



Who Do You Want to Be in the “Next Normal”?

I have accepted and surrendered to the understanding that the world isn't going back to the way it was before. But who do I want to be in this “next normal”?

Here's how I am approaching my commitment to thrive amid the chaos of 2021.

Imagine a Compelling Vision of the Future

What are you creating in 2021? It is a question worth answering.

Many of us have begun to re-evaluate our long-term personal development goals and priorities — and we're still figuring them out. That is a beautiful thing!

The simple act of visualization can help you narrow in on your desired outcomes. So try this visualization exercise to help you get there:

1. First, quiet your mind. Shut your eyes.
2. Pick a random Thursday, five years into the future. What does that day look like? What work are you doing that engages you? Who are you spending your time with? If you're having trouble imagining those things on your own, then I recommend [this visioning exercise](#) from the [Hoffman Institute](#), which can help you begin to truly imagine how you envision your new life.
3. Open your eyes. Write everything down. Be specific. Paint the most beautiful day that you can imagine. Go deep. Dream big. Color it with beautiful detail. Write the story of the best day of your future life. This is the compelling vision of the future that you need to help guide your decisions.
4. Reverse-engineer that perfect Thursday. How can you get closer to that vision? What steps do you need to take? What do you need to [stop doing or quit](#) to create momentum? Write down those steps and the micro-decisions that it will take to get you there. If you need more support, then I recommend consulting my free guide, [How to Create Meaningful Change in Your Life](#), for actionable tactics and insights that will help you envision and create the life that you desire for yourself.

Dedicate Time for Reflection

Even though many of us are commuting less, we're also working more, according to [research from Stanford](#). Americans are anxious, stressed and depressed right now. That is no surprise, given all the anxiety related to job loss, financial insecurity and social isolation. We're overworked and exhausted.

We're also having a harder time unplugging than ever. The technology that helps us work from home during this pandemic is also adding to our stress. Scientists have found that even the **mere presence of a smartphone** in our vicinity is enough to distract us, as we anticipate **the dopamine rush** picking it up can provide.

But you *need* time for yourself. You cannot pour from an empty cup. Neither can I. So, take the time to invest in yourself. Go out for a walk. Be in nature. Reflect on the past 90 days and ask yourself these questions:

- What did I learn?
- What went well?
- What can I adjust?
- Who am I becoming?

Reflection builds self-awareness, and awareness builds our resilience. These **journaling prompts** will help you know yourself better and reclaim what you are truly made for! Through this experience, the silver lining is that we can emerge stronger, more self-assured and crystal clear about what we are creating and who we are becoming on the journey forward. That kind of intention is a gift!

Create Systems of Accountability for Your Personal Development Goals

There's a reason that only 19% of people keep their New Year's resolutions. No matter what our personal development goals are — or when you set them — they can be incredibly difficult to accomplish, mainly because we fail to deepen the commitment or summon the resolve to push past the inevitable pain, plateaus and setbacks that will occur on the journey forward. Clearly, willpower won't work. What does work is a better system?

Sometimes, it's difficult to summon the emotional energy to keep going. So if you do find yourself falling short of your 90-day personal development goals, don't beat yourself up. It's not our setbacks that truly set us back — it's our failure to learn from them that keeps us from achieving our personal development goals. As you consider what you want to accomplish in 2021, give this five-step system a shot to set you up for success:

1. **Choose your goal.** Decide what you want. Who do you want to be in 2021?
2. **Move into the right mindset.** Consider the following:
 - **Why:** Who else will benefit from you achieving the goal? How will you benefit? How will you feel? Write it down.
 - **Consequences:** What will happen if you do not achieve the goal? Project your life five years from now if things stay the same or get worse. What does that look like? How will that feel?
 - **Reflection:** What daily habits need to change?

3. **Decide how to measure.** How are you going to **measure progress?** You'll need to establish a baseline and very specific targets for improvement. There is probably an app for that. Or a journal. Clearly, it deserves some time in your calendar. Just be clear on what success looks like.
4. **Establish accountability.** Who is coming on this change journey with you? When the willpower wanes — and I promise it will — who has your back to make sure this time you don't throw in the towel? I have a trainer, a team and my **Personal Board of Directors** pushing me to grow and holding me accountable to my commitments every week.
5. **Start.** Now. Not "later." Momentum is a powerful thing. Don't lose it by procrastinating or saying that you'll start your personal development goals next week, next month or next year. It's so much easier to accomplish your big goals with momentum on your side. Your future self will thank you!

Finally, remember to treat yourself with compassion on the road ahead. Every morning is a new opportunity for you to begin again and recommit to yourself. Setbacks are a natural part of any change journey, so simply expect them!

One of life's grand challenges is to become all that you have the possibility of becoming. You cannot believe what it does to the human spirit to maximize your human potential and stretch yourself to the limit. We are made to grow!

<https://ryanestis.com/personal-growth/personal-development-goals/>