

This is what I'm suggesting you do when determining what you want: Put in your order for paradise with all the trimmings added. Serve yourself the life of your dreams by adding details to your vision for the future.

Ask two people what they want in life. One says, "I just hope to be happy, somehow." Not many details. Another says, "I want to become financially independent in 10 years so that I can devote my time to writing a novel and working with homeless people." It's not hard to guess who is more likely to realize her goals.

Right now, you can begin to bring your dreams into sharp focus. Start by asking *what*, *where*, *when*, and *who*.

EXPAND YOUR CREATIONS WITH "HOW" AND "WHY"

Once you've gained some clarity about what you want, you can create even more details by asking two more questions:

- How will I achieve this goal?
- Why do I want to achieve this goal?

Caution: We can ask such questions in ways that erect obstacles to our goals and actually prevent us from getting what we want in life. I love to see people liberate themselves from these limiting options and discover more creative ways to ask *how* and *why*.

Ask "how" to create multiple pathways

Asking *how* assists you in developing action plans to meet your goals.

When asking *how*, we can avoid answers that lead us to a prescription—the idea that there is only *one* way to accomplish any goal. Most goals can be reached through multiple pathways. While generating more details about what we want, we can create more precise action plans—several of them—for satisfying any desire.

For example, you might determine that you want to earn \$100,000 per year while working from your home as a freelance consultant. To meet that income goal, you could choose from several strategies. One is to charge \$50 per hour and work 40 hours per week for 50 weeks per year. Another is to charge \$100 per hour and work only 20 hours per week for the same number of weeks per year. You could also consider working more hours during the winter months so that you could take summers off and still earn \$100,000 yearly. These are just a few examples.



Remember that strategies and techniques are not guarantees. They're just means to an end—moving you into action. Your clarity about what you want and your commitment to get it can be far more powerful than any action plan or technique.

Ask “why” to fulfill your “impossible” desires

Asking another question—*why*—can help you expand your list of desires and even fulfill those that seem impossible.

Suppose that I discover two contradictory desires: I love eating chocolate sweets, *and* I want to lose weight. Faced with these conflicting desires, I have at least two options.

One option is to look at *why* I desire chocolate sweets. If I'm not careful, this line of questioning can drive me into analyzing the past and making excuses: *I want to eat chocolate sweets because my mom baked a chocolate cake for me every week when I was a kid and sweets have become a source of comfort; I'd feel abandoned if I gave them up. Or I've become physiologically addicted to sugar and I just can't break the habit.*

Another option is to ask *why* in a way that creates more possibilities for the future and helps me discover the desires *behind* the current desire.

For example, I could say that I desire chocolate sweets because:

- I enjoy eating food that tastes exceptionally good.
- Eating dessert after meals is an effective way to spend more quality time with my family.
- I need the energy boosts from sugar to handle all the tasks I have to complete.

Once I discover these desires behind my desire for chocolate cake, I can then ask *how* to achieve them. I may even find a way to get all those desires fulfilled *without* eating chocolate sweets. For example, I could:

- Experiment with enjoying other kinds of foods that taste exceptionally good.
- Plan evening activities for my family that promote intimate time together.
- Talk to a professional health practitioner about how to maintain high energy without eating sweets.

Asking *why* in this manner grounds me in the realm of values—the things in life that I want most, including enjoyment, intimacy, and energy. This line of questioning greatly multiplies the options for fulfilling my purpose—creating a wonderful life.

