



Self Coaching Stimulators

What do I imagine is possible when I focus on only one of the five fundamental future self disciplines today?



1. What's my first thought?

Remember the Buddhist quote from our last series, The Five Fundamental Future Self Disciplines: "If anything is worth doing at all, do it with all your heart." In Osho's brilliant book, *Book of Understanding*, he says, "It's not a question of which path you follow, it's a question of whether you go totally in or not." To be totally in our action brings joy. Even ordinary trivial actions done with total intensity brings glow to our being, fulfillment, a fullness, and a deep contentment. Anything done half-heartedly, however good that thing may be, it's only going to bring misery. As David Whyte says, "The antidote to exhaustion is full-heartedness." What do I imagine is possible when I focus on only one of the five fundamental future self disciplines today? **What's my first thought?**



2. What's occurring now?

Balancing is a verb. Remember the tightrope walker? The wire is life. The tightrope walker moves left to right, then right to left. And when we move too far to the right, we're in danger of falling off. So we move back to the left, and only for a moment, are we truly balanced. Today, which of the five fundamental future self disciplines can we lean into, to bring balance back? What do I imagine is possible when I focus on only one of the disciplines today? **What's occurring now?**



3. What just happened?

In Lao Tzu's book, *The Art of War*, he says, "He who controls others may be powerful, but he who has mastered himself is mightier still." And don't think we can't detain total awareness and whole enlightenment without proper discipline and practice, this is egomania. Appropriate rituals channel our emotions and our life energy towards the light. Without the discipline and the practice, we will tumble constantly backward into the darkness. What do I imagine is possible when I focus on only one of the fundamental future's self disciplines today? **What just happened?**



4. What am I feeling now?

BJ Fogg writes in his book, *Tiny Habits* (which is as good as James Clear's *Atomic Habits*) that, "Behavior happens when three elements come together." Remember the letters, M-A-P: Motivation, Ability, Prompt.

They come together at some moment. Motivation is our future self's desires to do the behavior. Ability is our capacity to do the behavior. And the prompt is our cue to do the behavior. The cue is the magic spot, from Patrick McKeown, the tongue on the roof of your mouth. Cues need a nose breathe. I have an alarm clock not to wake up, but at 7:30 PM, it rings to cue me to turn off all screens. The question, "What does future self want to eat?" That's the cue to consider what I feel like 30-45 minutes after I eat. I bookend my days, the bookends are my cue. I have a cue for meditation, 20 minutes first thing in the morning and 20 minutes last thing of the day. Micro, mini, and macro movements are my cues to always be moving. A.B.M. stand for Always Be Moving. So what do I imagine is possible if I focus on just one of the five fundamental future self-disciplines today? **What am I feeling now?**



5. What are my opportunities?

Here's a few things that I do regularly to support my movement. I never sit for more than 20 minutes and I put a timer on my desk so that I stand every 20 minutes. When I sit down, I use a bolster, so my knees are far below my hips. I can stand easily. It's just hoisting myself up. I am constantly adjusting my posture – stretching from side to side, lifting one leg after another. I stand up every hour and do at least one minute of hanging from my hanger. And then I go on nice 10 minute walk in the forest, sometimes 3 times a day. What are my opportunities for movement? What do I imagine is possible for my future self when I dedicate a larger portion of my life energy to movement? BJ Fogg says, "Prompts are invisible drivers of our lives and no behavior happens without a prompt." When I

notice my tongue is not resting on the roof of my mouth, I immediately place it in the magic spot, close my eyes, and take two deep breaths. After I brush my teeth, I do three pushups. I stand up from my chair, and I do three squats. After my

7:30 PM alarm goes off, I turn off all screens. After my feet hit the floor, I've got five minutes to be in the meditation chair. So what do I imagine is possible when I focus on only one or the five fundamental future self-disciplines today? **What are my opportunities?**



6. What's missing?

Imagine nose breathing is a tool. Bedtime wind down ritual is a tool. No sugar in the first six ingredients on any package is a tool. Calm Headspace meditation apps is another tool. Micro, mini, and macro movements are a tool. Phil Stutz and Barry Michels wrote a great book called *Tools*, it's really a terrific tool. Here's what they say, "A change in attitude won't stop you from screaming because attitude can't control behavior." They just don't do it, it's not strong enough. To control behavior, we need a specific tool to be used at a specific time to combat a specific problem. A tool requires us to do something. So what do I imagine is possible when I focus on one of the five future self disciplines today? **What's missing?**



7. What am I avoiding?

Why Meditate by Matthieu Richard makes a very compelling argument not to go another day without meditating. The goal of medication is precisely to make our mind smooth and manageable so it can be concentrated, or relaxed, at will. And especially to free it from the tyranny of mental affliction and confusion. The antidote to distraction is cultivating vigilance. Whenever we notice that our mind has wandered off, bring it back to the object of meditation. When we suddenly realize that we've been distracted, it shows we've removed your mindfulness. So we should be happy about this instead of being discouraged and regretful. The more often we notice that we've been distracted, the more our mindfulness

is progressing. Remember this is also why we are meditating. The goal is not to waste time giving free range to our thoughts, but to use our meditation time to gain freedom from suffering. What do I imagine is possible if I focus on just one of the five fundamental future self disciplines today? **What am I avoiding?**



8. What's true for me?

In PrivateWork-it-out #36 we introduced the concept of the keystone habit. I got that idea from Charles Duhigg's book, *The Power of Habits*. A keystone habit is that one habit that when you change it, it will be the greatest positive impact on your life. So of the five fundamental future self-disciplines, which is your keystone? Is it breath? Sleep? Eat? Meditate? Move? What do I imagine is possible when I focus on the one that I feel is my keystone? **What's true for me?**



