My Life Portfolio

A Planning Guide and Practical Workbook
for those interested in developing life goals and achieving their dreams.

Written by Gail Thornton
Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy
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Introduction

Planning for the future sounds like a large task, one that needs lawyers and support services and family. It doesn't need to be that difficult.

All planning begins with the desire for change and security. Here, we want our lives to be different, to choose our future, and to develop a plan. Change begins by dreaming about what we want for ourselves. This stirs our imagination to think about the possibilities. Possibilities lead to goals, then to action and decision and finally, living your plan.

This process can be a learning experience. What you may discover is that you know what you like and what you don't like; that you can think for yourself and have the freedom to dream about your life. This is your life - think about what it is that you want and give yourself permission to dream. It leads to creating goals and then reaching them, but in the beginning is your need for change. If you've come this far, you do want change. The next stage is to ask yourself the questions.

Planning is a life long activity; we do it every day. Sometimes, we put our plan on paper; sometimes, we follow our feelings to choose our direction. We all have our unique styles for planning and this portfolio is only one of many ways you can begin to plan.

On the cover of this book are painters tools. The paint, is the dream you have for the different parts of your life. This book is your brush. Paint your future. The following pages will ask you to think about what you want in all areas of your life. Think about the qualities of your dream, not just the one word answer.

For example, when you consider a job that you would like,
you might think "I want to be a firefighter".

Then go to the next stage: the details.

What is it about that job that interests you?
Is it that you like being a part of a team, helping, wearing a uniform, or do you like the excitement of danger?

Thinking about the qualities will help you to see what you really want. These details are so important and you will see that your possibilities grow since there are a lot of things that will match those answers.

Your future begins with focussing your dreams and goals. Once your goals are created, the next stage is to make them happen by looking at the possible directions and taking action to get your goal. Participating fully in this process, you can expect change in your life; and it is you who will direct this change.

You can achieve your goal. If you need help, call us. It is up to you. It is your decision.

Your plan for the future begins now with what is already yours: your desires, your thoughts.

You are the painter.
Allow yourself to dream and have the courage to make your dreams happen!

This Much I Know Is True

This guide is for my own use.

I have desires, dreams and abilities.
I have an imagination.
I have likes and dislikes.

I know about some things that I want for my future.
Some things I am not so certain about.
I want change.
I want some things to stay the same.
I can make change in my life.

I may need help with things.

I think for myself.
I am responsible for my life.

I am curious what this exercise will offer me.
Will it change my life forever? Will it focus my goals and desires? Will I be a changed

person?
Possibly.

Possibility

If I can dream it, it is possible. If I desire it, it is possible.

Making it possible begins with recognizing what it is that I want.

That is what this book is about.

This exercise will ask me to consider things I may not have thought about before and it will ask me to explore those desires so close to my heart that I cannot imagine living without.

It will ask me to explore.
I am willing to explore.

I may choose to do this exercise in private, I may ask for the assistance of someone I trust or I may feel more comfortable asking for the help of someone outside my circle of support.

I may choose to record my thoughts - write, draw, paste pictures, audio or video tape - anything.
It begins with the thought.

I may choose to share my portfolio with others.

I may choose to go through the exercise again to see how my desires have changed and to focus my new goals.

No dream is too silly. No dream is too small or too big.

I will take my time.
I have an open mind.
I will enjoy this process as I discover new and exciting things about myself!

I begin with this...

My Personal Life

My personal life is my body, mind and spirit. Its quality is shown in my relationships. It's shown in the rights and freedoms I exercise and in the care I

put into my growth. This chapter reveals what is closest to my heart. I cannot live well without it. To grow and develop in a direction I choose, I give myself permission to explore and to dream regardless of what others choose to believe.

What makes me feel good about myself?

What bothers me? What makes me feel sad, unsure or frustrated?

My Mind, Body, and Spirit...

What brings me joy now?

Do I want to try new experiences?

Describe:

Would I like to develop my spiritual life more fully?

What interests me? (Meditation, learning about myself, yoga, church, learning from spiritual teachers, etc.)

