



UK Extension's  
**Universe of  
Possibilities™**

**SKILLS FOR CREATING HAPPINESS AND BLESSING OTHERS**

## *Your Vision Map*

*You are a one-of-a-kind person with extraordinary potential! Within you resides amazing energy, an intuitive ability to make the wisest decisions, and the creative power to accomplish the deepest desires of your heart. And what's true for you is true for all of us.*

*As more of us bring our noble dreams to life, we naturally bless those around us and help to create a more promise-filled and loving world—a world in which we can be healthy and live in peace, a world in which kindness and sharing triumph over fear and war, a world of unimagined possibilities.*

*Each of us has a small role to play in creating a more ideal society. Your part may seem tiny, yet it makes a vital contribution to the big picture. We all are connected, and when one person decides to give life his or her best, that choice enriches the quality of life for us all.*

*Giving life your best does not mean driving yourself in a fear-based way toward self-defeating and unrealistic standards of perfection; rather, it means staying well-balanced while striving for a high but reasonable degree of excellence in keeping with your inner guidance.*

*Deep within, we all have noble urges and dreams. Your Vision Map is a way of tapping into one of your important longings and then creating a tangible picture of what you want to accomplish, with key steps for getting there.*

## 7 Core Principles

- 1 Dare to explore courageously the dreams dancing in your heart and soul and make a commitment to the one that calls to you most clearly at this point in your life.
- 2 Craft and keep in front of you a clear picture of your vision so that you are inspired by it and stay on course without being sidetracked needlessly.
- 3 Be prepared for both obstacles and opportunities by remaining imaginatively flexible and optimistically open to fresh and unexpected ways of achieving the essence of your vision.
- 4 Enthusiastically share your dream with those who are receptive, and seek support from the sources that feel most right to you—special friends, sympathetic organizations, or, perhaps, your relationship with God or a higher power.
- 5 Using all your senses, make a habit of creating full-color mental movies in which you see your emerging vision in its full glory and can observe its many benefits.
- 6 In bringing your dream to life, be sure to enjoy each step along the way so that you find abundant satisfaction and pleasure through the entire journey as well as in the final unfolding of your vision.
- 7 Remember, the more centered you are on the Target of Life, the greater your well-being, the wiser your choices, and the more effective you are in everything you do.

Put yourself in the center of the heart of the Target of Life. **Notice that the heart of the Target is clear, unobstructed, full of light.** From there, you see clearly and make choices that are good for you and those around you. You are attuned to your inner guidance and best judgment. You feel at peace, strong, compassionate, joyful, energetic, and creative. Your reflexes are sharp, your immune system strong. You stumble and fall less often, and you handle life's inevitable challenges with more confidence and skill. Your ability to endure prolonged hardship increases. You are naturally more sensitive to others—more patient, generous, and understanding. You more easily express the richness of your authentic self. The more deeply centered you are in the heart of the Target of Life, the more love you feel and share. **You are at your best—physically, mentally, and spiritually.**



*Target of Life*

**Although you undoubtedly have experienced being relatively centered, often little and big things happen that go against your desires and expectations, and you are likely to find yourself thrown off center and pulled out of your heart's wisdom into the surrounding web of minor frustrations and energy-drainers.** Your vitality, peace, and sensitivity begin to fade, and little tensions, doubts, and fears start to emerge. Stress creeps in and things bother you more easily. You are more critical of yourself and edgier with the people in your life. Your effectiveness, spiritual attunement, and physical health start to slip.

**All of this can pull you even further away from the center of the Target of Life into the area of increased darkness and sharp edges.** When you are in this portion of the Target, you have strayed still further away from your center—your heart of hearts, your home of love, wisdom, and joy. Stress levels are high, and it's much more difficult to sense your inner guidance. You're far more likely to become irritable with co-workers and friends, to yell at family members, and to make poor decisions in every area of life. Tension, disharmony, and fatigue take their toll on your creativity and physical well-being. You and everyone around you are affected negatively.

**Beyond this portion of the Target of Life is the outer darkness. Here you can't see well at all; it's a terrible place to be. Insecurity, doubt, confusion, and selfishness are rampant.** Stress soars to dangerous levels, and good judgment plummets to an all-time low. You feel heavy and burdened and make decisions that hurt yourself and others. You are driven by fear, blindness, and anger. In this outer darkness your health suffers tremendously, and all kinds of abuse, destruction, and violence flourish. Despite your inherent goodness, you may find yourself saying and doing horrendous things. Truly, it's a living hell.

