

Creating A Vision of A Happier Life

Objective: To generate a sense of hope by creating a vision of what you'd like your life to look like in six months, one year, and two years.

You Should Know

Whenever we make a big change in our lives, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. In making the decision to stop using drugs or alcohol, you might feel excited, but you might also feel anxious or sad. That's normal and understandable. With all those difficult feelings, it's hard to get in touch with a sense of hope—hope for success, hope for relief from the addiction, and hope for a happier future. It's OK to hope, even if you're going through a tough time—maybe *especially* then. A vision of your future can serve as a powerful guidepost along your road to recovery. That's why this exercise appears at the beginning of your process.

Does This Sound Like You?

Ariella, 24, had been drinking to excess since her senior year in high school. Although she did manage to graduate from college with a degree in computer science, her drinking escalated rapidly after graduation, and she didn't pursue a job in her chosen field. She attended different outpatient programs and has now been sober for two months. She is working as a barista in a café. Ariella wants to stay sober and is trying to live "one day at a time," but when she thinks about her future, it looks like a big, blank slate.

How are you like Ariella? How are you different?

Do you know what you want in your life? Is there anything in the way of your working toward what you want? Describe briefly.

What to Do

In this exercise, you'll create a vision statement to help you "keep your eyes on the prize"—living a happier life.

First, make a list of twelve things you want in your life. There are no right or wrong answers, and you don't have to be realistic. Just go for it, whether it's getting a job, moving to a new place, buying a house, taking a vacation, falling in love, having children, or simply having peace of mind—anything goes! Use extra paper if needed. If you want, you can create a collage of images from magazines or download photos or images from the internet instead.

Things I Want in My Life:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____

How did that feel? Was it fun or stressful or a little bit of both? Again, it's OK to dream and hope. You deserve it! Write your response here:

Now you'll craft your vision statement. You'll have the chance to do this exercise twice in this workbook. This time, you'll focus on your vision for six months, one year, and two years from today. Later, you'll think even further into the future. You may refer to your list of wants to help you shape your statement.

Reflections on This Exercise

How helpful was this exercise? _____

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What could you do differently to make progress in this area of your recovery?
