

wlpg



# STAGEfour

I'm taking control

STEP 1 – IT'S AS EASY AS ABC

STEP 2 – I HAVE THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

STEP 3 – I HAVE THE SELF-BELIEF

STEP 4 – I HAVE THE COMMITMENT



WE VIEW EVERY DAY OF OUR HOLIDAYS WITH A SENSE OF HAPPINESS AND EXCITEMENT. JUST IMAGINE WHAT YOU COULD ACHIEVE IF YOU LOOKED AT EACH DAY OF YOUR LIFE IN SUCH A POSITIVE WAY.

## OVERVIEW

This stage is crucial because you are facing a make-or-break decision.

You've created your vision and have a clearer picture of the life you want. You're also starting to understand how to make it happen by blending your WLPG. You now have three choices:

## TIME TO MAKE YOUR MIND UP...

At this stage you're facing three choices. Making the right one is critical if you really want to change your life.

**CHOICE 1** – Forget it. “My vision wasn’t that good anyway so it might as well go in the bin!” This comment highlights a negative attitude – so you’ll probably fail.

**CHOICE 2** – Put it off. “I can’t do anything about it just now but may get round to it one day.” This comment shows lack of belief and commitment – you have no confidence in being able to do it.

**CHOICE 3** – Make it happen. “I’m going to give this a go and make my vision my reality.” To really say it and mean it requires a positive combination of attitude, belief and commitment.



Lee Boulton seems to glide through life like a swan across the water. In reality, like many of us, she’s paddling furiously under the surface to overcome fears and worries. Lack of self-confidence makes her put off big things like her driving test. She worries herself sick at big social events and interviews. Although keen to become a teacher, she hears two voices – one encouraging taking the risk, the other protecting her from failure. Lee realises she needs to listen to both voices but in the right order. “One voice is saying you’ll regret it if you don’t. The other asks what if you’re not clever enough?”.

**STEP 1** > LOOKS AT YOUR ATTITUDE, BELIEF AND COMMITMENT AND HELPS YOU ASSESS YOUR CURRENT APPROACH

**STEP 2** > HELPS YOU TO ASSESS YOUR ATTITUDE AND MAKE THE CHANGES NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE YOUR VISION

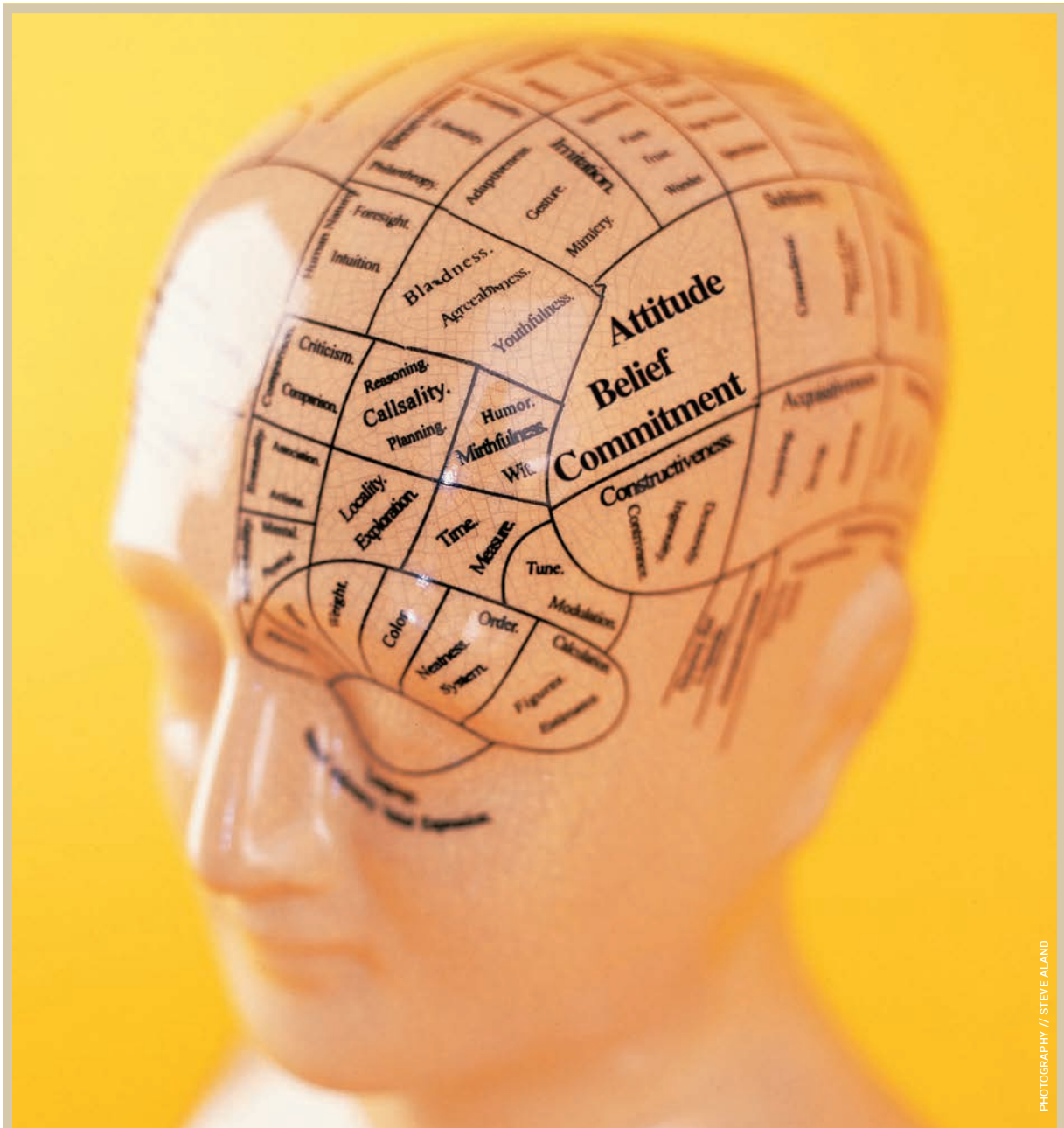
**STEP 3** > SUGGESTS WAYS TO OVERCOME THOUGHTS OR BELIEFS THAT DESTROY YOUR CONFIDENCE

