

How to Design Your Vision and Align Your Life



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Do you believe in magic? At 11 years old, I was an avid learner-cum-entrepreneur. In the final year of primary school, I and a group of girls in my class would compete to reach the next topic in maths class and race to complete a book per night in the *Sweet Valley* series.

In my down time, my best friend and I were crafty and got to work making things on the weekend and then selling our wares, from scarfs to chocolate animals, to our friends in the playground on Monday. I also had key roles in school plays and was a solo singer in the summer concerts. I had big dreams of what my future would hold. It was magical. I really felt unstoppable. I was in my element and life felt good.

Fast forward to secondary school and things changed. With a heavier workload and a huge school to navigate, the pressure was on. I became ill and in my long absence my best friend changed classes to be back with the other girls from primary school. When I

returned, I had missed a lot, learning became a chore, the production line ceased and I was no longer the lead in the school shows. There is a whole separate story behind what was said to me at that time by a teacher, which I won't go into in this article, but I will say that it left me broken and deflated. The dream bubble had burst. I still tried hard at school, but my self-belief was shattered.

In early adulthood, some further things happened that were rather traumatic. As a result, I developed a real sense of needing to prepare for the worst and believed that by doing so, whatever I ended up with would be slightly better. I also adopted a mantra that 'I could write stories for Eastenders' and if you had been in my life at that time, you would know I really wasn't exaggerating. Somehow, despite the drama, I left school, started a good job and excelled in my career in financial services. Despite being 'the little star' when I smashed my work goals, I was also nicknamed 'Glass Half Empty Martin'.

I believe everything happens for a reason, even if we can't see that reason for some time to come.



What we feed our mind becomes our reality.



When times were really tough and I was at crisis point, not being able to take anymore, I would close my eyes and imagine what I wanted the outcome to be. Sometimes these requests massively outweighed the odds but somehow this process made a difference. The dark skies would seem to clear and the outcome was more pleasant. Was this magic?

About 10 years ago, I had a desire to start learning again. At that time, financial services didn't welcome much flexibility and I didn't want to go back to work full time. I joined a network marketing company to work around my part-time insurance role. The other consultants encouraged me to read personal development books and I discovered that highly successful people didn't have the perfect world like I believed; they had worries, just like me, but they had developed techniques to keep going and achieve their goals. I consumed more and more books and attended seminars – and my mindset began to change. Being part of the positive crowd of entrepreneurs led me on a wonderful and serendipitous journey to becoming a coach and NLP practitioner, seven years ago. I created vision boards and it seemed that as I focused on the future and got clearer on my goals, I would receive little magical signs that pointed me to the next opportunity, and then the next, and then the next.

When I returned from the NLP practitioner retreat, I was buzzing with pride and positivity at having gained a certification. After a few days back at work, a little box was left on my desk. Inside was a pen labelled 'Caroline Positive and Passionate'. I burst into tears at the realisation that my change was visible. My playful, creative, optimistic 11-year-old outlook on life was returning and I began to realise that if I really wanted to, I could still achieve my childhood dreams. Life doesn't happen **to** us, it happens **for** us... I realised I had choice.

The difference that makes the difference

My heightened awareness helped me to notice the limitations in the language of myself and others and at this point I knew I was gifted these tools for a reason. I simply had to help more people like me to realise their potential. I set this as a goal and took steps forward but really had no idea how this was going to happen. I remained flexible and again, I followed the little signs of opportunity that life presented. This led to me producing my first and now flagship workshop, Enabling Personal Success, in 2018. I helped fellow travellers on this journey of life with six keys that I will share with you today, and we will delve further into them in the workshop in December. www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/553728646287

There are many tools in our NLP toolboxes that you can use to activate these six keys and work with your clients to achieve success. However, as giving people we often put ourselves last on the list and I wholeheartedly believe that leadership starts from within.

Everything in our world starts as a thought. The laptop I'm typing on now and the table I am sitting at were once the thought of an inventor. When our brain absorbs the world we live in there is simply too much to take in and our brain deletes, distorts and generalises based on our past experiences and what it thinks we need to be aware of. What we feed our mind becomes our reality. The clever and complex reticular activating system is wired to look for what we have been focusing on and bring things into our awareness. Before learning NLP, I was focusing on the negative, so negative things were showing up for me over and over again. When my mindset switched, as if by magic the opposite began to happen.



- ▶ I still believe in the magic and, armed with my coaching and NLP toolbox and the six keys to success, I have now begun to master how to connect with my dreams and take steps towards achieving them in a quicker, proactive way. So, how do you design your vision and align your life?

My six keys to success

1 Know your perfect 10

Brainstorm what your world would be like as a perfect 10 for you in every area of your life. Dream big! You can achieve so much more than you think. Get into as much detail as you can, put it into pictures, regularly revisit using all your senses to imagine having achieved it.

2 Identify your values

Discover what is important to you! What lights you up and what presses your hot buttons? Notice what is incongruent, so you can adjust your focus accordingly.

3 Review your habits

What behaviours are setting you up for success and what is holding you back? As you imagine yourself having achieved your goals, what behaviours will you have adopted?

4 Check your language

Some of us can be our own worst enemy a lot of the time. I used to find myself being very critical, condescending and downright horrible to myself – and I still can be sometimes. Be your own best friend! Our unconscious mind does not hear the word 'Don't', so reframe towards what you **do** want or you will end up attracting what you don't!

5 Consider your environment

I'm sure most of us want to work towards an eco-friendly life, but that isn't quite what I mean by this. What I do mean is: is your physical environment supportive of the things you want to achieve? For plants to flourish, they need to have the right soil, light and water and be away from predators, such as other plants or creatures that might consume them. As humans, we also flourish in a positive environment that supports our growth. You become the average of the five people you spend your time with. Who are your five, and what is your average? Are you spending time in a flourishing environment?

6 Be grateful

I believe everything happens for a reason, even if we can't see that reason for some time to come. When we are working towards the next level we can get so caught up in the doing that we forget to reflect and be grateful. Regularly review your goals to see if you are on track. Tweak and refocus where you need to. Practise gratitude for the progress you have made and always try to find some good in the things that have happened that you perceive as less positive.

I regularly return to these keys to check my progress and, as I reflect, I am simply amazed by some of the moments that have magically materialised along the way. I will share some examples in December. In the meantime, I invite you to explore the six keys and consider the NLP presuppositions, including:

'If it is possible in the world, it's possible for me. It's just a matter of how.'

'People have all the resources they need to make the changes they want.'

'We are in charge of our mind and therefore our results.'

Here's to your success! ■

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