essential to pause and reflect. This isn't just an exercise; it's neuroscience. When you reflect, you're activating your pre-frontal cortex, also known as your "smart brain." The smart brain lets you make decisions aligned with your core values and passions.

### Questions to ponder

#### Emotional state

How do you want to feel in your life? For example, do you want to feel "energised" or "peaceful"?

### Example

*Today, I took a few minutes to sit quietly and reflect on how I want to feel in my life. The word "peaceful" kept coming to mind. I've been so caught up in the hustle and bustle that I've forgotten the importance of inner peace. I want to cultivate a life where I can navigate challenges with a calm mind and balanced emotions.*

## Identity

Who do you aspire to be in this world? Maybe it's a "compassionate friend" or a "creative entrepreneur."

### Example

*As I pondered on who I aspire to be, the phrase "compassionate friend" resonated with me. I've always valued friendship, but today's reflection made me realise that I want to be the kind of friend who listens and offers emotional support and understanding. I want to be someone people can turn to in times of need, and that starts with being more compassionate in my daily interactions.*



Spend 15-20 minutes writing your answers to these questions. Be as detailed as possible.

## Yearly Retrospective

### Purpose

This is your chance to acknowledge your journey, celebrate your resilience, and set the stage for the year ahead.

### Instructions

Reflect on the following questions and jot down your thoughts. Keep your responses safe so you can revisit them next year.

- **Highs and lows**

What were your happiest moments and toughest challenges last year? Maybe you got a promotion but also faced some health issues.

- **Challenges**

What obstacles did you face, and how did you overcome them? Perhaps you lost a job but started a successful freelance gig.

- **Letting go**

Identify one thing you'd like to release to make room for joy. It could be a toxic relationship or a self-limiting belief.

### Example

#### ***Highs and lows – My roller coaster year***

*Looking back, last year was a mix of highs and lows. One of the happiest moments was when I got promoted to a managerial position at work. It felt like a validation of all the hard work I'd put in. On the flip side, I also faced some health challenges that forced me to slow down and reevaluate my priorities.*

### **Challenges - turning lemons into lemonade**

*The biggest obstacle I faced was losing a major client, which initially felt like a career setback. However, it pushed me to diversify my skills and start a freelance gig. Surprisingly, it turned out to be quite successful and even more fulfilling than my previous work.*

### **Letting go - Making room for joy**

*As I reflect on the year, I realise that I need to let go of my self-limiting belief that I'm not good enough. This thought pattern has held me back in many ways, and it's time to release it to make room for joy and new opportunities.*

*I'll keep these reflections safe and revisit them next year to see how far I've come. It's a way to acknowledge my journey, celebrate my resilience, and set the stage for the year ahead.*



Allocate 30 minutes to an hour for this exercise. Write your answers and consider sharing them with a trusted friend or family member for additional insights.

## **Introducing the Four Ds: Your Pathway to Flourishing**

As we continue this transformative journey, it's time to introduce a pivotal framework to guide you towards a life where you don't just survive—you flourish. Meet the Four D's—Discover, Dream, Design, and Destiny.

This exercise is more than just a set of tasks; it's a holistic approach to life planning. It will help you:

- 1. Discover** your core values and strengths, laying the foundation for a life that aligns with who you truly are.
- 2. Dream** big, allowing your imagination to break free from limitations and envision a life that brings you joy and fulfilment.
- 3. Design** a practical, achievable plan that turns your dreams into actionable steps.
- 4. Destiny** is where you bring it all to fruition, living out your designed plan and stepping into your envisioned future.

By engaging with these four stages, you'll set yourself up to flourish in a life that's uniquely yours. Are you ready to take the first step?

## 1. Discover: Your strength stories

### Purpose

This is the first “D” in our Four D’s framework—Discover. Here, you’ll recognise the values, mindsets, and behaviours that have guided you during challenging times.

### Instructions

Think back to a time when you navigated through uncertainty to create positive change. Write down the values and mindsets that anchored you. For instance, maybe your value of “community” led you to organise neighbourhood clean-ups during a local crisis.



#### Example

#### *My Strength Story - Navigating the pandemic as a working parent*

#### **Values and mindsets**

**Resilience** - When schools closed, I had to juggle work, homeschooling, and household chores. It was overwhelming, but my resilience kept me going.