**Every individual has a Target of Life as does every relationship, organization, city, and nation.** Even the world as a whole has a Target of Life, and when the world moves too far from its center of love, an array of major problems erupt, including disease, poverty, environmental disasters, international strife, and war.

It is our individual and collective choices that move us away from our intuitive wisdom at the center of the Target of Life into varying degrees of stress, confusion, frustration, and conflict. **Fortunately, by making wise choices at any time, we can move back toward the center of the Target into greater levels of peace, vitality, kindness, and opportunity.**

In the gift of choice lies our greatest power—a power that can be used to uplift or destroy. The Target of Life is a helpful way to understand our individual and collective well-being. **With awareness and practice, we can become highly skilled at detecting and creatively responding to the early signs of harmful stress.** We can gradually learn to stay more deeply centered with increasing frequency, saving ourselves all kinds of trouble and our society billions of dollars in unnecessary health care costs.

**If you have a strong spiritual orientation, you may find it helpful to think of being centered as being in the heart of the Divine Presence—the source of all goodness, harmony, abundance, and creativity.** As temptations confront you and you allow yourself to be lured into making less than optimal decisions, you stray from the center of Divine Love into varying degrees of fear, pain, and self-defeating behaviors. To move toward the center of Divine Presence or toward a self-created hell of outer darkness, to go more deeply into love and joy or to separate yourself from the Divine and become lost in fear and confusion—these are decisions that you face each day. By staying centered and honoring your intuitive guidance, by remaining alert and choosing wisely, you can be at your best more frequently and help to create a world of marvelous possibilities.



**W**hat would you love to do? What brings you joy? In your heart of hearts, what do you long for? At this time in your life, is there a special gift that you would like to give to your loved ones or to the world? These are the kinds of questions to ask yourself as you launch into creating a Vision Map.

You are unique, and your Vision Map will reflect your individuality. ***There is no magic formula or one right way to identify a vision and bring it to life.*** While guidelines are offered in this publication, the creative adventure of focusing on a current dream and moving toward its fulfillment will be the product of your own ingenuity.

### **ALLOW YOUR VISION TO HAVE A LIFE OF ITS OWN**

Creating your Vision Map is very much like giving birth. You play a critical role in identifying and launching your vision, but your dream has a life of its own. When it's first born, you need to protect your vision; but, as it develops, give your dream the freedom to grow in ways that you may never have expected.

---

*Cherish your visions and your dreams, as they are the children of your soul, the blueprints of your ultimate achievements.*

Napoleon Hill

---

Commit to your dream, stay focused, and work diligently to attain your objectives, but relinquish the tendency to control the details. Expect the universe to support you while staying completely open about how this might happen. ***Make friends with uncertainty and the array of possibilities it brings.*** Then the journey toward achieving your dream becomes an adventure filled with learning, opportunities, and delightful surprises.

### **DRAWING YOUR VISION MAP**

If you have brought a potential achievement to mind but are not inspired by it, if there is not an element of

fun in it, or if it only feels like a lot of hard work, then you're probably not following a truly inspired longing.

***When you have a deep desire to accomplish something positive and you can say, "I would LOVE to do that," you probably are tapping into a true vision.*** Doing what you love is energizing! It stimulates creativity and feelings of satisfaction. It's good for your health, and it's one of the best motivators available.

Take a few slow, deep breaths. Recall the Target of Life, and let yourself move toward the heart in the center of the Target so that you are alert, calm, and open to new possibilities. Then consider these questions: ***What particular dream or vision pulls you most right now? What is it that you would love to do?***

Without censoring yourself, jot down individual words or phrases (and perhaps simple pictures or symbols) that pop into your mind. Allow yourself to dream and be adventuresome. When you're finished, look over what you've written and pick out a ***focus***—a word, phrase, picture, or symbol that summarizes your answer and pinpoints the vision you want to bring to life.

Next, using a full-size, blank piece of paper, draw a circle about two inches in diameter in the center of the page. Place your ***focus***—be it a word, phrase, or symbol—inside the circle.

Around this central ***focus***, write down words for and images of things that can help you achieve your vision. Do this spontaneously, without censoring yourself. As appropriate, draw lines and arrows connecting the various items. Feel free to use colored pens or other creative touches. Do you want to create a logo for your vision? Most importantly, be sure to name your vision and place the title prominently on the page.