**STEP 4** > CHECKS YOU HAVE THE COMMITMENT, MOTIVATION AND RESILIENCE TO ACHIEVE YOUR VISION

## HOW STAGE 4 WILL HELP YOU

Don't worry if you find some parts of this stage difficult. You'll still get real benefits and insights that help you to:

- Take your first steps to making your vision a reality
- Improve your attitude, self-belief and commitment
- Build a positive approach and increase your confidence to move forward



PHOTOGRAPHY // STEVE ALAND

‘Your Attitude, Belief and Commitment puts you in control of making changes. You’ve nothing to lose and everything to gain – so just go for it!’

## STEP 1 – IT'S AS EASY AS ABC

To make your vision a reality, you need a positive attitude. You have to believe you can do it and then you need to commit to making it happen. This may sound a little daunting but it's really as easy as ABC:

**A: ATTITUDE** – Having a positive frame of mind. Being open to possibilities, looking creatively and enthusiastically to the future.

**B: BELIEF** – Having a strong self-belief. Being confident in your life with a strong sense of worth and self-esteem.

**C: COMMITMENT** – Having determination to change your life and knowing you'll make mistakes but have the tenacity to win through in the end.

'If you want to be happy, be' – Henry Thoreau

'When you really believe in what you're doing, you must persevere despite all obstacles' – Lee Iacocca

'If you think you are too small to be effective, you have never been in bed with a mosquito' – Anita Roddick

### e I really mean it...

Before going any further, let's take a look at your ABC.

1. Read the statements on the opposite page and tick the boxes reflecting where you are on the scale. Try to be honest and avoid the middle ground. Fooling yourself isn't going to help you in the long run.
2. Now compare your scores. Where are the highest ratings? Do you score highly across all three – Attitude, Belief and Commitment – or is one element stronger than the others?
3. What are the areas that need more development? Ask yourself where you need to enhance and improve your attitude, belief and commitment.

Don't forget the lower your score is, the less likely you are to achieve the goals and vision you created at Stages 2 and 3.

To support you the next three steps are designed to move you quicker towards your vision by helping you

- create a positive attitude
- boost your self-belief and
- enhance your personal commitment



How do you see this pint? Half full or half empty? How do you see situations and choices in your life? Remember the outcome of any situation is not based on the situation itself, but your reaction to it.



## A ATTITUDE

**A1** I always expect things to go wrong



1 2 3 4 5 6



**A1** I tend to find solutions to problems

**A2** I tend to see the negative before I see the positive



1 2 3 4 5 6



**A2** I always see the positive side of things

**A3** I stop myself doing things before I've given them a chance



1 2 3 4 5 6



**A3** I'm happy to try new things out

**A4** I'm never going to do anything with that vision – it just won't happen



1 2 3 4 5 6



**A4** I'm going to have a go at making this happen

## B BELIEF

**B1** I don't see the point in trying to change – this is how I will always be



1 2 3 4 5 6



**B1** I recognise the things I do well and build on these to set new targets

**B2** I never manage to do things as well as I think they should be done



1 2 3 4 5 6



**B2** I know my strengths and weaknesses and am at ease with them

**B3** Other people tend to be brighter, more capable or just better than I am



1 2 3 4 5 6



**B3** I believe I am as worthwhile as any other person

**B4** I don't believe I can do anything to achieve my vision so I'll put it to one side and one day get round to doing it.



1 2 3 4 5 6



**B4** I know I have the belief and skill to make this happen

## C COMMITMENT

**C1** I have difficulty in picking myself up again and keeping going when things go wrong



1 2 3 4 5 6



**C1** I believe I can learn something from every experience even those that don't go right. I am able to bounce back from such experiences

**C2** I find making mistakes difficult to accept



1 2 3 4 5 6



**C2** I think mistakes are a natural part of the process, and I am happy making them

**C3** I sometimes give up when things don't go as I'd planned



1 2 3 4 5 6



**C3** I keep my eye on the bigger picture I am trying to achieve despite setbacks along the way

**C4** I'm going to throw this vision away – it wasn't very good anyway



1 2 3 4 5 6



**C4** I'm going to try and make this vision real



HOLD  
ON TIGHT  
TO YOUR  
DREAMS

## STEP 2 – I HAVE THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

This step helps you to assess your attitude to making the changes necessary to achieve your vision. Every morning you face a simple choice. Are you going to start the day with a positive attitude or a negative one?

How often do people say they got out of bed on the wrong side? Yet the attitude you take to the world each day is critical for your life. And it's nothing to do with the side of the bed!

You'll find the next exercise helpful – and fun – in understanding just how you behave at the moment. As well as deciding which character fits you best, ask other people what they think. Try spotting other friends and colleagues too.



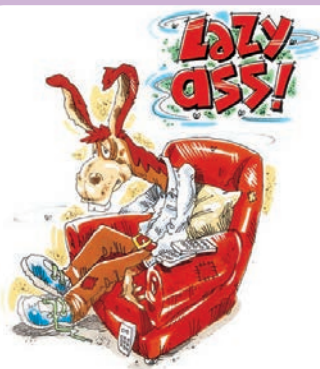
I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you.... we are in charge of our attitudes!" – Charles Swindoll



## e This is the kind of person I am!

Imagine you're going to a fancy dress party with friends and colleagues. Everyone will dress up as an animal character that reflects their personality.

