

# Fearless:

## Ten Steps to Your Destiny

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Transcend Leadership Coaching

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## From the Author

Through my work over the past two decades with business owners, executives and leaders in many different roles, I have noticed that a key factor in the satisfaction of every individual has been feeling that they are fulfilling their purpose, their potential, and creating something meaningful for themselves and the people around them. Although each of us has a unique set of values, goals and visions for our own life and future, we all struggle with finding a personal path to success, and indeed, defining success on our own terms.

I am inspired by the clients with whom I have had the privilege to work to write this book to help you define your path forward, a path as unique as you are as an individual, and one that will keep you inspired and motivated to keep moving in the direction of your goals, and help you live fearlessly and with purpose.

Each chapter is set up to cover a key segment of your voyage to defining the path that leads to you becoming who you were meant to be. Take time to be reflective. Explore what each chapter really means for you as a person and for your definition of success. The voyage is one that will leave you better prepared to choose the future you want to build, and make great progress towards it with enthusiasm and energy.

Review this often and refresh your plan as you feel your priorities changing or your commitment waning. A fresh look may make all the difference!

### **Sharing this Document**

A lot of work went into putting this guide together to help you become your personal best. Many hours went into writing the original content, compiling it from client work and experiences, and distilling the core ideas from the last two decades. As a result, this information has value, and your broader community of friends, family and coworkers may be interested in sharing it.

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## Introduction

Have you ever had the feeling that you were just “looking and acting the part” in your work life? Or that somehow you were doing activities that played to your weaknesses and left you feeling drained? Or maybe even that “if everyone would just do what I need them to...” it would all be easier and better?

First of all, if you have, you are not alone. Some of the symptoms of this type of disconnect between “the real you” and the “you at work” are:

- **Overwhelm and Rush.** You always have too much to do, and never enough time to do it. Keeping all those balls in the air is wearing you out. If you could just add a few more hours to the day it would all work out...
- **Urgency overload.** Everything is important and has to be done now, and even small issues feel like major crises.
- **“Silver bullet” mentality,** or “next week/month/year I will be in control/happy/healthy...”. This can easily become a pattern in your life. It seems that you will be fine just after the next big contract/promotion/raise/client.
- **Externally-driven Goals and Priorities.** This looks like striving for goals and focusing on priorities that will garner external recognition, like a title, an income level, an award, approval from someone – because of what other people will think of you when you get there.

The worst part is that these symptoms tend to feed one another, and you can find yourself in a spiral of stress very quickly. I call this the “Driven Life”.

But, there is an alternative I call the “Fearless Life”, and its symptoms include:

- **Long-Term focus on Fundamentals.** This means looking out into the future and working on things that form the foundation for achieving your long-term vision.
- **Internally-driven Goals and Priorities.** You do this in setting and prioritizing goals that are based on your personal vision, not based on externally or “system”-driven criteria for success or achievement. What is really important to you, regardless of what society expects or your mother thinks.
- **Vision-based Choice and Decisions.** In the fearless life, you make decisions from a place of balanced vision and can measure any decision against whether or not it is taking you toward or away from your vision.
- **Priority-driven scheduling to build balance.** Finally, with a strong personal vision, you drive your schedule; your schedule does not drive you. You put the things that really matter in your plan, and you begin to eliminate the things that do not increase your energy and your ability to achieve the vision.

So while the difference in how you will feel about the Fearless Life is worlds apart from the feeling created by living the driven life, the changes you need to make to shift are not difficult, complicated or mysterious, nor do they require any miracle on your part.

The only requirement to begin living the Fearless Life is to commit to that outcome, and to your own worth. You will need to invest time, thought, reflection and effort in noticing how you are currently living, and making more conscious choices about how you really want to live. In the next 10 chapters, I outline exactly the steps that will lead you from “Driven” to “Fearless” and how to take each one.

Are you ready to give up the sense of being overwhelmed, the feeling that time is your master and that you are a victim of the circumstances of your life, and become the master of your destiny? Then let’s get started!



## 1. Stop the Rollercoaster, Focus on You

In order to change the way you feel and behave and become the best person you can be, you have to begin by setting aside time to examine yourself and your situation and take the steps required to create permanent change. This isn't a 15-minute exercise, either, but rather a long-term commitment to valuing yourself and your unique contributions, desires and goals.

If you think you don't have time for this, or you don't have time for this "right now", look back at the list of "Driven Life" characteristics and realize that you can be stuck in this pattern for life unless you find a way to make a change now, because now is all there is.

In fact, this exercise of becoming the person you were meant to be can be started in a few hours, but to create meaningful change, I suggest you give yourself a year to allow your logical and emotional minds to collaborate on your vision of yourself, and to fully integrate new thinking and new habits in a sustainable way. Plan on at least a couple of hours a week over a few months to start. Build this time into your schedule – what work could be more important?

