

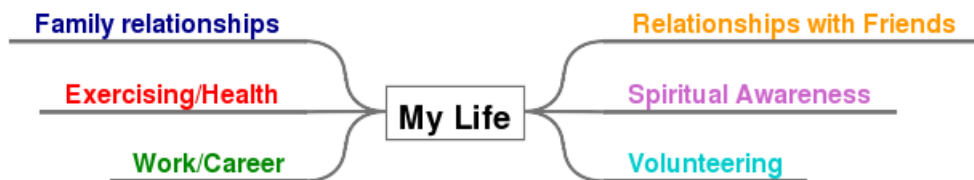
Be Happy – Identify your Destination

`Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?'
`That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,' said the Cat.
`I don't much care where--' said Alice.
`Then it doesn't matter which way you go,' said the Cat.
`--so long as I get *somewhere*,' Alice added as an explanation.
`Oh, you're sure to do that,' said the Cat, `if you only walk long enough.'
Lewis Carroll, from Alice in Wonderland

I believe that one component to being happy is doing the things that are important to you. Some of those things may be things you don't want to do, but nonetheless, they are important. Life can seem hectic and overwhelming because we have so many options available to us. The skill to learn is how to distill the things that are important to us. There are five simple steps you can follow to do this. I'm going to apply these to living a balanced life, but you can apply this technique to any part of your life you choose, such as your work environment, your spiritual growth, how to arrange your office desk or your kitchen.

You will need some time to reflect and a way to record your thoughts (paper or electronic, which ever you feel most comfortable with.)

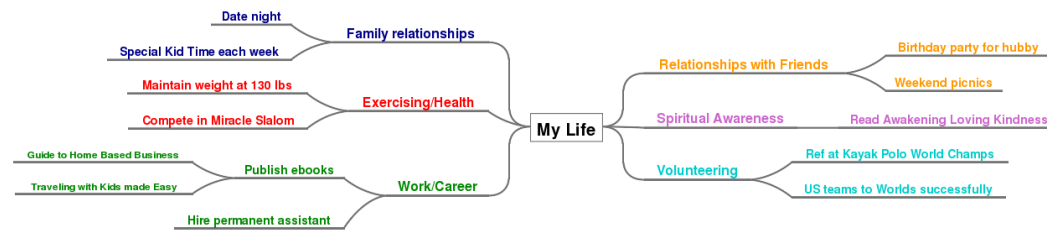
The first step is a creative process. I recommend using mind maps or something similar. You can do this in list form if you prefer. Write down or draw every activity that is important to you that you do now or you want to do. Keep the categories broad – for instance, “date night with my husband” would come under “Family relationships.” Here's an example:



The second step is to prioritize your activities. Ask yourself, “Is Activity A more important than Activity B, or is Activity B more important than Activity A.” Ask yourself the question both ways so that your brain has a chance to consider each alternative. Do this for each pair of activities until you have a prioritized list. We will use this information later on. Keep an open mind when you're doing this exercise and go with your initial gut feeling. The process should be a fast one. You may be surprised by some of the results. It can be shocking sometimes when you realize that your work is more important than playing with your kids – or vice versa! If you want to remind yourself of the priorities, color each branch of your mind map with colors that represent a graduated order of priority for you.

The third step is to imagine what you what to accomplish in each of those areas.

Start with the activity that is most important to you. You can imagine out to any time frame you wish to. Add these to your mind map. Try doing one for 5 years out, for 1 year out and for 6 months out. For the purposes of this example, I'm going to imagine out to the end of summer:



For the fourth step, imagine what it will be like when you have achieved those accomplishments. Now, imagine what it will be like as you are achieving those accomplishments. As you know, with almost every activity, there is part of it that you don't like doing. If you connect doing that activity with the accomplishment and the feeling you will have once you've accomplished it, it's much easier to do that activity.

The fifth step is to make a record of step four. You can write yourself a story, draw a picture or, if you're artistically challenged like me, create a collage using pictures either from the internet or magazines. Now start talking about what you're going to accomplish. Give your brain as many ways to experience your intended accomplishments as possible. The purpose of this step is start your brain asking "How can I do this?" And you know, don't you, that your brain is capable of remarkable things. As you bring your intended accomplishments out into the world, you will naturally find people and events aligning with your intentions. You will create a world around you where your intentions can indeed be achieved.

So, to summarize:

- 1) Identify the activities that are most important to you.
- 2) Prioritize your activities
- 3) Identify your intended accomplishments
- 4) Imagine your life having accomplished them
- 5) Make a record of your life having achieved your accomplishments

Having identified the areas of life that are most important to you, now the assignment is to make your life congruent with your intentions, which is beyond the scope of this article, but look out for my article on time management next month where I will cover one aspect of this.

Yours in success,
Katherine Macey

Katherine Macey is the founder of [Organize to Excel](#), a professional organizing

business dedicated to helping you manage your time and space so you can follow your passions and fulfill your dreams. Contact Katherine (katherine@organizetoexcel.com) now to identify how **Organize to Excel** can best support you in following YOUR passions and fulfilling YOUR dreams.