1. Take a look at the following characters and read their descriptions to decide which character or combination of characters you should go as. Whether you're a Toxic Toad, Happy Hippo or Capable Chameleon, it's vital to understand what you can do to improve and/or maintain this.
2. Make a note of any improvements you could make.
3. When you've decided your character – or combination – ask other people how they see you. You may get a surprise!
4. Think also about which character you would most like to be like.



*Lazy Asses may appear negative and apathetic, having little interest in what they do or even in life in general. Rather than take action, they wait for something to land in their lap. This may result from past failures or rejection causing a loss of confidence and therefore an inability to take control.*

### WAYS TO IMPROVE

- Think carefully about the consequences of not doing anything proactively about your situation – are you truly living the life you want?
- Find someone to encourage and support your efforts (refer to Stage 5 of this resource). If you are the Lazy Ass, you will find it very difficult to do this by yourself
- Set yourself regular short-term objectives whose success you can review and celebrate. Begin to try blending your WLPG with little challenges to help you extend your comfort zone

'No one ever stumbled across anything sitting down'

– Charles Kettering



*Busy Bees see things through, contribute well to what they do and work hard. They have lots to offer but due to other commitments can often feel they compromise on what they wish to do in their lives. They often fail to celebrate their achievements and risk staying doing what they are doing now.*

### WAYS TO IMPROVE

- Find out what really matters to you – take another look at your life's essentials – your six Ps. Determine the priority of these – what will really make a difference to what you are doing now
- Focus on working smarter to make these happen – structure your plans and find someone to help
- Celebrate your success and avoid focusing on any setbacks

'Here's a cure for hurry sickness, slow down and enjoy life – every moment of it' – Dick Bolles



*Crotchety Camels are often weighed down by negative baggage and can demotivate others. Often very experienced and capable, they wonder what they can do for themselves and offer to others. They often feel unable to respond to change and fear rejection.*

#### WAYS TO IMPROVE

- Begin to consider solutions and not just problems. Try some of the activities on pages 24 and 26. Consider how you can put more fun into your steps to help you achieve your objectives
- Use your energy creatively, looking at new ways to help you achieve your vision
- Use the skills you have to stretch yourself and be flexible in the route you take to achieving your vision

*'A man can succeed in almost anything for which he has unlimited enthusiasm' – Charles Schwas*

**top cat**



*Top Cats tend to be full of drive and energy, with a proactive approach to achieving the objectives they set themselves. They maintain a clear focus on these as they take the steps to move closer to them.*

#### WAYS TO IMPROVE

- Consider what is your view of success and avoid getting sucked into other people's expectations of it. Be true to yourself and make sure your life's essentials are your priorities and nobody else's
- Avoid throwing yourself so much into one aspect of your life that you miss out on others – are you blending WLPG effectively?
- Don't become too complacent. You could quickly go from being consciously competent to unconsciously incompetent

*'Ask yourself, who has call on your time, mental energy, emotional energy, physical energy?' – David Clutterbuck*

**HAPHAZARD Hamster**



*Haphazard Hamsters seem to work, learn, play and give very hard but often end up wondering what they have gained by it. They need to take the time to look at what they really want and channel their energy more effectively.*

#### WAYS TO IMPROVE

- Make sure you are giving yourself quality time to pause and reflect on where you are heading in your WLPG – are you realising the vision you identified in Stage 2
- Set yourself clear objectives and gain a greater level of focus and direction, targeting your energy and enthusiasm
- Find a helping hand, coach or mentor and gain as much feedback as possible



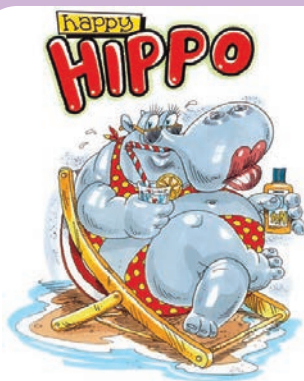
*Capable Chameleons are very flexible, responding well to change and adapting to new situations quickly. They find it easy to understand the needs of others and offer support. They can sometimes however take on too many tasks at the same time.*

#### WAYS TO IMPROVE

- Reassess aspects of your life that are important to you – have you created the right blend of WLPG?
- Avoid spreading yourself too thinly and review where you can make the greatest impact within your picture
- Maintain your flexibility of approach and continually develop your skills

‘Each of us is potentially the difference in the world’

– Marilyn Ferguson



*Happy Hippos have a lot to offer but are too comfortable to change. They like staying in their comfort zone and if possible avoid any changes to the status quo. While content for the moment, they need to consider where do they want to be in the longer term.*

#### WAYS TO IMPROVE

- Be honest - are you really happy and living the life you want? Is this sustainable in the long-term (see Stage 3), eg: are you still building your skills to maintain your employability?
- Take time out to complete some of the activities. What makes you happy now - and in the future? How can you spend more time doing the things you are good at and enjoy? Think back to Stage 1, pg2 – what you’ve learned already
- Work with someone to encourage and support you along the way

‘So many people fall short of their true potential because their fear holds them back in some way’ – Sangesta Mayne



*Oblivious Ostriches resist change of any kind and try to ignore the situation they are in. They can therefore often miss positive opportunities, which would help them take control of their situation.*

#### WAYS TO IMPROVE

- Try to take your head out of the sand and look around you at all the WLPG opportunities available
- Ask why you are avoiding things – is it fear of taking a risk? Learn to take small manageable steps before tackling the big issues
- Get support from others. Listen and learn from feedback – an objective view is essential. Who can help you? Refer to Stage 5

## Wise Owl!



*Wise Owls always think ahead and have an eye open to spot and seize opportunities to effectively blend working, learning, playing and giving. They understand where they need to position themselves to take advantage of these opportunities and develop their vision further.*