The alternative is that you continue on the path you are on, and keep thinking that the "right" time to do this is just after you reach that next milestone. Perhaps this is a difficult or particularly busy time for you. Perhaps you might be better served by getting past a major move, new job adjustment, or other major life event. Begin this new voyage by assessing what might change for you by starting the voyage right now, even with small first steps, versus holding on to habits and behaviors that are keeping you stressed. Be

fully conscious about the choice of beginning this voyage, by carefully considering what you have to gain from revealing more of your strengths, your unique gifts, your vision for what your life could mean, and how you will feel when you are living the Fearless Life.

**Assignment One: Set Aside Time.** Take a moment right now and set a date for beginning this voyage, and plan when you will spend time on you each day, each week, each month. Do you already have a practice that helps you take care of yourself? It could be an exercise routine, a morning prayer, a habit of journaling, of meditation, of planning, or even a weekly walk or time to read. What would it be like to build a few minutes into that practice to focus on becoming the person you were meant to be and fulfilling your true purpose? How much could you accomplish with that small investment of time and thought?

Have you got some time set aside? Great! So, the next chapter starts with a list and some practice thinking about what really matters most to you.

## 2. Defining Your Values

The key to finding fulfillment and being true to yourself is understanding your own personal values at a deep and fundamental level. When you honor your values, you find satisfaction in what you are doing and feel at peace. On the contrary, when your values are violated, you may feel angry or deeply frustrated.

There is no right or wrong about particular values. Think about someone at work who might value accuracy above everything else. When that person works with someone who values timeliness above all else, you can imagine that they might experience conflict. This does not mean that either person is right or wrong, only that they value different principles more highly. Some values, like “integrity” often come up as fundamental for many people. There are many things we value in common, but we may choose different “top” values. Is “integrity” more important to you than “harmony”? How about “compassion” or “loyalty”? You may find that you find many of these values important to you, but perhaps hard to determine which ones really matter the most, to the point where you are upset when they are not honored.

How can you discover your most closely held values? One way is to look at this list of values and try to select those that speak to you, and then keep shortening the list until you are down to the most important 5 and prioritizing those. You can also look at moments in your life when you felt most fulfilled, satisfied and full of purpose and ask yourself which values were being upheld. Conversely, when you think of times you were angry, you can ask yourself which values were not honored. Look particularly at when you felt your buttons getting pushed by a person or situation, because “buttons” are almost always about values.

Once I found myself getting angry while trying to change an airline ticket to go home about 12 hours earlier than planned, and being asked to pay more than 3x what the original ticket had cost to do so. When I looked closely at my reaction, I realized that I have a strong value around fairness, and to me, this situation just felt unfair, triggering my angry response. Where do you find yourself angry, frustrated or irritated, and what values are being stepped on or violated?

Keep a list of your values and once you have the top five, try sorting them in order of importance. Which one must you honor above all others? Which one would keep you from being happy were it violated? Once you have a top value, which one would come next? And so forth.

**Assignment Two: Discover Your Top Values.** Take a moment right now and evaluate your top values. Values are the core principles that help you quickly assess opportunities, people, projects and environments that will serve you and those which will conflict with your core values and lead to frustration instead of fulfillment. Find listed here some possible values, but you may find others fit more closely for you – feel free to add your own words and explore what feels right for you.

**FEARLESS: TEN STEPS TO YOUR DESTINY**

Abundance	Acceptance	Accomplishment
Achievement	Adaptability	Adventure
Affluence	Aggressiveness	Agility
Altruism	Ambition	Appreciation
Attentiveness	Attractiveness	Audacity
Accuracy	Affection	Alertness
Assertiveness	Awareness	Benevolence
Balance	Beauty	Belonging
Boldness	Bravery	Brilliance
Calmness	Certainty	Chastity
Candor	Capability	Celebrity
Challenge	Charity	Charm
Cheerfulness	Clarity	Cleanliness
Commitment	Compassion	Confidence
Connection	Consciousness	Consistency
Control	Coolness	Cooperation
Creativity	Credibility	Curiosity
Comfort	Conformity	Contribution
Courtesy	Decisiveness	Determination
Deference	Dependability	Depth
Devoutness	Dignity	Diligence
Discovery	Discretion	Diversity
Discipline	Dominance	Duty
Effectiveness	Economy	Education
Efficiency	Elegance	Empathy
Energy	Enthusiasm	Excellence
Endurance	Expertise	Exploration

**FEARLESS: TEN STEPS TO YOUR DESTINY**

Family	Fairness	Faith
Fearlessness	Firmness	Fidelity
Focus	Fitness	Financial independence
Flexibility	Flow	Freedom
Friendliness	Frugality	Generosity
Giving	Grace	Gratitude
Growth	Harmony	Health
Holiness	Honor	Honesty
Humility	Humor	Imagination
Impact	Impartiality	Independence
Insightfulness	Intensity	Integrity
Industry	Intimacy	Intelligence
Intuition	Joy	Justice
Kindness	Knowledge	Learning
Leadership	Liberty	Logic
Love	Loyalty	Making a difference
Mastery	Maturity	Meekness
Mellowness	Modesty	Mindfulness
Neatness	Obedience	Open-mindedness
Optimism	Organization	Originality
Passion	Peace	Perceptiveness
Perfection	Perseverance	Philanthropy
Piety	Playfulness	Poise
Popularity	Power	Pragmatism
Preparedness	Privacy	Professionalism
Prosperity	Punctuality	Purity
Realism	Reason	Recognition