When you're finished, you will have the first draft of your Vision Map—an integrated, one-page picture of your core vision and what is likely to help you bring it to life. At some point, you probably will want to create a more polished and refined version of your Vision Map, and you will most likely benefit by creating updated versions as your vision matures.

## SHARE YOUR VISION WITH OTHERS

We may be hesitant to talk about our visions, but sharing our dreams usually is vital to our success. Explaining your Vision Map to a few open-minded loved ones is a good way to start. Ask for their support and feedback. When you share your vision with clarity and enthusiasm, people and events often will begin to organize around it.

---

*And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to bloom.*

Anais Nin

---

Based upon the feedback that you receive, fine-tune your Vision Map. Then post it in a place where you will see it frequently. Each time you look at your map, update it, think about it, or share it, the imprint of your vision goes deeper into your being, and your probability of success increases.

What will be the benefits of achieving your vision? Write them down and remind yourself frequently of these rewards. This will help to keep you motivated.

***Don't immediately talk yourself out of something you really want to do simply because it might not seem practical, or you're worried about what others might think, or you feel it's too late.*** Guard against letting another person or your inner critic shoot down your dream before it has a chance to take an initial form and be tested.

Proceed intelligently, step-by-step, knowing you can always modify your course or change directions altogether. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. So trust in your heart of hearts, believe in your vision, and go for it!

## PERSISTENCE BRINGS SUCCESS

In pursuing your dream, you will almost certainly run into obstacles. ***Remember, where there's a will, there's a way.*** With almost every major challenge, the key to success lies in persistence.

Abraham Lincoln, one of our nation's greatest leaders, dealt courageously with many personal and political setbacks before becoming president of the United States. Faced with an amazing array of hardships and setbacks, Mother Teresa of Calcutta

persisted through one obstacle after another before her vision of helping the poorest of the poor gained worldwide success and prominence. In creating the electric light bulb, Thomas Edison went through hundreds of failed experiments.

So if you've tried to bring a heartfelt and worthwhile vision into reality and have not yet succeeded, you're in good company. Refuse to be discouraged; keep on giving it your best!

President Lincoln said it well: "You can have anything you want—if you want it badly enough. You can be anything you want to be, do anything you set out to accomplish if you hold to that desire with singleness of purpose."

## MORE TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- ◆ ***Break your vision down into small, manageable steps.*** This way, you can begin modest progress toward your goal right away.
- ◆ ***Creatively use reminders—little prompts to help you stay focused on achieving your vision.*** Possibilities include notes on the bathroom mirror, a symbol of your goal displayed on the refrigerator door, or a loose-fitting rubber band on your finger.

---

*You are never given a dream without also being given the power to make it true.*

Richard Bach

---

- ◆ ***Don't dwell on problems, but do prepare for potential obstacles.*** Think ahead and name obstacles that you are likely to meet in reaching your target goal. Plan ways to go around, under, or over these barriers. When you are prepared for obstacles, you can more easily avoid them or nip them in the bud.
- ◆ ***Being stressed out is one of the biggest obstacles preventing us from achieving our dreams, so keep the Target of Life in mind and stay as close to its heart as you can.*** With practice, your skills at staying centered will continually grow in strength and creativity.

- ◆ **Affirm to yourself a key positive phrase, such as, “Within me is the wisdom and strength to succeed. Whatever I set my mind to, I can accomplish.”** Be sure to find or create a positive thought that feels right for you, and repeat it to yourself with conviction and optimism, again and again, each day.
  - ◆ **Regularly visualize yourself achieving your goal.** Let your imagination see these pictures of success in three-dimensional, living color. *Use all your senses* to feel the reality of your success. Picture yourself in motion, as if on a videotape rather than in a still snapshot.
  - ◆ **If you are spiritually inclined, do your best to create your dream but also surrender in faith to the mystery of life.** Allow God, or the power of the universe, to work through you and your circumstances. Your dream may unfold in ways that you had never imagined. Remember that science has validated the effectiveness of prayer and meditation; they can provide invaluable comfort and guidance as well as a host of other impressive benefits.
  - ◆ **Enlist the help of a special friend or counselor who believes in your vision and will support you.** Perhaps he or she might check in with you once a week or so to see how you are doing and to encourage you.
- ◇ Can you think of a theme that runs throughout the books and movies you like best? Is it something you want to experience? What could you do to make that theme more of a reality in your life?
  - ◇ Why do you think so many of us are hesitant to identify and share our dreams and deep longings?
  - ◇ A well-known proverb states, “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” What does this mean to you?
  - ◇ What do you feel most passionate about?
  - ◇ What does it cost to bring a vision to life? Can you give an example of such a cost?
  - ◇ After a near-death experience or other “wake-up” call, a person may finally let go and pursue an inner vision or longing. This often results in new enthusiasm and happiness as well as improved health and blessings to others. What is going on in situations such as these?
  - ◇ Automaker Henry Ford once said, “If you think you can or you can’t, you’re right.” In what ways do you think this quotation might pertain to bringing our individual and collective visions to life?



