

How to Close the Gap Between the Life You Live and the Life You Want

See the 12-step process I've been using to help transform my life.



Most people think that they fail to reach their goals due to a lack of time. The reality, however, is that *success* is a matter of strategy.

If you're doing the wrong things, you can continue for a century and will still fail to create your desired reality.

Most of the time, your *speed of execution* and the quality of your strategy define whether you achieve your goals or not.

Steven Pressfield once stated that ***most people have two lives: the lives we live and the lives we are capable of living.***

And the reality is that creating greatness and achieving extraordinary results isn't as complicated as we tend to believe. It's just a matter of execution. Those who execute more *always* outpace the rest.

As Henry Ford once said:

“You can't build a reputation on what you're going to do.”

Getting what you want is about *doing* what you need to do, even if you don't feel like it.

But how do you know what exactly you need to do?

And how do you keep doing it, even if you don't enjoy it?

I've been asking myself these questions over and over again during the past years.

I read hundreds of books on personal success, attended all seminars I could catch, and paid for dozens of online programs, hoping to find an answer to at least one of those questions.

But no matter how hard I tried and how much time and energy I spent, I always found myself feeling confused and lacked a solid strategy.

That's when I recognized I need to stop hunting for even more information and *use* what I already know. During that process, I realized that I already had all the puzzle pieces — I just had to rearrange them.

After doing that for the past three years, I came up with the following 12-step process.

I've taught this system to hundreds of people in my workshops and kept making small tweaks to turn it into an applicable and holistic program:

#1. The Big Picture

Without a **clear vision**, you'll lack intrinsic motivation.

And if you don't know *why* you're doing something, it's going to be hard to figure out *what* to do.

Your vision sets the foundation for **everything** you want to create in your life.

The most important rule here is having a look at *all* areas of your life: **Your health, character, finances, romance, recreation, spirituality, career,...**

You don't need to know exactly what you want to achieve in all these areas, but you should spend a few minutes *thinking* about how you want to *feel* about each field of your life.

How do you want to feel about your health in 10, 15, or 20 years?

Who do you want to be?

What do you want to feel if you think about money?

How do you want to experience spirituality or your relationships?

Answering those questions isn't easy, but it's necessary because those answers will be your guidance. If your answers don't excite you, you'll struggle to put effort into creating that reality.

How to do it:

Whatever you want to achieve in life, it always starts with a clear and compelling vision.

Take at least 20–30 minutes to write down what you want to feel and experience in each area of your life.

You can create a one-year vision or think about a longer period; that's totally up to you.

AREAS OF LIFE	
HEALTH	FINANCE
CHARACTER	PASSION & RECREATION
ROMANCE	PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT
FRIENDS & FAMILY	SPIRITUALITY & RELIGION
CAREER & BUSINESS	CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY

Another way to work on your big vision is by creating a *vision board* full of images that excite and motivate you.

You can easily create a beautiful board with free tools such as [Canva](#).

#2. List Them All

As Zig Ziglar once said:

“A goal properly set is halfway achieved.”

That’s why the second step to creating lasting change is about setting goals that are aligned with the vision you created in Step #1.

The challenge with setting goals is that you’ll need to figure out *what kind of goals* actually help you perform at your best.

Some people prefer **realistic** goals, while others prefer setting **big** goals.

Grant Cardone, for example, [preaches](#) that you should set goals that are 10x the size of what you initially wanted to achieve.

I prefer slightly big yet still realistic goals.

However, you need to find the right balance between *achievable* and *challenging* for *yourself*.

Apart from the size of your goals, there are also different **types of goals**.

“*I want to meditate every day.*” is a **habit goal**, while “*I want to finish my first marathon by July 2021.*” is a **result goal**.

But in the end, each habit goal leads to some result (e.g., being more mindful), and each result goal is achieved through some habit.

How to do it:

Similarly to Step #1, you should also set goals for each area of your life.

Sometimes, you might consciously decide to neglect one or more areas.

Even though that's okay, it's important to reflect on each area and consciously decide whether you want to ignore that field of your life.

#3. The Big Three

The third step is a challenging yet crucial one: Now, you need to prioritize the goals you've set in Step #2 and develop a maximum of *three focus goals*.

That's crucial because you can't focus on ten goals at the same time.

This prioritization will help you understand which areas of your life need the most attention. Additionally, your focus goals will help you easily say *no* to all the things that won't bring you closer to your desired results.