**FEARLESS: TEN STEPS TO YOUR DESTINY**

Recreation	Relaxation	Reliability
Respect	Resilience	Resourcefulness
Reverence	Rigor	Sacrifice
Sacredness	Security	Serenity
Sensuality	Self-control	Selflessness
Sensitivity	Self-reliance	Service
Sexuality	Silliness	Simplicity
Skillfulness	Strength	Sincerity
Spirituality	Solidarity	Spontaneity
Spontaneity	Success	Structure
Sympathy	Support	Truth
Tranquility	Traditionalism	Temperance
Trust	Unflappability	Understanding
Utility	Variety	Virtue
Vitality	Vision	Wealth
Winning	Wisdom	Wonder
Zeal		

### 3. Establish Your Personal Vision

The next step in this voyage to greater success and fulfillment is establishing your personal vision. A personal vision is grounded in the present and includes every significant aspect of your life, who you are, and what you desire in your life.

A great place to begin this is to start with a deep understanding of your own natural talents, abilities and preferences. There are several tools to help you do this, but my favorite is the Realise2 from the Center for Applied Positive Psychology (CAPP). It gives you not only your Strengths, but also points out your “learned behaviors” which are things you are good at, but which drain your energy. That helps explain a lot about tasks that you are repeatedly asked to do (because you are good at them), but which leave you feeling tired and unmotivated. You can take that assessment online at: [www.capeu.com/Realise2.aspx](http://www.capeu.com/Realise2.aspx) (\$26 for standard). Another assessment of strengths I like that you can find at your local bookstore is called [Strengths Finder 2.0](#), and it will give you a clear idea of your top 5 strengths and the kinds of activities you will undertake with mastery.

Building a vision that plays to your strengths will drive greater enjoyment and fulfillment in everything you do. Anytime that you are working against your strengths, you will find it feels like really hard work. Your innate talents do not change with training, experience or education, but are intrinsic characteristics of who you are. Knowing what your talents are is vital to creating a robust and meaningful personal vision.

The other elements your personal vision needs to incorporate are:



- Your Skills and Experience: what expertise, knowledge and wisdom have you gained in your life? What skills have you acquired? Which ones do you want to continue to use?
- Your Interests and Passions: What gives you energy and ignites your passions? What needs in the world are you compelled to meet? What activities or causes create “flow” or a state where you lose track of time?
- Your Communication and Interpersonal Style: how do you prefer to interact with people? Are you introverted or extroverted? Do you prefer to deal with data or feelings? Are you future-oriented in your interactions or more grounded in the here and now? MBTI, DISC, MAPP and other assessments can help you define this if you don’t already know.
- Your Values: Use the list you developed in chapter 2. What are the values that drive you? What are your top five? Taking the time to identify your most important values is worth the effort in making sure your vision honors those values.
- Your Goals: What you want to accomplish in life, how you see the purpose of your voyage and where it is headed. Are there certain targets you have defined as essential to who you are? What meaning do they have for you, and which elements are fundamental and unchanging, and which elements might be more flexible and shift as your life unfolds?
- Your personal history: What messages have you incorporated from your childhood and early development? What did your family, teachers and other mentors tell you about your role in life and what you might accomplish? How do you wish to keep these messages or free yourself from them?

- Your stage in life: Where you are in your life will determine what you will include in your vision. Be clear about how this stage of your life is unfolding and what decisions are facing you and how your vision can address this.

**Assignment Three: Write Your Personal Vision.** Start by just writing a list of what you know about yourself, and then begin writing a picture of what you want for your life in 10 or even 20 years from now. Some possible exercises to get your creative brain engaged include:

- Write a letter from yourself 20 years from now, encouraging yourself in the present, and outlining how wonderful the future will be and how your future self knows you will achieve your goals.
- Close your eyes and imagine that you have been transported to the future and travel around your life in that time. You can even sit and talk with your future self about what it took to create this future life.
- Draw a picture of something that represents your vision of the future – it's not for an art critic, so just make it fun and meaningful to you. Doodles, cartoons and color are just fine.

Once you've found the right creative exercise for you, write about your vision for the future. Write what feels right at the moment, and then revisit it and edit frequently until you have a vision statement that inspires you to take action to realize that vision, and begin living like it has already happened.

