Exercise 3 - Use the Moment

**Past or Future?**

Let’s try an experiment to show you two different ways your mind works. Really do this—it’s fun, pretty fascinating, and will take just a few minutes.

First, take a comfortable, seated position and look down at the floor, at a spot right between your toes. Take a few deep breaths, and then, staying in that position, take the next two minutes or so to think about your life.

Anything and everything in your life—it doesn’t matter what, just whatever comes to mind.

All right? Go.

What did you think about? Jot it down here.

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Now, clear your mind, get up and walk around for a minute, then come back and do the second half of the experiment.

This time, take that same comfortable, seated position, only tilt your head up so that you’re looking at the ceiling. Take a few deep breaths, and then think about your life over the next two minutes or so—again, it doesn’t matter exactly what you think about, just focus on whatever comes to mind.

All set? Go.

What did you think about this time? Jot it down here.

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Now, how did those two experiences compare? Did you think about pretty much the same things both times, or were they different?

For example, during the first part of the experiment, did you find yourself thinking about the past? Did any regrets come to mind? Did you find yourself thinking about things you could have or should have done differently?

During the second part, when you were looking up at the ceiling, did you find yourself thinking about the future? Were your thoughts and feelings more positive?

If so, you’re not alone. Most people find it’s pretty hard to not start thinking about the past when looking down. And when looking up, it’s hard not to think forward into the future, about hopes, ambitions, and aspirations. It just seems to come naturally.

The point is this: Looking behind you will cause you to feel and act much differently than if you look to the future (and make plans to make it the best).

**A Look in the Mirror**

How do you view your present circumstances—your family, school, friends, neighborhood, and state of mind? What’s going well? What’s holding you back?

Think about each part of your life listed below. For each, do you tend to see yourself as at the mercy of what happens (not taking action), or someone who is in charge of what happens (ready to take action)? Be as honest as you can with this—and if you don’t like any of your answers, don’t worry:

We’re going to show you how to change them!

For Myself:

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For My Friendships:

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For My Health (physical, mental, and spiritual):

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For My Wealth:

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For My Education and Career:

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For My Footprint on the World (what I want to accomplish or how I want to be remembered):

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Perhaps this exercise helped you see where you need to take action. Lots of times we wait for a lucky break.

But good things will happen if you start to take little steps to achieve your goals.

So let’s start taking those steps.