**Adaptability** - I quickly adapted to a new routine, setting up a homeschooling station and designating “quiet hours” for work.

**Community** - Knowing we were all in this together, I initiated a virtual support group for parents in my community to share resources and coping strategies.

**Mindfulness** - I incorporated mindfulness techniques into my daily routine to manage stress, which also benefited my family.



Take 20 minutes to write your strength story. Use bullet points to highlight key values and mindsets.

## 2. Dream: Your Five-Year Vision

### Purpose

Welcome to the second “D”—Dream. This is your chance to dream big and articulate a vivid, sensory-rich vision of your life five years from now.

### Instructions

Set aside 30 minutes for this free-writing exercise. Use the prompts below to guide you.

- **Sensory details**  
Describe your surroundings, clothes, and emotions.
- **Key relationships**  
Who are the significant people in your life?
- **Professional milestones**  
What have you achieved in your career?



### Example

**Sensory details** - I'm sitting in my cosy home office, the scent of lavender essential oil diffusing through the air. I'm wearing comfortable yet stylish loungewear, feeling the soft fabric against my skin. The room is quiet, save for the gentle sound of my mindfulness app guiding me through a meditation.

**Key relationships** - My spouse is in the living room, engaging our children in a creative art project. We've become a team that prioritises mental well-being, and it shows in the calm atmosphere of our home. My friends, who share my passion for mindfulness, are coming over later for a group meditation session.

**Professional milestones** - I've successfully balanced a fulfilling career with being a present parent. I've also just completed my certification in mindfulness coaching and have started offering online and in-person workshops. My blog on mindful parenting has gained a large following, and I've been invited to speak at a mental health conference next month.



Use vivid language and write as if you're painting a picture. Aim for at least one full page of content.

### 3. Design: Your Action Plan

#### Purpose

The third “D” is Design. Now, let’s roll up our sleeves and translate that dreamy vision into actionable steps. This is the core of your step-by-step guide to flourish.

#### Instructions

Review your vision and identify key themes or words. These become your core values. Now, set 4-5 goals aligned with these values. For example, if “health” is a core value, a goal could be “to run a half-marathon.”



*Example*

*Goal 1 – meditate 5-mins per day*

*Goal 2:*

*Goal 3:*

*Goal 4:*

*Goal 5:*



Create a table or a list where you match each core value with a corresponding goal.

Next to each goal, jot down the first action step you can take to achieve it.

## 4. Destiny: Daily Reflections

### Purpose

The final “D” is Destiny. This is your daily check-in to ensure you’re staying aligned with your values and goals.

### Instructions

Each evening, jot down how you’ve lived according to your values. Make this a bedtime ritual. For example, if one of your values is “kindness,” note down any acts of kindness you performed that day.



### Example

*Today, I noticed my elderly neighbour struggling with her groceries. I offered to help and carried them into her kitchen. She was so grateful and it warmed my heart to see her smile.*



Keep a small notebook or use a mobile app to record your daily reflections. Make it a habit to do this right before bedtime.

There you have it, the Four D’s—Discover, Dream, Design, and Destiny.

Each step is designed to help you flourish in your own unique way.

Are you ready to embark on this life-changing journey?

Just two more things before you do.



## Celebrate Your Wins

### Purpose

*Last but not least*, let's celebrate your wins, no matter how small.

### Instructions

Note down your small victories and celebrate them. The dopamine release will help solidify these new habits. For example, if you managed to meditate for five minutes, give yourself a pat on the back.



### Example

*Today was a good day. I finally finished the project that's been hanging over my head for weeks. It's such a relief to have it done, and I'm proud of the work I put into it. My manager even gave me some positive feedback, which was the cherry on top. I also managed to squeeze in a 20-minute workout, which I've been skipping lately. Felt so energised afterwards!*



Keep a "Wins Journal" where you jot down your daily victories. Take a moment each week to review and celebrate them.

## Final Thoughts

Congratulations on completing this transformative exercise

Remember, the journey is as important as the destination. Keep this workbook as a living document, updating it as you evolve. Your future self will thank you. And hey, if you ever feel stuck, remember this workbook is always here to guide you back to your true north.



Core of Wellbeing  
LEARNING PSYCHOLOGY TO FLOURISH

Here's to a happier, healthier you.

Warmly

Joanne and the team.