You will know it is a finished vision statement when you read it and feel inspired to work toward the vision. When it feels like you cannot wait to get on the path to that future place, and are ready to work hard to make it come to life. To connect most powerfully, vision statements should incorporate

logical elements (numbers, things, concrete achievements), emotional elements (feelings, connections, inspiration) and values or moral elements (larger purpose, connection to a greater whole or community).

You will want to post your vision statement in a place where you will see it daily, and make time to read through it at least once a week. If it starts to feel stale, or your vision of the future begins to shift, just rewrite it. It's yours, and it needs to serve to inspire you, so change it until it does that for you. You may even want to include images that help you feel the joy in your vision, inspiring quotes, or record it with music that uplifts and inspires you.

Remember your strengths? Use them to find a medium that works for you. Just as you are perfect, just as you are, anything that keeps *you* inspired is perfect.

## 4. Setting Great Goals

Now that you have a vision of where you are going, it is important to set goals that move you in the direction of your vision. I like to make sure they are SMART goals. You may have heard this acronym before, but it stands for: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound.

If your goal is to have a healthy body, for example, you might set a goal of losing 20 pounds by October 31<sup>st</sup> this year, or you might set a goal of reducing your soda consumption to no more than 8 oz per day by September 1st, or any other goal that helps you reach your definition of “a healthy body”. The exact goals you set will be very specific to you, and there is no “right” or “wrong” goal, just like there isn’t a right or wrong vision.

In a business context, your goal might be to improve effectiveness of your meetings, and the SMART goal could be something like: Have a clear agenda for each meeting 24 hours ahead of time and end each meeting on time and with a clear set of action items assigned to specific individuals with deadlines. Or: Have only one key issue per meeting, and keep meetings to under 1 hour. Or: Have meetings only when there is a need for discussion and decision-making or quick touch-base meetings, not just to “share” information better presented in writing. All of these are possible goals. The point is to make it specific to your image of what the goal looks like.

To start with, you need to get specific about what things would have to be present for you to feel you have attained your vision. If your vision is to have a healthy body, what does that mean to you? Is it about weight, body fat percentage, how fast you walk a mile, ability to touch your toes, how much you can bench press, how often you exercise, the kinds of foods you nourish

yourself with, the measure of cholesterol or other blood chemicals? If your vision is to have effective meetings, what does that mean? Is it about wasting less time, enjoying meetings more, having fewer meetings, building accountability, increasing focus, or just about making clearer decisions in meetings? All of these are possible goals, and many more. Sometimes it helps to close your eyes and place yourself in your vision and imagine how you will feel there, and what will have changed for you to feel this way.

Now that you have visualized it, what specific goals did you attain to feel that way? And how can you begin moving in that direction? If you have a specific business goal, what are some first steps you could take to work toward your vision?

#### **Assignment Four: Set SMART goals that connect to your vision.**

While setting goals, it is important to remember to set Achievable goals (remember the “A” in SMART?). Too often, we set goals that are very ambitious, but perhaps too ambitious and when we are unable to achieve them as quickly as we planned, we feel that we have failed.

In order to avoid this feeling of failure, while stretching yourself to push a little further than is “easy”, it is best to set yourself a series of smaller goals for the coming week or month. To stick with our health example, a set of first steps might be to have a physical, stop drinking sugary drinks, and start walking 30 minutes every day. While this might be possible, depending upon your starting point, this might be pretty challenging, so you might set a “minimum acceptable” goal of getting the physical, and walking at least twice a week for 30 minutes, and eliminating sugary drinks during the week. Finally, you might set a target somewhere between this minimum and your ideal, and aim for that. At least if you achieve the minimum, you will feel

you have made meaningful progress, and you may be able to do even more than that in the process.

For our business meeting example, you might start with small steps such as making a list of all the types of meetings you currently have, and identifying the purpose each is serving, and outlining which ones could be eliminated, which ones need to be improved, and what might need to be added. Your “minimum acceptable” goal might be to just have the list of current meetings and their purpose. And the target could be somewhere in between where you have the list of meetings and their purpose, and you identify which ones most need improvement. Again, you will at least be able to make the list, and feel you are “on the path” to making improvements, but also feel like there is some challenge in reaching for the middle and ideal targets.

If your goals are long-term, such as 1-2 years or more away, be sure to set up some interim goals. In most cases, it is hard to set a goal of getting a big promotion, getting married, changing your corporate culture or other multi-step challenges and achieve it in a couple of months, so break your goal up into shorter-term milestones that you can aim for and feel the satisfaction of making progress as you work towards ultimate success.

Ideally, plan to make progress on your goals each week, to keep them fresh and top of mind. Remember those New Year’s resolutions that languish by early February, if not sooner? Many people find that they just forget that they even made resolutions because they didn’t set a regular time to review them and see how they were progressing.

Now that you have established your goals, write them down. Track them. Review them at least weekly and see how you are progressing. If you find that you are slipping, think about what specifically happens in the moment you slip up, and how you might change your thoughts and emotions to break through the next potential slip and move forward.