“Whenever you say “yes” to anything, there is less of you for something else. Make sure your “yes” is worth the less.”

— Louie Giglio

How to do it:

During this step, you need to look at the vision you created and the actual goals you defined in Step #2.

Based on these goals, you now need to choose your Top #3 priorities for the next 12 months.

Too often, we spread ourselves too thin by trying to achieve too many goals simultaneously.

But if you want extraordinary results, you need an extraordinary focus.

#4. Breaking Them Down

Step #4 is all about ***breaking your focus goals down into actionable steps*** so you can achieve them with ease. By doing so, you’re creating an actual *plan*.

Through this step, you can minimize or even eliminate roadblocks.

You can estimate the necessary resources, spot challenges, and create potential solutions to problems that might arise during the journey.

Let's say your #1 Focus Goal is publishing a book — in that case, you'd need to break down the process into actionable steps. These could be:

- Writing sessions for the actual content
- Deciding on the title and subtitle
- Deciding on the cover
- Formatting
- Finding a publisher
- Creating a marketing plan
- ...

How to do it:

Whenever you're working on monthly or even yearly goals, make sure to break them down into actionable to-dos. By doing so, you'll be able to eliminate feeling overwhelmed.

You can apply this process to *any* goal you want to achieve. All you need is some time to think through the whole journey.

This sort of planning can often feel overwhelming and like a waste of time. Yet the reality is that it will save you *lots* of time and energy.

#5. Life Analysis

Before you move forward and start working on your focus goals, you should have a quick look at the status quo:

How does your current time management look like?

What do you spend the most time on?

Where's the greatest potential for improvement in your daily life?

What are the negative habits holding you back from living your full potential?

Answering these questions will help you figure out what you need to get rid of in order to reach all your goals.

How to do it:

Take a few minutes to review your daily life.

If you're not aware of your current daily schedule, you can set an hourly timer for the next 2–3 days and write down what you've been doing every time the alarm rings.

After 2–3 days, you can have a look at your notes and draw conclusions.

Through this exercise, you'll be more aware of your biggest time-wasters and figure out how to eliminate them.

#6. Foundation of Change

To create a better future, you first need to ***get rid of the negative beliefs holding you back.***

This step is all about changing your beliefs and creating a foundation that will help you reach your goals with less hassle.

How to do it:

Grab a piece of paper or your journal and take a few minutes to reflect on thoughts and fears that are currently holding you back from being your best self:

What's currently holding you back?

Why do you think that way?

Did these thoughts emerge from your past?

*What do you **want** to think and **believe** in the future?*

What kind of internal reality do you want to create?

Additionally, you might create a list of powerful affirmations that can empower you every single day.

Here are some of my favorite affirmations:

I'm happy, healthy, and radiant.

I lovingly do everything I can to assist my body in maintaining perfect health.

I'm naturally filled with an abundance of energy.

I'm calm and at peace.

I love taking care of myself.

I'm always safe and divinely protected.

I view challenges as opportunities.

I'm so grateful for my incredible relationships.

I'm attracting new clients each and every single day.

I'm so proud of the beautiful work I'm doing on this planet.

My income is constantly increasing.

Money flows easily into my life and there's always more than enough.

I'm open and receptive to all the wealth life offers me.

#7. The Power of Habits

Now that you've created the foundation for your journey, it's all about **daily habits** that will help you get closer to achieving your focus goals.

No matter what you aim to achieve — **small daily jabs are more powerful than a single punch.** That's why daily habits can have such a significant impact on your life.

How to do it:

To form powerful habits, you first need to answer a few critical questions — that's the only way to ensure you're going to stick to your routines.

Which daily routines can help you become that ideal version of yourself and live the life you dream of?

How can you ensure you stick to your new habits?

What will you do on difficult days when you can't make it through your ideal routine?

*What do you need to prepare in order to start your new routine?
Do you need any kind of equipment or specific information before
getting started?*

Take your time to answer these questions and decide on a few new habits that can help you achieve your top #3 Focus Goals with ease.

#8. Your Epic Environment

Step #8 is an often overlooked yet crucial one.

A flower can't grow in the wrong environment. Similarly, **you won't be able to reach your full potential if you're surrounded by the wrong things and people.**

Decluttering your life and making necessary adjustments will help you eliminate everything that's holding you back and create space for new opportunities, people, and experiences.

How to do it:

For the next 14 days, carefully inspect the **people and things** in your environment.