Would I like to improve my physical and mental health?

In what areas? (Exercise, reading, food, assistive devices, communication, etc.)

Would I like to make more decisions in my life?

In what areas?

Do I know my Rights? (**See OFCP Booklet: Consumer Rights for Long Term Care)

Do I use my Rights? If not, why?

Am I willing to take more responsibility?

What is stopping me from taking responsibility?

What do I like most about myself?

What are my successes? What are the personal goals I have achieved?

What do I want to succeed at? Dare to dream - Don't limit yourself!!

How would I spend my favourite afternoon?

Day?

Weekend?

***"And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom."* - Anais Nin**

What are my dreams for my life?

One week:

Two weeks:

One month:

Five months:

One year:

Three years:

And the first thing I can do is...

What stops me from going after the things that I want?

My Relationships...

***"If you miss love, you miss life."* - Leo Buscaglia**

Do I have someone I feel very close to now? Who is closest to me?

Am I happy with my personal relationships including:

My family?

Intimate relationships?

Friendships?

How would I like these to be different? What is missing?
(Are they fulfilling, loving, honest, supportive, etc)
(Am I accepted for who I am or if I behave?)

Do I want more time alone?

Do I want to be with people more?

Describe my dreams for my close relationships.

My Home

Home has as many different meanings as there are people on this Earth. It doesn't have to mean a house, or even a room of my own. Home means my own space. I can think about what living arrangements I want to have, and those possibilities can be made real.

What do I like about where I live now?
Including the location, resources, design, accessibility, safety, busy or quiet, etc.

What would I change?

What is missing in my home?

Is there someone I would like to live with in the future?

My Details...

***"If you don't ask, you don't get."* - Ghandi**

What are my dreams for my future home?

Two weeks:

One month:

Six weeks:

One year:

Three years:

Where would I like to live?

What does my new home look like? Think about the type of building, my private space, important qualities, assistance, colours, pets, other people, etc.

Describe what my favourite private space would look like. (Suggestion: Use pictures cut out from magazines.)

My Community

Community is my home on a larger scale. It includes my participation with the people, places and things that I consider important in my life.

What do I like about the community I live in now?

What would I change?

What would I add to my community?

My Active Participation...

Do I know anyone in my community?

Do I have support in my community and am I connected to them?

How do I contribute to my community?

What would I change about my role in the community?

What do I want access to?

Do I want to participate more?

In what ways?

***"A friend is a gift you give yourself."* - Robert Louis Stevenson**

Do I want more friends and to be someone's friend?

Do I feel safe and respected?

My dream for my community is...

Do I want to spend more time with:

nature

parks

people

children

animals

List others:

Do I want to travel? Describe the trip. Where would I go and what would I do?

Technology...

Have I heard of the internet and do I want to learn about it?

Do I want access to the internet?

Do I use the internet and want to get better at it?

What other technology would be useful to me?

Assistive devices:

Communication aids:

Mobility aids:

My Employment and Education

This chapter includes my right to contribute my skills in some way. This may be a paid position, volunteer work, internship, education, or training.

Do I want to be employed?

Do I have a job now?

What do I like about my work?

What would I change?

My Details...

What work interests me?

What do I like about that work? Is it that I would be working with:

people

technology

arts

administration

politics

creative

helping

other:

Do I want more challenging work? More responsibility?

How much money do I want to make?

What type of work would I not want to do? Why?

Do I want to do volunteer work?

What kind?

Am I interested in learning?

***"The great aim in education is not knowledge but action."* - Herbert Spencer**

Do I want to go to school?

What are my educational goals and interests?

Continuing education?

Interest courses?

Career focussed education?

What will challenge me?

What am I willing to try?

My Support Services

The collection of support services that I require are unique to me. I can choose to direct these services and that process begins with looking at what I want and need.

Do I have support services now? If not, do I want them?

What do I like about the support services I receive now?

What would I change?

My Details...

What services are important for me to live in my home?

What services are important for me to live in my community?

What services are important for me to be in my work place?

