

A Future Worth Moving Towards

REFLECTIVE WRITING SERIES · 4 OF 5 · FUTURE-FOCUSED WRITING

Imagining a realistic, hopeful future, and a first step towards it

Research on future-oriented writing suggests that imagining a hopeful, realistic future may be associated with greater wellbeing, particularly when paired with practical steps. The focus here is an ordinary, achievable future, not an ideal one.

IMAGINE**A reasonably good future**

Not perfect or "best", just good enough and realistic for you.

NOTICE**What might get in the way**

An inner obstacle, such as a habit, a fear or a familiar thought.

PLAN**If it shows up, then...**

A simple, specific response, and one small step you could take this week.

Before I begin, my mood feels

0 = very low · 10 = very good



1 An ordinary good day: a year or so from now, things have gone reasonably well. What does one day look like?

Where are you, who is around, what are you doing? Small, everyday details are enough. If a year feels too far, choose next month.

2 What would make that day feel meaningful to me?

3 What inner obstacle might get in the way?

Something within you, described with understanding rather than blame.

4 If that obstacle shows up, then I'll...

5 One small step I could take this week

After writing, my mood feels

rate again; any change, or none, is useful to notice

**What the research suggests**

In one study, writing about a hoped-for future self was associated with increased wellbeing. Other research suggests that pairing hopeful imagining with realistic obstacles and plans may support action more than positive imagining alone.

Go at your own pace

Writing about difficult experiences can bring up emotions. Pause whenever you need to, or come back to the exercise when it feels manageable.

When you finish

Take a moment to notice how you feel. A little grounding, movement, or time away from the page can help you transition back into your day.

SOURCES

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