### QUESTIONS TO PONDER AND DISCUSS

One good question at the right time, a question that prompts you to think in a fresh and positive way, can be worth a shelf full of books.

**Think about the broad topic of bringing your noble dreams to life and the many associated factors, then write down several related questions that come to mind.** Ponder your questions and discuss your responses with a friend or with a small group. In addition to questions you come up with, you may also draw from the following questions or variations of them.



### SKILL BUILDERS

Skill builders help you exercise your creative muscles to give you the strength you need for success. **Let your imagination go and see what kinds of exercises you can come up with on the topic of bringing your noble visions to life.** Let the skill builders below trigger additional ideas. As with physical fitness workouts, benefits come from actually **doing** the exercises.

- ◆ Take a little time to get away and be alone, preferably out in nature—maybe while sitting on an inviting park bench or while walking in one of your favorite natural settings. Just be quiet and receptive, without expectations, and see if you sense any feelings, images, or messages coming from your heart and soul.

- ◆ Recall a time when you envisioned something you wanted to do and you accomplished it. Think about this success, why it was important, and the satisfaction and benefits you gained from it. What factors were most responsible for your success? And how might you apply those factors today?
- ◆ Think of a historical figure, spiritual leader, or another well-known person whom you admire and consider to be a visionary thinker. What is it about the way this person thinks, speaks, and acts that seems to make such a difference?
- ◆ Visit a friend and share your dreams about what would help to make the world a better place. Remember, thoughts carry power, and everything of significance in our lives first started as a thought.
- ◆ Interview two people who, in your opinion, have done a great job of bringing their visions to life. See what you can learn, and try to identify some keys to their success that you could replicate in your life.

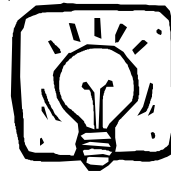


### A NEW POSSIBILITY

Bringing a dream to life is a journey. It begins and continues one step at a time. Think about all that you have learned from this publication and how you might put it into practice. Then choose one small goal that you want to accomplish in the next few days. Move toward a new possibility that is really important to you—one that you are enthusiastic about and are confident you can achieve.

**Take a card or a piece of paper and, at the top, write “A New Possibility.” Under this heading, briefly state what you will do and by when. Sign this action plan and put it where you will see it often.** Tell a supportive friend or family member about your goal, and frequently visualize yourself following through. Be prepared just in case doubts or roadblocks crop up. Know that you can always draw upon faith, firm resolve, and creativity to overcome any obstacles that may arise.

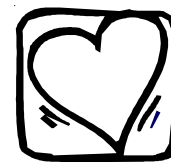
When you put the deepest desires of your heart into action, it naturally benefits others, either directly or indirectly. Have fun with your action plan; make a difference; inspire others. Dare to envision new possibilities, and then create your dreams one step at a time.



### POSITIVE THOUGHTS

You may find the following brief thoughts (or similar ones that you create) to be simple yet powerful inspirational tools. You might, for example, memorize and, with deep feeling and concentration, mentally repeat one of these seed thoughts or write it on a card and place it where you'll see it often.

- ♥ In the temple of inner silence, I sense the deepest dreams of my soul and joyfully envision them coming to life.
- ♥ I let go of all nonessentials and, with enthusiasm, focus my time and energy on what inspires me.
- ♥ I love inviting others to share their noble hopes and dreams as I, in turn, offer my abundant encouragement and humble insight.



