

UNLOCK YOUR POTENTIAL

in 6 easy steps

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Your life has endless possibilities, but are you tapping into them? We've identified six steps to creating the life you've always dreamed about. Follow these easy exercises and change your life for the better...

1 Identify your personal happiness trigger

Life isn't meant to be difficult. Discovering what makes you happy is the key to fulfilling your potential and actually requires very little effort. When you live a life that revolves around your passions, it's inevitable that you'll feel fulfilled.

GET-HAPPY EXERCISE

■ When did you last feel really enthusiastic and happy about something? Was it when you were learning something fresh, such as a new language? Or when you were helping out a friend in need? Was it when you were surrounded by people you care about? Or trekking through the woods with only a map for company?

■ Identify your three happiest times and write down exactly what it was about each situation that made you feel so good. Was it the satisfaction you got from helping others, or the feeling of achievement from reaching a goal? Were your surroundings or the people the most important part of your happiness?

■ Now that you've identified your top three 'happy moments', take one action to support each of these in the next 28 days. So if you love to learn, book a course in something you've always been interested in. If you love to support others, offer your help to a charitable organisation. If you love to feel connected, arrange a weekly family get-together or commit to a regular night out with your closest friends. If you love adventure, book a trip to somewhere you've always wanted to visit or join a mountaineering club.

FINDING THE KEY Can't think of anything that lights your fire? Try this: **switch off the TV for a month and leave work at 5.30pm every night. Each night try something new, whether it's a new recipe, a new route home from work, going to a book reading or a new exercise class. If you want to discover what life can offer you, then get off that sofa. You won't find out what floats your boat by watching other people's lives on TV.**

2 Discover what's holding you back

The way you feel about yourself determines everything you do. These thought patterns were formed when you were a child, so they've been around for a while! The good news, however, is you're a grown-up now and able to make a more accurate assessment of yourself, based on adult logic. Remember that who you are and the life you have now is a direct result of the way you think. If you don't change the pattern of your thoughts, your future will look exactly the same.

BREAK-FREE EXERCISE

■ Ask yourself, 'What do I get out of these behavioural habits?' Does working long hours allow you to excuse yourself from leading a fulfilled life? Does arguing

with your partner guarantee you get constant attention? Or do you find it difficult to say no to demanding friends and family because you want to be liked by everybody?

■ Write down three benefits you'll gain by changing your thought patterns. Now write a statement to reinforce your new belief, whether it's to commit to finishing work on time every day or admitting that it's more important to be happy than right. Practise this new habit over and over again: with constant practice it will soon become automatic.

■ Be patient. Your bad habit took a while to learn; you won't learn your new, better habit overnight.

FINDING THE KEY Give yourself a new label. Instead of being 'lazy', or 'a procrastinator', label yourself 'creative' or 'adventurous'. This is your first step to fulfilling your own prophecy.

3 Confront what you're afraid of

You may think fear is caused by a specific situation, but it's far more likely to be linked to your state of mind. A first date can sometimes feel as scary as a visit to the dentist, but it's not the prospect of making small talk for three hours that brings you out in a sweat; it's more likely to be the possibility of rejection at the end. Before doing something you feel afraid of, or are uncomfortable with,



you need to assess if there's any real danger or whether it's simply fear of the unknown that's keeping you safely in your comfort zone.

FACE-YOUR-FEARS EXERCISE

■ Think of a scary situation you're facing right now and write down a list of all your fears. How old do you feel when you experience these fears? Are they real, or are these feelings from the past and irrelevant to what's happening right now?

■ Ask yourself, 'What's the worst thing that can happen in each situation?' If you can handle the worst-case scenario, then you have nothing to be scared of. Only when you see your fears for what they are will you be able to sort out fact from fiction.

FINDING THE KEY Take one risk a week. Plan to have at least one new experience that feels a little out of your comfort zone. With each action you survive (and perhaps even enjoy!), you'll raise your self-esteem and will have conquered another fear.

4 Decide who's in charge of your life

Whenever you say the word 'should', you're living your life based on someone else's agenda. You're also giving away the power to make the choice that feels right for you.

TAKING-CONTROL EXERCISE

■ Make a list of all the things you think you 'should' be doing. Do any of these sound familiar? 'I should stick at this job and make the best of it.' 'I should be married by the age of 30.' 'I should go to the gym five times a week.'

■ Who is telling you this is the right thing to do? Who thinks you should stick at a job you dislike? Who said you should be married at a certain age? How long are you going to let your mother, your friends or the media run your life?

■ Now, replace each 'should' with 'I could', 'I choose', 'I decide' or 'I want'. See how this hands the responsibility back to you? Saying 'I could cook my partner a meal every night' gives you the ►

power to make that decision. It's totally your choice. And if it's not right for you, you can choose to drop it.

FINDING THE KEY This month, do one thing each week that's unashamedly selfish. Do it for you because you deserve it. Write a list of things you haven't allowed yourself to do (or to have) because they seemed just too selfish. Now do them!

5 Focus on the good stuff

People who fail in life have already pictured themselves doing so. They see the difficulty in every situation and decide it's impossible before they've given themselves a chance to succeed. If your head is full of past failures, you're never going to believe anything else can happen.

CONFIDENCE-BOOSTER EXERCISE

- Start re-programming your brain to focus on the positive. Spend 30 minutes running through your past in your mind and scan for the times when you were your most successful.
- Now make a mental film of the best bits and press the play button every time you need a confidence boost. This focusing exercise will



TO MAKE CHANGES IN YOUR LIFE, YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE THAT ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE... PROGRAM YOUR BRAIN TO FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE



expand and emphasise your achievements, helping you to feel confident in future situations.

FINDING THE KEY Before you go to sleep, or on your journey home, write down any personal victories you achieved that day, however small. Made it on time for work? Caught up with friends? Write it down to remind you how great your life is.

6 Don't limit yourself

You probably have no idea how severely you limit what's possible in your life by making assumptions. Every day we put blocks in the way of achieving what we want. From 'I'll never get the promotion' to 'I'm too old to go back to college', these are hurdles we've created to stop ourselves achieving our goals.

PUSH-THE-BOUNDARIES EXERCISE

- The next time you think something is impossible, ask yourself whether this assumption is based on fact. Do you really know that's true? You may find there are five people older than you on your course, for example. Your boss may know of opportunities you're not aware of in your company.
 - To make changes in your life, you have to start believing anything is possible. Make a list of the many choices available to you and start from there.
- FINDING THE KEY** Remember that even if you get knocked back, that's only one person's opinion. Keep pursuing your dreams and look for new ways or avenues to achieve them. □

Visit www.wildlifecoaching.com to buy Liz Wilde's six-week coaching program *Is This It?*, £39.95, and subscribe to her free monthly Motivator Mail.