9. What's my ideal scenario?

In a really cool book called *The Power of Habits* by Jack Hodge, he says, "Doers are more successful than dreamers because they take consistent purposeful action, while dreamers never really get started or quickly burnout." Doers have the ability to purposely affect change in their life. They accomplish extraordinary things, whether it's starting their own company, getting elected to public office, running a marathon, or any extraordinary accomplishment. While dreamers are somehow stuck on the sidelines, only dreaming about such things. Dreamer. Doer. So what do I imagine is possible when I focus on only one of the five fundamental future self disciplines today? **What's my ideal scenario for today?**



10. What am I imagining as I'm thinking about my ideal scenario?

Now, we don't eliminate current habits. We replace them. We don't break bad habits; we replace them with better habits. Purposely, deliberately, consciously, we choose new habits to replace old habits. This will greatly increase the odds of changing the habit when we replace the habit, not try to get rid of the habit. **So what do I imagine is happening in my ideal scenario as I pick one of the five fundamental future self disciplines to focus on today?**



11. What's between me and my ideal scenario?

Heidi Grant- Halvorson says it beautifully in her book called, *Succeed*. She says, "If you want more self-control, you can get more done. And you get more self-control the same way you get bigger muscles, you've got to give it regular workouts." Recent research has shown that engaging daily activities like exercising, keeping track of your finances, keeping track of what you're eating, or even remembering just to sit up straight every time you think of it can help us develop an overall self-control capacity. For example, in one study, students who were assigned to, and stuck to, a daily exercise program, not only got physically healthier, but they also became more likely to wash dishes instead of leave them in the sink, and less likely to impulsively spend money. **What's between me and my ideal scenario?**



12. What really matters?

Erich Fromm was a required reading while I attended the University of Santa Monica while studying to get a certificate in Spiritual Psychology back in 2011. And again, the word "discipline" appears again and again. In his book, *The Art of Loving*, he says, "The practice of any art has a general requirement. Quiet regardless of whether we deal with the art of carpentry, medicine, or the art of love. First of all, the practice of an art requires discipline, breathing, sleeping, eating, meditating, and moving. I shall never be good at anything if I do not do it

in a disciplined way. Anytime I do anything, I do only if I'm in the mood. It may be nice and amusing hobby, but I shall never become a master in that art." What do I imagine is possible when I focus on only one of the five fundamental future self disciplines today? **What really matters?**



13. What difference will it make?

Michael Beckwith is a beautiful minister from South Los Angeles and wrote a book called, *Life Visioning*. He's not only a minister, a preacher, an author, but he's also a podcaster and a messenger of God. I love this guy. And he says, "We can't feel the wetness of water by looking at photographs of water. We must immerse ourselves in it." We can't feel the ecstasy of awakened awareness through reading about it, we must find it in our inner most self.

So today, what difference does it make when I focus on only one of the five fundamental future self disciplines? **What difference will it make?**



14. What's the risk?

Pema Shodron, a beautiful American Buddhist monk, wrote *The Places That Scare You*. In it she says, "We can let the circumstances of our lives harden us so that we become increasingly resentful and afraid, or we can let them go. When we do, it'll make us kinder, more open to what makes us more useful. We will always have the freedom of choice to hang on or let go." What's the risk if I focus on one of five fundamental future self disciplines today? **So what's the risk and what's the risk if I don't?**



15. What adjustments can I make?

In PrivateWork, great minds ask great questions. The daily PrivateWork DirectionQuestion engages our thoughts, activates our imagination, and turns us inward towards our full resourcefulness. It teaches us to trust ourselves and trust our process. You've been seduced 14 times now with the DirectionQuestion, "What do I imagine as possible when I focus on only one of the future self discipline today?" **What adjustments can I make?**



16. What needs to happen next?

If you asked me what's my spiritual practice today, what wraps my full attention, I would say three things:

1. Reading, underlining in my books, re-interpreting, synthesizing what I learn.
2. Next would be meditation. I do 12-20 minutes every morning, first thing. And recently, I've really dialing in my 12-20 minutes right before bed.
3. And then movement and nose breaths – doing those two in combination. Movement, intense exercise, makes a difference to me.

So integrating reading, integrating with my meditation, and moving with my breath and my exercise is my spiritual practice. So ask yourself, "What needs to happen next?" Just select one of the five fundamentals and focus on it today.

What needs to happen next?



17. What's occurring now?

Close your eyes, take two nice nose breaths, empty the breath, bring it up, expand it out, slowly bring it down, and slowly empty. What's occurring now? When I imagine the one fundamental that I could focus on today, what would be possible? **What's occurring now?**



18. What am I feeling now?

Falling in love with the process of becoming masterful at breathing, sleeping, eating, meditating, and movement. It's a lifelong journey and there is always room to improve to create your future self. **What am I feeling now?**



19. What am I not saying?

If we want to become more useful to the world, our first focus should be on mastery of self, breathing, sleeping, eating, meditating, and movement. Bring your aliveness. That's what discipline gives us. It's the gift of discipline. Discipline is what allows us to be the most useful contributor. **What have I not said that needs to be said now?**



20. What's my actionable insight?

In *The Selected Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, he says. "The purpose of life is not to be happy; it's to be useful, honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well, to know that even one life has breathed easier because of you and because you have lived, this is to have succeeded." What do I imagine as possible when I focus on just one of the five fundamental future self disciplines today? **What's my actionable insight?**