Who do I want to help me get my services? (Family, friends, agencies, independent individuals?)

Do I decide what I can do for myself and what I need help with?

***"You train people how to treat you by how you treat yourself."* - Martin Rutte**

Am I directing my services now?

Would I like to?

Am I worried about directing my own services? If yes, why?

What are my goals for directing my own services?

What can I do now?

Advocacy

The role of an advocate is to help me represent my Rights and concerns. The best advocates are people who know and care about me and understand my wishes.

***"You have to do it by yourself and you can't do it alone."* - Martin Rutte**

Do I want someone's help to make my wishes known?

Do I know what an advocate is?

How have my advocates helped me?

Do I know how I could benefit from having an advocate?

Do I have an advocate?

Who would be a good advocate for me?

Do I need help asking someone to be my advocate?

Who are my advocate(s)?

The first thing I want my advocates to help me with is...

Summary

Looking at my answers throughout this book, I now see my goals. Here I will list them.

***"All that we are is the result of what we have thought."* - Dhammapada**

What are my goals?

What can I do now?

Section II: Achieving My Plan

Thinking about these questions has helped me to see what I want in my life. These pages are a beginning point and when I look at my answers, I see that I have created clear goals for what I want in my life. Now I can begin to make these goals happen!

To make something real, I have to act on my goal. There are many ways to put my goals into action. Here are some strategies that I can use.

Strategies for Action

Forming a team:

Many people have found that inviting people to work with them helps to get their goals. Working as a team gives support to all the members and it brings people with different skills together to help make change for me. People I invite to join my group are people who are closest and most involved in my life. They are my advocates. I bring my goals to the group and the team helps to plan, solve problems, advocate and help out when needed. The important part is... I choose who I want to be a part of my team.

***"Encouragement is the oxygen of the soul."* - Anonymous**

Choosing a direction:

Imagine I have already attained my goal. If I was telling someone how this came to be, what would be the thing that happened just before I got my goal. Then what was before that? Work backwards until I am where I am now and try the step that is next on the list.

Let People Know:

Sharing my goals with people I trust can be helpful because they can help me advocate for what I want.

Call the Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy

They can help me with planning, information and connecting with others.

***"The only way to start is to start."* - Source Unknown**

Helpful Contacts

There are people that can help me with doing the book, give me information, work with me in doing my plan and help to make it happen. I will choose people I trust, people who care about me, people I feel comfortable with, people who want to see my goals happen. I will achieve more with people who are encouraging and open-minded.

These people might include:

My Spouse or Partner
My Parents
My Children
In Laws
My Sister or Brother
Relatives
Friends
Co-workers
Neighbours
Church members
Minister, Priest or Rabbi
A person with a similar disability
Therapist
Doctors
Special Clinics
Social Services
Other agencies & Organizations

***"You miss 100% of the shots you never take."* - Wayne Gretzky**

Making It Work

***"Never give up, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn."* - Harriet Beecher Stowe**

If something doesn't work, I will try again.

Things don't always work smoothly the first time.

I will live as if I already have it.

I will stay focussed on my plan.

I can do this!

I will reach my goals!

Glossary

Achieve: To get; to get what I want

Action: To do something

Advocate: Strategies and action to get what I want

Assist: To help

Challenging: Something that pushes me beyond what I know and/or are comfortable with

Confidence: Feeling good about myself; feeling like I can do things

Desires: Things that I want

Develop: To grow; to create fully

Details: The things that make up my dream

Directing Services: Controlling what I would like done, how and by whom

Experiences: Things that I have lived through

Exploring: Looking at things fully

Goals: Things that I want

Internet: A world on the computer that offers resources and information

Participate: To take part in

Planning: To think about what I want and to set goals

Portfolio: A collection of my ideas

Private: Something that belongs to only me

Process: The actions and experiences in moving towards my goal

Provide: To give

Responsibility: Owning my ideas and my actions

Rights: Things I have that I can use to defend myself

Role: My part in the community; how others see me

Spiritual: A word used to refer to my higher self

Succeed/ Successes: Accomplishments

Unique: One of a kind