### WAYS TO IMPROVE

- Stay flexible in your approach. Continue to be creative in spotting new opportunities to develop your vision
- Continually review your position and identify what has motivated you
- Don't get too comfortable with the environment around you – continue to develop your skills and impart your knowledge to support others. This could be part of your WLPG life plan in Stage 7

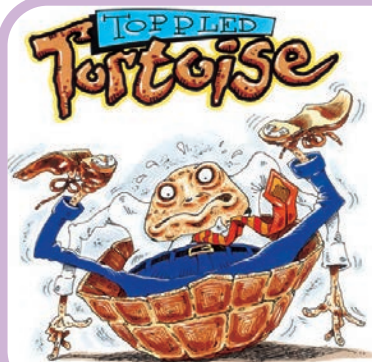
*'The successful are the people who have fallen flat a dozen times – but have got to their feet again' – Pam Brown*



*Lost Sheep may lack the vital experience, skills or understanding to know what they aspire to. Although they can be keen to develop themselves, they often just follow the flock then wonder how they ended up doing what they are doing.*

### WAYS TO IMPROVE

- Gain direction by taking time to understand what matters to you – review your Stage 2 activities
- Be more proactive in finding new opportunities to blend WLPG. Seek information interviews, (Stage 5, pg16) be ready to use stepping stones to new opportunities and make the most of existing contacts
- Find a shepherd – somebody who you can trust to guide, inform and provide objective feedback for you



*Toppled Tortoises feel stuck in a rut and have trouble finding creative solutions to their situation. They often feel controlled by their circumstances rather than in control of them and have difficulty identifying the first steps they need to take to change.*

### WAYS TO IMPROVE

- Find someone to provide a helping hand. Build your community to boost your confidence and give your ideas structure and direction
- Try to become more self-reliant by developing your self awareness – use what you learned in Stage 2 to act on what's important to you.
- Don't take rejection or setbacks personally. The more WLPG opportunities you create, the more potential rejections you can expect





*Toxic Toads can poison the atmosphere by their negative attitude and stop themselves realising their potential as a result. They can seem angry or frustrated and focus on complaining about the problem rather than finding solutions.*

#### WAYS TO IMPROVE

- Ask if you're happy in your present situation. Focus on finding out what is important to you. Look back at your priorities in Stage 2 and what you've learned already at Stage 1. Take steps to improve your situation. Try to identify one thing to start making your situation better
- Check your attitude – is it getting you where you want to be in your working, learning, playing and giving? Use your energy positively
- Recognise the effect you may be having on other people and avoid blaming others for your situation. How can you change it?

'Lucky people attempt to achieve their goals, even if their chances of success seem slim, and persevere in the face of failure' – Richard Wiseman

e

#### I can solve my problems

This exercise should have suggested some things about yourself you need to tackle. And this is easier than you might think.

On page 14 you'll find a list of typical problems that stop people achieving their goals.

It's full of ideas to create a positive attitude and boost your confidence. Highlight any actions that could help you personally – just one or two could make that big difference to your life.



#### MEET THE PLAYFUL TIGER

For her job as a business marketing officer, Jo Wilde created her own character – the playful tiger! Her goal is to have fun, keep an open mind and not take life too seriously. Her view is that we are a mixture of characters but it's important to be happy with who you are and not worry about the things you aren't. Jo believes it's crucial to focus on things you can change and not worry about those you can't.

'Be happy with who you are, but be prepared to change for the better'





PHOTOGRAPHY // STEVE ALAND

YOU'RE  
NEVER  
FULLY  
DRESSED  
WITHOUT  
A SMILE

## PROBLEMS I CAN BEAT

LAZINESS	Set yourself regular, short-term tasks. Concentrate on achieving early successes making your first attempts easy and achievable. Get someone to help – friend, colleague or family member.
LACKING SELF-CONFIDENCE	Seek positive feedback. Try now and then to move out of your comfort zone and take on a new challenge. Build a community of positive, confident people around you who are willing to help you develop and boost your self-confidence. Don't undersell your achievements and ensure you have a clear focus.
FEAR OF FAILURE OR REJECTION	Learn from failures as well as successes. Understand that rejection happens a lot so don't take it personally. Keep a record of your successes you can refer to when necessary. Don't forget that failures can help you grow eventually.
POOR TIME MANAGEMENT	Look at ways you can make more of your time. Give yourself a realistic time each week to focus on developing your inspiring future. Allow time to reflect and set priorities for action.
NO FOCUS OR DIRECTION	Recognise what is really important to you. Reflect again on the Stage 2 activities and pre-test ideas you like best. Stay open-minded and be creative exploring new ideas.
COMFORT ZONE	Recognise if you are in your comfort zone and occasionally try new things out. Set yourself a weekly or monthly challenge to do this with things you feel confident about in working, learning, playing and giving.
LACK OF RELEVANT EXPERIENCE	Identify where your gaps are. Try finding activities to fill these gaps – consider different working, learning, playing and giving options.
MOTIVATION	What purpose does your future have? Does it really motivate you? Try pre-testing some of your options to sharpen the focus on what motivates you and provides you with rewards.
LIMITED TIME/SUPPORT	Build a support community around yourself to help you develop your vision. Find support in all areas – working, learning, playing and giving. Recognise any phrases you use that could be stopping you acting.
SCARED OF TAKING RISKS	Think about the comfort zone you may be in and any beliefs you hold that stop you trying new things. Are these preventing you from developing the life you want? Try testing various options.

‘Climb to the top of the boulder that blocks your way and enjoy the view from a different perspective’ – David Baird





### USE ALL YOUR BRAIN...

To overcome problems of this kind you may need to change your attitude to life. And that means using your brain – or rather both sides of it. The left side of your brain often plays a 'safe-keeping' role. It tends to keep you where you are familiar and safe, however unsatisfactory it may be.

The right side of your brain in contrast tends to be more experimental and may lead you into uncharted waters. This is the part of you that craves adventure.