### LOVE MADE VISIBLE

*Together, let us envision and build a world where all people enjoy optimal well-being. Let us strive to awaken fresh thinking, new enthusiasm, and abundant love. Let us create a world of unimagined possibilities. It can be done!*

## 10 Educational Modules

*UK Extension's Universe of Possibilities™: Skills for Creating Happiness and Blessing Others* is an educational series containing 10 modules. Each module is accompanied by a Macromedia Flash® movie, a PowerPoint® presentation, and other teaching tools. All these resources, along with a Facilitator's Guide, are available free-of-charge in camera-ready format at the following website: [www.ca.uky.edu/fcs/possibilities](http://www.ca.uky.edu/fcs/possibilities).

1. **Your Vision Map**

2. **Making the Growth Choice**

3. **The Way of Peace**

4. **Heart Intelligence**

5. **The Freedom of Self-Discipline**



6. **Embracing This Present Moment**

7. **Accepting and Loving Your Body**

8. **Healthy Relationships**

9. **Unleashing Your Creativity**

10. **Gifts of Gratitude and Blessing**

### REFERENCES AND BACKGROUND READING

- Ariely, D., & Wertenbroch, K. (2002). Procrastination, deadlines, and performance: Self-control by precommitment. *Psychological Science*, 13 (3), 219 – 224.
- Britten, R. (2001). *Fearless living: Live without excuses and love without regret*. New York: Dutton.
- Cameron, J. (1992). *The artist's way: A spiritual path to higher creativity*. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam.
- Easwaran, E. (1994). *Take your time: Finding balance in a hurried world*. Tomales, CA: Nilgiri Press.
- Gelb, M. J. (1998). *How to think like Leonardo da Vinci: Seven steps to genius every day*. New York: Dell.
- Gelb, M. J. (2002). *Discover your genius: How to think like history's ten most revolutionary minds*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Hafen, B. Q., Karren, K. J., Frandsen, K. J., & Smith, N. L. (1996). *Mind/body health: The effects of attitudes, emotions, and relationships*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Kern, H. (with Rosenblatt, B., & Lyke, H.). (2001). *Discipline: Six steps to unleashing your hidden potential*. [Bloomington, IN]: 1<sup>st</sup> Books Library.
- Koole, S., & Spijker, M. v. (2000). Overcoming the planning fallacy through willpower: Effects of implementation intentions on actual and predicted task-completion times. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 30 (6), 873 – 888.
- Levoy, G. (1997). *Callings: Finding and following an authentic life*. New York: Harmony.
- Michalko, M. (2001). *Cracking creativity: The secrets of creative genius*. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed.
- Niven, D. (2000). *The 100 simple secrets of happy people: What scientists have learned and how you can use it*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.
- NLP Comprehensive. (1991). *A pocket guide to NLP: The new technology of achievement*. [Brochure]. Chicago: Nightingale-Conant.
- Richardson, C. (1998). *Take time for your life: A personal coach's seven-step program for creating the life you want*. New York: Broadway.
- Seligman, M. E. P. (1998). *Learned optimism* (Rev. ed.). New York: Pocket Books.
- Seligman, M. E. P. (2002). *Authentic happiness: Using the new positive psychology to realize your potential for lasting fulfillment*. New York: Free Press.
- Snyder, C. R., & Lopez, S. J. (Eds.). (2002). *Handbook of positive psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Sobel, D. S., & Ornstein, R. (1996). *The healthy mind healthy body handbook*. New York: Patient Education Media.
- Walsh, R. (1999). *Essential spirituality: The 7 central practices to awaken heart and mind*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Williamson, M. (Ed.). (2001). *Imagine: What America could be in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: Visions of a better future from leading American thinkers*. New York: New American Library.

Prepared by **Sam Quick, Ph.D.**, Extension Specialist in Human Development and Family Relations, and **Alex Lesueur, Jr., M.S.L.S.**, Staff Support Associate. A hearty thank you to the many professionals who reviewed and helped to edit these publications. They are acknowledged on the Possibilities website noted above.

Copyright © 2004 for materials developed by the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service. These publications may be reproduced in portions or their entirety for educational or nonprofit purposes only. Permitted users shall give credit to the author(s) and include this copyright notice. (Used by permission of author, the content of this publication is largely taken from a copyrighted book manuscript by Sam Quick.) Educational programs of the Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service serve all people regardless of race, color, age, sex, religion, disability, or national origin.