## 5. Developing Strategies

With SMART goals in hand, you are ready to build strategies around them. This is just like developing business strategies in that you can look at your various strengths and build strategies that play to them. If you know one of your key strengths from Realise2 is “Relationship Deepener”, you work best through close relationships with people. So, you might find that you want to work on a goal through finding someone in your close circle that shares the goal and working with that person, or leveraging your close relationships to find resources or information to help you reach your goal. Or if you are an extrovert perhaps with “Rapport Builder” or “Connector”, you might exercise more regularly if you were in a group doing the same (a class, a group training together for a race, etc.), or be more effective in improving meetings in your organization if you gathered a group to work on that common goal.

There are always multiple strategies for achieving any goal, and these can be as personal as the goals themselves. If you want to reduce the amount of soda you drink, you might think about when you drink it now, what triggers you to drink it, and what alternatives you might create for yourself. Not having it at home could help someone who primarily drinks soda at home, but if you drink it mostly at work from the vending machine while on a break with colleagues, your strategy would probably be very different.

If you call a meeting every time there is information that needs to be shared broadly, you might take a close look at the kinds of information that trigger you to call those meetings and develop some guidelines for yourself to drive calling a meeting versus other modes of communication. You might notice what takes you “off topic” in meetings, and recruit someone in the meeting to



act as facilitator and call the meeting back to topic. For really important meetings, you might even decide to have an external facilitator.

There are as many strategies for each goal as there are people and obstacles, so play with different options and look for those that leverage your unique talents and overcome your specific obstacles and ingrained habits.

### **Assignment Five: Develop Strategies for Each Goal that Play to**

**Your Strengths.** If you are trying to replace an old habit, whether it is interrupting others in conversation, or asking multiple questions at once before you get answers, you will want to find new behaviors to replace them. You might work on shutting off the internal dialogue that has you preparing what you want to say by listening to the other person and building a mental image of what they are saying and taking a breath in the silence before you say anything. You might have a mantra before you speak of “one question”... and practice not speaking until you had the question you really wanted to ask. The important thing is to think through what triggers your current behavior and develop a strategy that will help you overcome any obvious barrier to making a change.

You may want to review your vision to make sure your strategies suit who you are, your innate talents, and your top values. Strategies for change work best when they are in line with who you are and what you hold dear.

A strategy is simply a decision about how to use resources to solve a problem. It is a choice about what you will do and what you will not do in order to achieve a goal. When you have given a strategy a good chance to succeed and find it ineffective, it's time to come up with a new strategy. Remember, experimenting is how we learn. Failures are

opportunities to examine what happened with a critical eye and design a new solution that may work better.

What strategies will you come up with to reach your goals? How can you learn about strategies that have worked for others and might be useful to you? How will you leverage your innate strengths and values to make your strategies effective for you?

## 6. Great Planning for Success

Behind every good strategy and every goal achieved, there was an action plan that brought it to life. Success is, after all, a planned activity.

The strategy is not the end of the process, but the beginning of your voyage toward your vision. You have defined the vision, made it concrete with some goals that define what it will take for the vision to come to life, developed some strategies that you think will help you achieve your goals, and now you are ready for the plans.

Plans are the day-to-day activities that are how you will implement the strategy. In some cases, it may be as simple as attending a meeting, or joining a group and putting it on your calendar. In others, it may involve multiple steps in meeting with others to get feedback, breaking your strategy down into specific steps and tasks, and then making time to take those actions every day, week and month until you have built new habits, new ways of being and a new feeling about your life.

So if your goal is to bring in 10 new clients, for example, your strategy might be to increase the number of prospects in your target market. Your plans might include joining a new group with lots of your target clients in it, attending more events where your target clients will be present, or speaking at those events. It might include making sure you actually attend the meetings of the new group by blocking that time in your calendar, having a plan for talking to at least 5 new people at each meeting, or spending 30 minutes a week identifying events where your target will be present, or calling organizers to find speaking engagements. When you break your strategy down into specific actions, plans for overcoming habits, time

pressure and your own thoughts, you are creating a plan to implement and be successful.

**Assignment Six: Write down plans or specific actions for each**

**strategy.** Each strategy that leads to an important goal for achieving your vision should have actions or plans associated with it. If you are feeling overwhelmed by the number of plans you are writing down, take a deep breath and relax for a moment. Go back and look at your list of goals and strategies, and decide which one is most important for you to work on right now. Just build plans for that one. Change is easiest to manage when we don't try to do everything all at once, so pace yourself. Tackle the really important goals first, and add plans for the others once you have some new habits thoroughly ingrained for the first ones.

Plans are at the most basic level, so if you find you planned to do something important in the morning and you just can't get up, adjust your plan to do it at a time that feels more natural to you. Plans are the level at which you "play" on a daily basis until you find a formula that works. It is the most flexible, but that does not mean you can skip the written plan and making that tangible commitment to work your plan. Unless the plan is written down and scheduled or made concrete for you in some other way, it becomes just another "nice idea" that you didn't do anything about. So, while your plans can be flexible and changed when they are not serving you well and moving you toward your goal, you have to take positive actions on your plan regularly.