Most of us have a preferred side of the brain. This is due partly to our genes and partly to our educational system, which tends to favour the left side. The side of your brain you favour will always influence your attitude and the way you approach the challenges and decisions ahead of you.

## e I know the way I think

1. Take a look at the characteristics below and think about your own preference.
2. Have you heard yourself using any of the phrases at the end of the lists?
3. Try changing any 'safekeeping' phrases you use into experimental ones

### THE SAFEKEEPING SELF

#### The left side of the brain

GUIDES  
EVALUATES  
ANALYSES  
PROTECTS  
IS REALISTIC  
LOOKS AT CONSEQUENCES  
IS SERIOUS, CAUTIOUS AND SUSPICIOUS  
IS ALERT TO DANGER  
AVOIDS SURPRISES  
AVOIDS RISKS  
MAKES RULES AND FOLLOWS THEM  
TENDS TO BE FEARFUL

"I don't think we should do that...."

"It might be better to wait until we know more"

"Why would they ask us to do that?"

"Better the devil you know"

"The procedures say ..."

"If we go ahead that would mean ..."

### THE EXPERIMENTAL SELF

#### The right side of the brain

IMAGINES  
ACTS INTUITIVELY  
SPECULATES  
RECOGNISES PATTERNS  
MAKES CONNECTIONS  
IMPETUOUS  
DOESN'T MIND BEING CONFUSED OR WRONG  
IS OPEN TO ANYTHING  
LIKES SURPRISES  
TAKES RISKS  
BREAKS RULES  
SEES THE FUN IN THINGS

"Lets have a go"

"This could provide the answer"

"Lets try and solve this"

"Why not?"

"I'd like to find out more about this"

"Lets cross that bridge when we get to it"

The following example shows this process in action:

## 'I want to be an astronaut'

### SAFEKEEPING

Don't be stupid  
I'm too old and unfit  
It would be too hard  
No, it's too expensive  
It's wrong because...  
The last space mission failed  
I'll stay and watch it on TV

### EXPERIMENTAL

Why not?  
I could get fitter... age doesn't matter  
This is how it could happen  
I could raise money by...  
Here's how we can get it back on track  
The technology and opportunities are improving  
I'm on my way... we have lift-off!

The EXPERIMENTAL self creates possibilities within limited data. The SAFEKEEPING self on the other hand structures the information as it stands. The problem for many of us is using the left side of our brain to put our foot on the brake in the belief that we are protecting ourselves. That may stop us taking advantage of exciting opportunities. The secret is to use both sides of the brain in combination. This can be a big help in planning a course of action. Try using the right side first to open up possibilities or solutions and then the left side to refine them. This will also help you develop a more positive attitude to making the vision you've created happen.



PHOTOGRAPHY // STEVE ALAND

### MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

Sting's life story has a message for us all. There were two equally-good bands in his school and, like any youngsters, all the members had dreams of making it big (right-brain thinking). But when University beckoned, the safekeeping self kicked in. All bar one decided to focus on their studies and forgot their dreams. Sting, however, did both, he kept his dream alive by building a new band and getting an agent but created a Plan B by studying to be a teacher.

The key to Sting's success (in addition to his obvious talent) was undoubtedly the way he combined both ways of thinking. He started with a big vision and backed it up with practical alternatives. If he had started with practicalities and listened to other people saying it wasn't possible, he would never have realised his ambitions. Next time you have a big idea, make it even bigger before you look positively at how you can turn it into reality.

## 10 habits for a positive attitude

Here are ten habits you can adopt to create a positive attitude right now. Which will you choose today?

1. Be open – not closed – to new possibilities in your working, learning, playing and giving. Try saying yes to ideas not ‘no’ or ‘yes, but...’
2. Enjoy the present rather than dwelling on the past.
3. Celebrate what you have now rather than worrying about the future. Stop worrying and start living.
4. Be grateful for what you’ve got before expecting something different.
5. Look for solutions – not problems. Every time you feel yourself knocking something or someone, stop yourself by writing your thoughts down and turning them into totally opposite statements.
6. Realise you can do it and ignore people saying you can’t or shouldn’t.
7. Take responsibility and use your own resources rather than blaming others and making excuses.
8. Give yourself permission to live your vision by doing something different. And take small risks rather than avoid things or worry about the big steps.
9. See your limitations as strengths rather than letting them limit you.
10. Learn positively from mistakes and rejection rather than dwell on them. There’s no such thing as failure – only feedback.

‘The greatest pleasure in life is doing what people say you cannot do’ – Walter Bagehot

**Another way of developing a positive attitude is to come up with your own positive statements.**

**This is a kind of self-suggestion – a soundbite you give to yourself. It’s based on the principle that, if you tell yourself something often enough, sooner or later you will believe it.**

**And you’ll be surprised how often it works. Positive statements help to:**

- Emphasise your good points
- Change weaknesses into strengths
- Change attitude
- Focus on what you want for yourself

‘The moment you accept yourself as you are, all burdens, all mountainous burdens, simply disappear. Then life is a sheer joy, a festival of lights’ – Osho



## e I can get positive

Have a go at writing a positive statement for yourself by following these simple steps:

1. Take a piece of paper and start your positive statement in the first person, eg: I respect and admire myself.
2. Use only positive words and phrases to describe what you want, eg: I can do this.
3. Make your positive statement credible stating your determination to change and intention to take the next step., Don't be too ambitious e.g. I used to be shy but all that is changing. I am becoming more sociable and know I will continue to improve.
4. Write down your positive statements - this helps reinforce them in your subconscious. Jot them down in a diary or notebook – anywhere that you can't fail to see them.
5. Make your statements as if you really mean them. Saying this out loud is best although, if you feel silly doing this, silently under your breath works well too. Remember your safekeeping self will be trying to take over, tell it firmly to be quiet and let the experimental side of your brain have a go.
6. Repeat your statements. The more you repeat them the more effective they'll be.
7. Update your list of statements regularly and keep them with you at all times. When one is no longer relevant, drop it and replace it with another.

