

create a personal framework for success

follow your desire...

what is it? and how can it help you face new challenges?

Throughout my life and work, I have found it useful to have a set of statements or personal mantras that help me with particularly challenging projects or experiences. It's especially useful when the new work, activity, or challenging moment is out of my comfort zone or triggering anxiety or self doubt.

This quick coaching tool is part of the *Do what makes you happy* programme. It's designed to help you locate these feelings and thoughts (or 'inner nasties' as I term them) and reframe them. In this way, it's not the thoughts or anxieties that are 'running the show' and that could potentially derail you. Instead, you have taken some agency in the situation and put the power back into your own hands.

It is inevitable that worries and concerns will surface though any period of personal and professional development. However, its not inevitable that these concerns have to paralyse you and prevent you taking action. Doing this exercise can be really useful for you to isolate the particular ways in which your mind works and where your own areas of potential sabotage lie.

do what
makes you
happy

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here's the process...

1. You'll need your journal, a piece of paper and pens or something to record this process on.
2. Start by writing down the thing that you want to do or think about – the action, new line of work, project or the challenge you are facing. Do this in any way that works for you; via a list, a mind map, or as part of a drawing. This could be *anything* – but here are a few examples... go for a promotion, start my own charity, think about going freelance, join a choir, start online dating, buy some paints and canvas and get painting. As you can see, it could be in any arena of life or work where there is a desire to do something new.
3. Now, look at what you've written down. Take a breath and start to focus into yourself. I want you to start to notice all the thoughts sensations and feelings that doing this new venture or thinking about this makes you feel. There will be thoughts from your mind, feelings from your heart, sensations in your body and some gut reactions.
4. Write everything down. Try to capture all the feelings, thoughts and sensations on the page. Getting all this out is so useful – you don't have to carry it all in your head. It can be expressed and processed. What we are really wanting to get to are all the ways in which your inner nasties operate when you want to do something new or challenging. Some of the stuff that comes up for me when I do this includes fear. Fear that I won't succeed, fear of failure, fear of wasting my time, etc. So, I would write how this manifests. For example...

I'm scared of failing, in case I'm really seen by people as a fraud, that I know nothing and I'm really useless, There's no way I'd ever succeed at something like this, so there really is no point, It'll never make money, I can't paint so why even bother – I can't. I've no confidence and I'm rubbish at networking, I'm scared of being seen as weak, I am a crap manager...

5. This little exercise shows up the key areas from your mindset that trip you up. It will also show up all the areas that you'll possibly need to do further research and development, so that you can make practical moves forward in pursuit of your new idea or venture. In some ways, this stuff is much easier to action – you will just need to Google answers to questions (e.g., how do I register a new charity, what does a good CV look like, local salsa classes, etc.).
6. Now, take a look at all the ways you put blocks or barriers in your way and how the inner nasties operate in your mind to stop you from moving forward. Chances are there is little or no evidence to back up these negative statements – they are manifestations of a strong inner critic which may have been set down in your younger years, at school or at work (for example).
7. The next step is to create the contradicting phrase or 'mantra' that will help you when these things arise again. The contradicting phrase will be about allowing yourself space to learn, take risks, try new things out. These will also be evidence based – based on your expertise and previous successes – which I know you will have had. This isn't always an easy step to take, but with practice you will get better at contradicting the inner voices and feelings that set you up for failure.
8. Once you've had a go at creating the contradicting phrases – write them up on a sheet of paper and stick them wherever you will see them. This is about setting up your work or living space and environment with personal statements for success. Come back to them whenever you're feeling wobbly.

My framework for success looks like this...

- There are no failures. I learn something every time.
- My work is based on 35 years expertise in the field. Of course I know what I am talking about.
- I'm doing my very best all of the time – its okay to feel scared when something's new.
- I've done brilliant things with my life in the past. It's always tricky at the beginning, just create the space to focus and I'll succeed.
- The voices in my mind are not the truth, I make up my own truth.
- Somewhere someone needs my work today.
- Comparisons are not useful – we are all unique – no one does it the way I do.
- I can do this – everything is working out just as it should.
- It's great to try new things out – this is how I continue to grow as a human being.

This exercise helps you to spot...

- Opportunities to ask more questions – for example, doing some market research, finding out what the appetite is among your potential audience, questioning whether you have the right audience focus, etc.
- Things that definitely have answers (such as 'how to launch a podcast' or 'how to start a freelance career'). You can start by Googling, look for experts, people who've done it before, etc. – and ask!
- Things that are just plain untrue: such as the idea that you're not capable. Think about all the things you *have* achieved in your life. They weren't flukes.

your turn

personal framework for success
your guide

This is your place to start generating
your framework...