What will your plan be for this month? For this week? For today? How will you make sure you follow your plan? When will you review your ability to follow the plan and make adjustments?

## 7. Creating Accountability

When I work with individual coaching clients, one element of the relationship to which many clients ascribe great power, is the accountability provided by the relationship. The client makes a plan to take certain actions over the next week, and I ask about those actions in the next session. While there is no feeling of being right or wrong for doing or not doing any action item, many clients feel that they have made a formal commitment to taking those actions when they have stated it to me, and will work much harder to complete those actions, just knowing that they will be reporting back.

Even outside of coaching relationships, you can build an accountability partnership with people who share your goal. If your team at work decided that you will all eliminate complaining, you can hold one another accountable and help each other notice when you spiral into a negative cycle. Just knowing that another person is going to be asking you about your progress and noticing your successes and mistakes can help you stay on track with your intended actions.

In an organization, there is no skill more important than “walking the talk”, or living by the principles that you publicly espouse. If you have ever seen a management team say they “value diversity” and never change the gender/race/nationality/age composition of their own management team, you know what I’m talking about. Another great example in corporate America is companies who say “people are our greatest asset” and then allow poor people management skills to persist and even promote the individuals with the poorest people skills – because they bring in revenue results. At what cost?

At the very least, the cost is management team credibility and trust with their employees, who can all see which value takes priority in the organization, and which does not. This is often the situation when the corporate mission or values begin to be seen as a “slogan of the week” to be hung on the wall and ignored, just like the last one was.

The problem is often not one of intent – most senior leadership I have worked with truly intend to value their people, but they have not mastered making it part of their daily management culture, and instead fall back to “how they were taught” and tired assumptions about what works to motivate people, create great companies and build business. Changing your habits is hard work – much harder than wordsmithing a catchy slogan.

When you set an intention and do not live that new intention, the cost to you as an individual in not honoring your commitments to yourself is that you begin to lose trust and faith in your own ability to follow through. The impact of this is greatest on your confidence, your self-image and your faith that you can overcome obstacles. An accountability relationship of some kind can help you stay on track, and also help you catch yourself quickly when you begin to fall short of your action plan, and make adjustments to the plan, or to your habits and thoughts to ultimately bring you success.

### **Assignment Seven: Create an Accountability Structure to**

**Support Your Most Important Goals.** Look back at your goals, and determine which ones are most important for you to work on right now. As you think about which strategies and plans you are implementing, and the values you are honoring, what structure will help you stay on track and “walk your talk”?

When you've tackled big goals in your past, what worked for you then? Some people like incentives and rewards, others are happier with a support group or an accountability buddy, or maybe just a log, progress chart or journal where they track how they have done. Sometimes the most motivating thing can be to picture yourself achieving the vision you created, and taking time daily to connect to that and feel how connected your present actions are to that future vision.

Find what works for you, and apply it to at least one of your goals. Track how you are progressing and how well your strategies are working. When you fail to meet your own expectations, assess what worked well, what got in your way, and recommit to your big goals and inspiring vision.

## 8. Feedback

So now you are working toward your goals, you are holding yourself accountable for implementing your plans, and probably beginning to feel more focused and like you are on the path to your vision. What helps keep you on that path? How will you know when to make course corrections? What are you measuring to see what progress you are making?

Of course tangible goals like losing weight, or eating better can be measured on a scale, or by tracking your meals and looking back to see how you did. But what about other goals you might have like losing your temper less often, or listening more effectively? Because these goals are measured by how others perceive you and your behavior, you may need to develop a system for getting regular feedback and understanding how much progress you are making, and what else you might need to consider.

In the work environment, you may already be getting feedback from peers, a boss, investors, clients or vendors, and at home you may have a partner, children or other family members who observe you first hand. Instead of relying on existing feedback mechanisms, it can be very helpful to ask these observers about what they see you doing and how that has changed. What appears to be working, and what remains to be improved? If your goal is a great working relationship with your team, ask them how they would characterize your working relationship with them now and how that has changed since you began implementing your strategies. If your goal is to stop yelling at the kids and start finding ways to “catch them being good” to encourage good behavior, ask your partner how you are doing, or even your kids.



Let others know what you are working on, and ask them to help you by letting you know how you are doing on that. By being vulnerable and human, and letting others know you are aware of areas you could do better, you are likely to be seen in a more sympathetic light even when you do not make progress, or when you backslide. No one has deep relationships with “perfect” people, and everyone has faults. By letting other know that you have them, too, and are aware of them, you make it more comfortable for them to be less than perfect and own their personal faults, too. By actively working to improve something about yourself, you are signalling that they can feel safe to do the same. You are walking the first steps to creating trust – being vulnerable.