**You should now have identified some solutions to help overcome your problems and improve your attitude. This will help in reviewing your self-belief in the next step.**

‘Cherish the freedom to be yourself. Be guided by your inner voice and do what you believe in. Sing, dance and embrace life to the full’

– Linda Kelham

‘Seen with new eyes, our lives can be transformed from accidents into adventures’ – Marilyn Ferguson



### A SMILE COSTS NOTHING

Phil Foxley struggles to read and write but doesn't let this get in the way of life. As Lord Mayor of the Thursday Club – a local voluntary group – he has speaking engagements at numerous social and cultural events. People say Phil wears two smiles – one on his face, the other in his heart.



Niamh O'Donnell like many two-year-olds has a wonderful sense of adventure and is willing to try anything if supported and encouraged. Are you?

### STEP 3 – I HAVE THE SELF-BELIEF

It is vital to let go of thoughts or beliefs that destroy your confidence and prevent you from taking the next steps forward. If you have a lot of negative thoughts you are likely to have a low level of self-belief and this is probably holding you back. You'll be stopping yourself with these thoughts before you've even started.

'I've never been able to do this kind of thing, I can't do it'

If you have just a few negative beliefs, they could be a barrier to you in a particular area.

'I was never good at maths at school, I couldn't do a job that involves finance'

If you have no negative beliefs, there's very little holding you back – so just go for it!

#### Drop these negative beliefs

It's all too easy to cling to ideas we've never even questioned. They develop over time and can come from anywhere but frequently stem from our childhood, experience and culture, eg:

- Statements such as you're stupid; you're not as bright as your sister/brother; you're too little; you're fat, etc.
- How you perceive how you are seen by others, eg: friends, colleagues etc.
- Behaviour that reinforces what you have been told, eg: If you're told you're no good at public speaking, for instance, you may start making mistakes despite evidence to the contrary. This becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.
- Being different from others and not fitting stereotypes, eg: boys don't cry, girls shouldn't climb trees – or perhaps wearing glasses, having a disability etc.

'If you keep on saying things are going to be bad you have a good chance of being a prophet' – Isaac Bashevis Singer

Such comments are called self-limiting beliefs. They may be said by others but often you tend to recite them inside your head. They can hold you back from doing all sorts of things you'd really like to have a go at. These self-limiting beliefs affect us in different areas of our working, learning, playing and giving. It's quite common to be full of self-belief with family and close friends but to lose it at work.

One of the most effective ways to start building up your self-belief is to start with areas where you feel most confident. This can then be extended to other areas. Once again you need to break down barriers – in this case the negative thoughts that could stop you taking action to realise your vision.



Marlene Amoo has always lived in the shadow of her brothers, members of the group 'The Real Thing', as well as facing challenges with dyslexia. Her confidence has been boosted by her passion for karate. She has progressed to black belt and now trains youngsters on basic moves. This in turn has motivated her to go back to college for reading and writing courses.

‘Don’t be afraid of your negative thoughts. Just know them for what they are – not the truth, just negative thoughts. Give them no house room in consciousness and they will dissolve into what they are – false ideas, false concepts, with nothing to sustain them’ – Nona Coxhead

Have you heard yourself saying any of the following?

## WORKING

My job is not important  
I’m no good at my job  
Everyone I work with is better  
at their job than me  
I’m only part-time  
I’m only an...  
I could never do that  
People are talking about me

## LEARNING

I’m too old to learn  
I’m not clever enough  
I’m no good at exams  
I was hopeless at school  
I’m stupid  
I could never learn to do that  
It’s too late for me now  
I couldn’t see it through  
People are talking about me

## PLAYING

I’d look stupid doing that  
I don’t know anyone  
I’m no good at ...  
I’m always the last to be picked  
Nobody wants me  
People will laugh at me  
Nobody likes me  
I’m not skilled/clever/quick etc.  
People are talking about me

## GIVING

Nobody needs me  
I’ve got nothing to offer/give  
I can’t make a difference  
I can’t do that  
What’s the point anyway?  
It’s out of my control  
I’m powerless to help  
Nothing I could do would help  
People are talking about me

The case studies on the next two pages show how other people have improved their self-belief in their working, learning, playing and giving

# WORKING



## CELEBRATE YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS

Bob Davies was confident as a telecoms logistics manager – but afraid to sell his skills in the job market. Faced with big change, Bob still preferred to travel miles each day rather than risk the unknown. But with support from friends he took the plunge and found a similar temporary job locally.

During six months looking for work he re-discovered his love of handiwork. He's now made himself indispensable in his new job but also has the offer of partnering a friend in a house refurbishment project.



'Anything's possible if you believe in yourself. We all have self-confidence but sometimes we need people to top it up'

# PLAYING



## PLAY WITH YOUR CONFIDENCE

Kathryn Little was always shy socially and avoided the crowd. But her confidence picked up when her parents asked her to take round the crisps at parties. It was an excuse to talk to anybody without worrying about what they thought. Gradually she weaned herself off the crisps technique and is now the first to approach new people at work and socially. She's built on this confidence and stretched her comfort zone further by taking a part-time lecturing job at a teacher training college.



'Don't let your worries about what other people think of you batter and bruise you. See them for what they are – your worries'



# LEARNING



## TAKE THE PLUNGE

Standing by the pool Laurence Brooks was scared stiff on his first swimming lesson. As a university lecturer he could stand in front of 100 people but as a non-swimmer, jumping into the unknown was another matter. As his worries and fears of looking stupid – or worse – went into overdrive, he suddenly realised they were natural and that he'd felt the same on his first day as a lecturer. He then jumped in!