Ask yourself how you could change the status-quo so that you're better supported in reaching your goals.

Who or what is making you feel good?

Which people, activities, or items are making you feel stressed, negative, or even angry?

How could your life look like if you'd let go of these things and people?

What's holding you back from making these changes?

What are the smallest steps you could make? (E.g. you could reduce the time you spend with certain people instead of totally eliminating them from your life.)

#9. Monthly Strategy Session

Step #9 is about creating a **monthly strategy** and deciding on your monthly focus.

Most people set yearly goals and leave the rest to chance. This annualized thinking is the greatest danger for your achievements as it doesn't empower you to take consistent action.

If your goal is to make \$100,000 of revenue in a year, there's no urgency to take massive action in January because you might believe there's plenty of time to do it later during the year.

Through this annualized thinking, we often believe that we *still have a lot of time* to achieve our goals while the reality is mostly the contrary.

To avoid this trap, it's important to create ***urgency***.

How to do it:

Even if you've set yearly goals, you need to be aware that each month, week, and day counts.

If you can't create significant results *now*, you'll also fail to create them later during the year.

Make sure you stick to a monthly strategy session — an appointment with yourself — to guarantee you take consistent action.

Every month, you should ***recall your vision, adjust your strategy, and create a monthly outlook***.

These monthly strategy sessions will help you stay on track and adjust your journey if necessary.

#10. Weekly Action Planning

Without a **weekly action plan** and clear priorities, you'll likely fail to reach your long-term goals because of procrastination.

In most organizations, results spike upward towards the end of a deadline.

Just think of yourself back in school days: When did you start doing your homework or studying for exams? When you still had lots of time left or when the days left dwindled toward zero?

It's a fact that we behave differently when a deadline comes close.

When we're aware of a deadline, we procrastinate less and get much more done.

How to do it:

By putting more importance on each week, you'll be able to get more done in a few months than most people accomplish in a year.

Stop waiting for a new month or even year to do things better — start ***right now*** and view each week similarly important as an entire year.

If you had a great week, you can build off of that. If the week sucked, you can start with a fresh one.

By putting more importance on each week, you'll be able to create exceptional results *now* instead of waiting for the end of the year.

#11. Daily Action Taking

Long-term success happens on a day-to-day basis. **Without execution, you'll fail, no matter how great your strategy is.**

Yearly goals and a long-term vision are important to stay motivated, but execution happens daily. What *really* matters is how you spend each of your days on a micro-scale.

How to do it:

Plan your mornings and evenings, set daily action steps, and stay concentrated on your three Focus Goals, even when things get busy.

Ask yourself how you can take ***massive action*** every single day and make sure to track your progress, for instance, with a daily habit tracker.

#12. Accountability

The final step is all about ***gamifying your journey*** and making it *easier* to stick to your resolutions.

Gamification and accountability will help you stick to your daily action steps and routines, even when it becomes hard to stay disciplined.

You can literally make your life easier by ensuring you stay empowered.

How to do it:

One way to ensure long-term motivation is by making yourself *accountable* — for instance, by committing to an accountability buddy.

An accountability buddy can be a friend or colleague who helps you stay on track with your goals by asking you about your progress.

Ideally, it's a mutual relationship where you keep each other accountable over a long period.

Another option is to join a [mastermind group](#) with people who have similar ambitions and are committed to mastering their goals.

Through weekly or bi-weekly mastermind sessions, you can keep each other accountable, share your struggles, talk about your next moves, and support each other.

Final Thoughts

Quite often, big changes can be achieved with ease if you allow yourself to start small.

Even if you have huge goals and lots of aspirations, you can take it easy and make one small step after the other.

Being ambitious is great, but so is allowing yourself to enjoy the whole journey.

If you want to make the next months of your life the best ones, make sure to start small and follow the 12-step process:

#1 Get clear about your long-term vision

#2 Write down goals for each area of your life

#3 Choose your Focus Goals

#4 Break your top #3 down into action steps

#5 Do a life analysis to understand how you currently use your time and energy

#6 Create your foundation of change by eliminating your negative beliefs

#7 Ask yourself which daily habits can help you reach your Focus Goals with ease and how you can integrate them into your everyday life

#8 Redesign your environment so that it supports you to reach your goals

#9 Schedule your monthly strategy sessions to ensure you stack on track

#10 Create a weekly action plan

#11 Get clear about your daily action steps

#12 Gamify your journey and find ways for holding yourself accountable