Feedback is particularly critical when you are seeking a result that involves other people and their perception of your behavior and how it impacts your relationship with them. You may think you have dramatically improved your listening skills, but if no one else can see a difference, you may still have a long way to go, and detailed feedback from a trusted source can be the difference between making a quantum leap toward your goals and meandering along and perhaps missing the mark and ultimately slowing your progress toward your vision.

After all, the sign of a great communicator is not in what the person says or how he says it, it is in how that communication is received. How are your behavior changes being received? Are you getting the results you intended, or just going through the motions and “doing what they say I *should* do”?

**Assignment Eight: Decide on Feedback mechanisms for each of your key goals.** Take a moment to write down how you will get feedback on your most important goals. If you have external measures (i.e. money in the bank, revenue goals, etc.) for some of them, great! Try to look for at least one area where you will solicit feedback from someone who is in a position to observe your efforts and help you decide what is effective and what is not. A coach or friend can often serve this purpose, and for executives, this is often the purpose of shadow coaching days, where a professional coach follows an executive through their day and gives immediate, specific feedback on behaviors the client does not notice on their own.

What behaviors could be hiding just outside of your awareness? What responses are you getting that are not what you expect? How could your behavior be triggering some of those responses? What feedback mechanism might help you notice some of those unconscious behaviors and get a better response?

## 9. Powerful Partnering

At yet a higher level of engagement than simply getting feedback, is developing partnerships to support you in pursuing your vision.

Partners can be colleagues, family members, friends, or anyone who has an interest in helping you meet your goals and achieve your vision. When considering whom you might enroll as your partner, think about people who might share your vision, benefit from you achieving it, or be pursuing a similar vision themselves.

The purpose of partnering is to find continuing support from someone who truly wants you to achieve your goals and is able to provide help to you when you need it. In a coaching relationship, you can count on your coach to be supportive of whatever vision you are creating, and unbiased about what goals you choose, or how you choose to get there. A professional certified coach is one of the best ways to achieve this level of partnership, but if coaching is not for you, you can find other types of partnership that help you grow and learn on your voyage to your vision.

Some things a partner can bring to you include resources, ideas, a brainstorming partner, encouragement, accountability and feedback. If you are both working toward similar goals, you can trade success stories, celebrate together as you reach milestones, and pull each other up when you get discouraged in any particular area.

If you can't find an obvious partner in your immediate circle, you may want to focus on a specific goal and look for others who are acquiring a similar skill or habit. For example, if you have an important goal that includes

developing stronger public speaking skills, your local Toastmasters may be a resource both in developing that skill, but also in finding partners in your voyage towards that goal.

Depending upon your goal, you may find local networking groups, existing support groups, and alumni or educational groups where others share your goal and are actively sharing their successes, strategies and struggles, and these groups can be the source of great power in keeping you on course

**Assignment Nine: Find at least one partner for one of your goals.**

Look around you. Who could be helpful to you in reaching your most important goals? Who has resources or perspectives that might help you along? Who would benefit from you reaching your goal? What might helping you do for them and their goals?

Who will you choose to partner with in your voyage? Which partners might be right for each of your goals?

## 10. Adopting Continuous Improvement

With all the support mechanisms we've reviewed in place, you are well on your way to realizing your goals and achieving your personal vision, in line with your most dear values.

So what remains to define your voyage to a more fulfilling, Fearless Life? Simply making the changes needed to integrate this process into your life on an ongoing basis. As your life changes and you achieve key elements of your vision, you may find that your vision begins to expand or change in ways that cause you to incorporate new goals. As you gain skills and overcome obstacles to your success, you may find entirely new skills suddenly become relevant and perhaps even critical to achieving your goals.

How can you incorporate this change without losing your momentum? Just as good manufacturing processes include an element of continuous improvement, or Kaizen, you can apply this same concept to your vision and your process of achieving it. And just like running a business or organization of any kind, you want to plan on some regular reviews and opportunities to celebrate what is going well, and identify what you might want to change.

### **Assignment Ten: Schedule a Review of Your Vision, Goals,**

**Strategies and Plans.** When you take time to look at the work you have done on establishing a vision and then bringing it to life with specific goals, strategies and plans, you give yourself permission to readjust and make better choices. You begin to see the voyage of becoming who you were meant to be as a grand experiment, where you are the designer and master of your

destiny. You will see how many of the things you thought were rules set in stone about who you are and what that means for your life, were assumptions that held you back and prevented you from claiming your personal vision. By scheduling a review of this work and your progress toward your goals, you are giving yourself the opportunity to stay committed to the Fearless Life and adjust the means by which you get there to better suit who you are and where you are going.

What personal practices do you currently have in place? How could you integrate some review of your personal goals and progress into those practices? If you journal daily, how would you include some review of your plans into that? If you review your finances quarterly, what would adding a review of other aspects of your business or life at that time add to your ability to plan for the future? Are there other mindfulness or planning or visioning practices that would lend themselves well to reviewing your vision, goals and recommitting to them, or making appropriate changes to keep them inspiring and motivating to you?