'Remember fear is a natural process. But understand it for what it is – false evidence appearing real'

# GIVING



## DOING GOOD FOR NOTHING

Audrey Sargent was in a rut, worrying about her looks and weight and feeling she had nothing to offer. While cleaning for a friend she discovered a local club for adults with learning difficulties was desperate for volunteers. Her first thought was 'they won't want me', but her friend persuaded her to take the first step. Audrey has never looked back – she's now the treasurer and her confidence has increased step by step. Encouraged by friends at the Club she has applied for her first formal job in over 10 years.

'I thought I was good for nothing, but doing good for nothing has changed my life'

If you recognise some of those phrases on page 21 try the following exercise:

### e This is how I see myself...

1. Take a piece of paper and write down twenty statements you believe about yourself – some may be positive, some negative.
2. Think about these statements in all areas of your WLPG
3. Draw four circles marked WLPG. Write the statements in the appropriate circle – don't worry about having equal number of statements in each. Your level of self-belief in one area of your WLPG could be completely different from that in other areas.
4. To help you think about these, focus on things you say to yourself and those you perceive others have said to you. What are the things you say to yourself in your head?
5. Take a look at your statements. Now try and turn any negative ones into positives, eg: "I'm hopeless at networking" becomes:

'I can have an interesting discussion with most people. I'm going to speak to that new client next time they're in the office'

6. Re-draw your four circles and record these new positive statements in each.
7. Now think about the vision you created for yourself in Stages 2 and 3. What are you telling yourself already about why you can't achieve this? See the box opposite. If you're not – great! Go ahead and commit yourself to making it happen by moving on to step four.
8. If some of those comments in your head are negative though you need to turn them into positives – how you can make your vision a reality.

Lots of people have problems believing they can really achieve something they have set their hearts on.

#### WHY I THINK I CAN'T MAKE MY VISION A REALITY:

*It's impossible – I can't do it, I'm not talented enough, It's just a pipedream, There's no way I'm confident enough.*

#### WHY I CAN MAKE MY VISION A REALITY:

*I know it's possible – I can do it, I've got far more skill than I thought, If I don't do it someone else will, I'm going to build my confidence by...*

'Men often become what they believe themselves to be. If I believe I cannot do something, it makes me incapable of doing it. When I believe I can, I acquire the ability to do it even if I didn't have it in the beginning' – Mahatma Gandhi

**If you need further help developing a strong self-belief, refer to the positive thinking activities and tips in the previous step as these can also help. Don't forget that other people can be a positive help with this. Think about your support community in Stage 5.**

**If you are still unsure of how to improve your self-belief, some of the following tips might also help.**

## 10 tips to boost my self-belief

1. Visualise yourself acting in a new and confident way – changing what you imagine about yourself can create self-belief.
2. Keep a record of achievements and successes and refer to it when you feel you need it.
3. Look for positives in what others are saying to you. Don't simply focus on the negatives and overlook all the positive feedback.
4. Learn to accept that you are as you are and be comfortable with it. Some things can't be changed but you can often find a new way of making the best of yourself by becoming better informed, acquiring new skills and changing unwanted habits.
5. Self-belief grows when you're in the right role in life for you. Take another look at the activities you completed in Stage 2.
6. Begin to build a positive community around you – don't surround yourself with Toxic Toads – find some Top Cats and Wise Owls.
7. Identify a key role model for yourself. The chances are you already have some of the qualities you admire in that person – so how can you develop these further?
8. Learn to handle rejection or failure when they come along – and learn from them.
9. Try to keep your negative experiences and problems in perspective. You can do this by putting them into the biggest context possible, eg: world famine or global warming.
10. Make a determined effort to see the funny side of life. Laughing – and making others laugh – works wonders for your self-esteem.

'It is the greatest of all mistakes to do nothing because you can only do a little' – Sydney Smith



### A NEW PERSPECTIVE

Ben Pye has found a new lease of life volunteering to help adults with special needs. It's put all his worries in perspective.



### ONE SIMPLE STEP

Gerry Burns-McCombe was on a treadmill trying to balance part-time roles as a waitress and an admin person. Then she took the simple step of helping a friend in an art gallery run a promotional event and it really boosted her confidence. She's now turned her admin role into a full-time position and expanded it to include marketing and promotion.



## STEP 4 – I HAVE THE COMMITMENT

Reaching the right blend of working, learning, playing and giving is going to take time.

And your journey could well include frustration, anger and setbacks – as well as the moments of real joy and personal fulfilment. You now understand how to strengthen your self-belief. This step helps ensure you have the commitment, motivation and resilience to achieve your vision. It helps you identify:

- The factors and resources already within your control
- The personal barriers you will need to overcome
- The opportunities, personal contacts and networks you need to maximise
- The external forces and risks whose effects you will need to minimise

You'll find it easier if you can step outside your immediate situation and see your present life in the wider context. You can then position yourself to achieve the outcome you want.

e

### I can beat those barriers

When the winds of change blow, you can either build walls and resist them or use all that energy to build windmills.

This exercise focuses on the barriers (or walls) that are stopping you moving towards the life you want – and the positive approaches/attitudes (windmills) that can help you take control and commit to action. In doing this consider your positive and negative thoughts and attitudes alongside the more tangible walls and windmills such as money, home circumstances, qualifications, age etc.

1. Write down the walls and windmills in your life as shown below.



#### WINDMILLS

Things that can help you take control

*My approach  
Skills in the job I do  
Good line manager  
Supportive family*



#### WALLS

Things stopping you moving forward

*Lack of focus  
No time  
Company culture*



2. Having identified what your walls and windmills are, you now need to consider how much control you exercise over these. Are you controlling them or are they controlling you? Take another look at the two lists you have just created. Ask yourself how much control you have over these walls and windmills.
3. Now begin to move them into the following four boxes. Do this by reviewing the list of windmills and decide if you have control over them – if so put them into box 1. If other people provide some of the windmills you selected, eg: networks, resources etc. then put them into box 3.
4. Now look at the walls you listed, and again identify those walls that you could exercise some control over and put them into box 2. You should then be left with the walls or obstacles that are genuinely out of your control – put those into box 4.



### 1 WINDMILLS

Things within my control

*My approach  
Skills in the job I do  
Be more focused  
Create time for me*



### 2 WALLS

**Barriers:** Things stopping me – but within my control



### 3 WINDMILLS

**Supporting Opportunities:** Building your community

*Good line manager  
Supportive family  
Internet resources  
Company training*



### 4 WALLS

**External Forces:** Things out of my control

*Company culture*

5. Take a look at the lists you have just created – which is the largest? Is it a wall or a windmill? Is it in or out of your control? If it's a wall, it may be stopping you committing to turning your plans into actions.
6. Focus on the things you can change, but also see if you can move any external forces (box 4) into your personal control (box 1).

In our experience, change occurs quickest when people internalise their barriers rather than blame them on external factors. For example there is a difference between, "There are no jobs in Merseyside" and "I'm too lazy to do proper research on where growth companies are".



### A SMILE COSTS NOTHING

Sayed Kalam will never forget three pieces of advice handed down from his mother – enjoy everything you do, do good things every day and commit to what you believe in. Sayed has realised that you can enjoy achieving anything with commitment, enthusiasm and perseverance. He started his career as a waiter, but didn't like his boss. Next he set up a take-away, then found the right business partner and together they established their own restaurant.

Now Sayed has a flourishing business with a dedicated team around him, which frees him up to enjoy quality time with his family and relax playing snooker and badminton. He achieved his success by starting small, building firm foundations, working hard, keeping sight of his bigger vision, hanging around positive people and realising that struggles and stresses are a natural part of the process. That is the advice he gives his children – not to mention wearing a smile every day!



### Now it's down to you...

Remember that by completing the previous exercise you've reviewed all the factors that could help you commit to beginning the process of making your vision a reality. Hopefully you can control many of these factors. But it's also vital that you are supported as much as possible by additional resources.

In box 3, page 27, building a community of support can help you (Stage 5 will explain this). And the more support you can identify in box 3, the easier it will be to commit to the process. Take a look at the walls identified in box 2. Can you take some action to move them into your control? Read back through this stage if needed. Then see if – with a change to your ABC – you could tackle some of these walls.

Again ask yourself if the barriers are self-limiting beliefs because your attitude isn't positive? Can you do something about them? If lack of time is a major barrier, try to find a quality hour a week to consider what you want and how you can make it happen. The more personal barriers you can remove, the more you'll feel in control.

It's amazing how much you can do about things you at first thought were out of control. Remember the only walls in box 4 should be ones that are genuinely out of your control. That should not stop you trying to remove them, even changing your attitude and response to them can help – every little step counts.

Remember that the future you want will only happen if you make it. So what are you going to do about it now?

WITH THE RIGHT ATTITUDE, BELIEF AND COMMITMENT YOU'RE WELL ON YOUR WAY. STAGE 5 HELPS YOU MOVE MORE QUICKLY AND EASILY TOWARDS YOUR VISION BY CREATING THE RIGHT SUPPORT COMMUNITY AROUND YOU.

## IT'S MY LIFE!

Collect and consider everything you've gained from this stage in a file or notebook. Use your Life planner to:

1. Check you have done all the exercises.
2. Record the lessons you have learned and what you found surprising or puzzling.
3. Note down any ideas that could form part of your plans for the future.



THE WINDMILLS APPROACH TO  
WORKING, LEARNING, PLAYING & GIVING

‘When the wind blows, some people  
build walls – others build windmills’

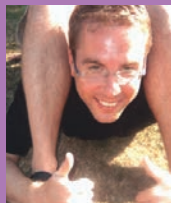
**Windmills is about dealing positively with the winds of change in your life.**

The Windmills approach to working, learning, playing and giving will open your eyes to possibilities you never dreamed existed. You'll discover it's far easier than you imagined to achieve the life you really want and deserve. You'll find out how to make some plans for the future that will begin to make that ideal life a reality.

#### THE WINDMILLS PARTNERSHIP

Windmills is a partnership between The University of Liverpool's GIEU (Graduate Into Employment Unit) and Dr Peter Hawkins. It has evolved from extensive delivery programmes funded by National LSC, NWDA, Greater Merseyside LSC, IAG Partnership, ESF, DfES and GONW.

#### DR PETER HAWKINS



Dr Peter Hawkins is a Fellow of The University of Liverpool and a world expert on career and life management.

As a visiting lecturer at Harvard University and advisor to UK Government, he writes, speaks and consults on an international basis.

Peter is the author of seven books, including the acclaimed 'Art of Building Windmills' and enjoys working with a range of partners including VSO, KPMG, Unicef, European Commission, BBC, DfES and the Association of Graduate Recruiters.

Passionate about working with people with special needs, Peter leads a charity for adults with learning difficulties and is an advocate for individuals with disabilities.

#### THE WINDMILLS TEAM

The Windmills team is part of GIEU, based at The University of Liverpool. Team members, in particular Helen Wakefield and Sharon Nicholson, have significantly contributed to the concepts, development and writing of this resource.

Windmills was developed through the team's experience and its success has included; increasing the employability of 20,000 under-employed and unemployed individuals; enhancing the competitiveness of 2,000 businesses; creating 1,250 entirely new jobs, and adding over £30 million value to the economy.

Windmills includes a portfolio of job, career, work and life resources together with tailored training programmes. The process has been successfully used with a range of clients, including women's groups and graduates, as well as for staff development, public, voluntary and commercial organisations and career and life practitioners.



For more information visit our website [www.windmillsprogramme.com](http://www.windmillsprogramme.com) or contact:

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