## Congratulations!

With a vision, goals, strategies and plans that originate in your personal skills, talents, preferences and values, you will find yourself living a life of greater satisfaction, purpose and energy. This higher level of energy will allow you to achieve so much more than you thought possible in your chosen field, while leaving you abundant energy to share with others and inspire them to find their own source of energy, inspiration and fulfillment.

With the ten steps of your voyage in place, you are well-equipped to handle the challenges you may face along the way, and can build your vision with confidence.

You will want to revisit this process from time to time and learn to embrace the change that is inevitable in your vision, your goals and your support mechanisms. The true power of the Fearless Life is in finding opportunity in every circumstance, and new ways to achieve larger and more inspiring Visions along the way.

We look forward to hearing about your Fearless Life and the voyage you are on – please let us know what you’ve created and what it means to you at: [info@leadfearlessly.com](mailto:info@leadfearlessly.com).

## Next Steps

Would you like to learn more or get support in your personal voyage toward the Fearless Life? While you have everything you need within you right now, and this guide to show you how to proceed, it can be hard to do this work all on your own.

To help you on your voyage, we suggest several resources that may support you in living a Fearless Life:

1. **Leadership Resource List:** This is our recommended reading list, with short descriptions written by me of a few dozen of the best leadership, management and personal development books I've read and that may help you with specific steps of your Fearless Life voyage. It's available from our homepage: [www.leadfearlessly.com](http://www.leadfearlessly.com)
2. **Energy Leadership Index:** If you are wondering why you keep getting stuck on specific kinds of goals, why you still feel stressed out and overwhelmed, or why you aren't getting the kinds of results you want, we highly recommend this assessment of your current attitudes, beliefs and habitual thoughts that can tell you where you might want to create attitude shift to change your results. [Email us](#) to set up the assessment and a debrief to create specific actions plans to shift your thoughts and beliefs for better results.
3. **Mastermind Groups:** I facilitate and coach 6-12 month mastermind groups around specific topics, such as growing a business, gaining more career satisfaction, or becoming a better leader. Each group has 6-12 members, and you can form one with your friends and colleagues or join the next open group. Having a group share your voyage adds to the ideas, support and accountability in remarkable ways. [Contact me](#) if you are interested in forming or joining a group.
4. **Individualized Executive Coaching:** My clients who make the most progress are those who engage in individual coaching. If your goal is big and powerful for you, and you are ready to make it happen, reach out and [schedule an appointment](#) to see if this is a good fit for you.



5. **Leadership Development Programs:** If you are in an organization that would like to create this kind of dramatic performance improvement for your team, Transcend Leadership Coaching offers custom group leadership development programs that can create quantum leaps in the leadership skills and teamwork in your organization. [Let us know a good time to talk](#) about your needs and how we might customize a program just for you. Typically, a program includes some group learning experiences, assessments and regular support to turn new skills and behaviors into positive habits and a cultural shift in the organization.
6. **Workshops and Speaking:** If your organization is looking to do more work building stronger leadership capabilities, communicate without fear and develop relationships that propel you forward, we speak, facilitate and hold workshops all the time, and would love to be asked. [Contact us for details.](#)

As always, you can reach out to us with questions, suggestions, or to share your success stories on our website at:

<http://www.leadfearlessly.com/categories/blog/>

Until we meet again – Lead Fearlessly!

Laura

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## About the Author

Laura Huckabee-Jennings has been coaching business leaders for over a decade and is the founder of Transcend Leadership Coaching. After starting her career as a strategy consultant, Laura worked for Fortune 50 companies like Procter & Gamble and Coca-Cola building businesses, teams and brands in markets around the world, including Japan, China, Israel, Poland, and the US.



As a Professional Certified Coach and Energy Leadership Index Master Practitioner, Laura helps senior leaders and their team better understand the behaviors, thoughts, attitudes and beliefs they are using to get their current results, and how they can develop greater awareness, versatility and core skills to get superior results and more consistent growth.

Based on her career managing businesses through extraordinary growth in markets around the world, Laura brings a data-driven, goal-oriented approach to human performance, leadership and change. Clients receive world-class tools, processes and coaching to help them achieve results such as more powerful delegation, more productive use of their time and energy, better relationships, stronger more successful teams, and greater financial success.

Laura holds a bachelor's degree in Physical Chemistry from Princeton University, a master's in Comparative Culture from Jochi University in Japan, and an MBA from INSEAD in Fontainebleau, France. She speaks Japanese fluently and has a good knowledge of French and a smattering of other languages. She is President of the Women's Economic Development Council, and has served on the Boards of the Partnership for Biotechnology Research, Women's Business Center and is active in Leadership Huntsville/Madison County and the Girl Scouts. She loves a good curry and is currently training for her first half-marathon.