

Aligning Self for Action



JUST DO IT

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Introduction

Have you ever wondered how some people find the joy in life no matter what is thrown their way?

Have you ever wanted to do something and managed to talk yourself out of it?

Have you ever had an idea and put so many obstacles in the way that you then felt it overwhelming or impossible?

Have you ever wondered how some people look light and happy as if they do not have a care in the world?

Have you ever wondered how some people achieve what they want regardless of obstacles and excuses that could get in their way, and how they take action quickly and with ease?

What is Aligning Self for Action

The ability to take action and feel good about doing something that you know serves you and ultimately leads to joy.

This model of 'aligning self for action' is a way to clear through the clutter preventing you from taking action so you have the confidence, inspiration and trust in yourself to Just do IT. This model is based on fabulous people that live and breathe this way.

Align: "To move or be adjusted into proper relationship or orientation".

Action: "The state of acting towards something".



Model Outcomes

- ✓ You have the **confidence to move forward and take action** or not. *Action could be deciding to say no!*
- ✓ You **feel joy** having completed/started the activity.
- ✓ You choose to **make the activity a habit** (if applicable) or decide it no longer serves you and let it go.
- ✓ You have a **sense of inner-ease** and calmness when faced with future actions as your confidence and ability to take action grows.
- ✓ You have a **raised awareness** of the activities you avoid and why.
- ✓ Your decision-making process becomes shorter as you form a habit of **positive inner dialogue**.
- ✓ Everything you do is in-line with or **working towards what you really want in life**.
- ✓ You have a **sense of fulfilment**.
- ✓ **Life is more joyful**.

The Importance of Aligning Self for Action

For many years I have known what life choices help me to live a balanced, energised life, yet on occasions I avoid taking action and doing what I know serves me and can end up down a rabbit hole as a result.

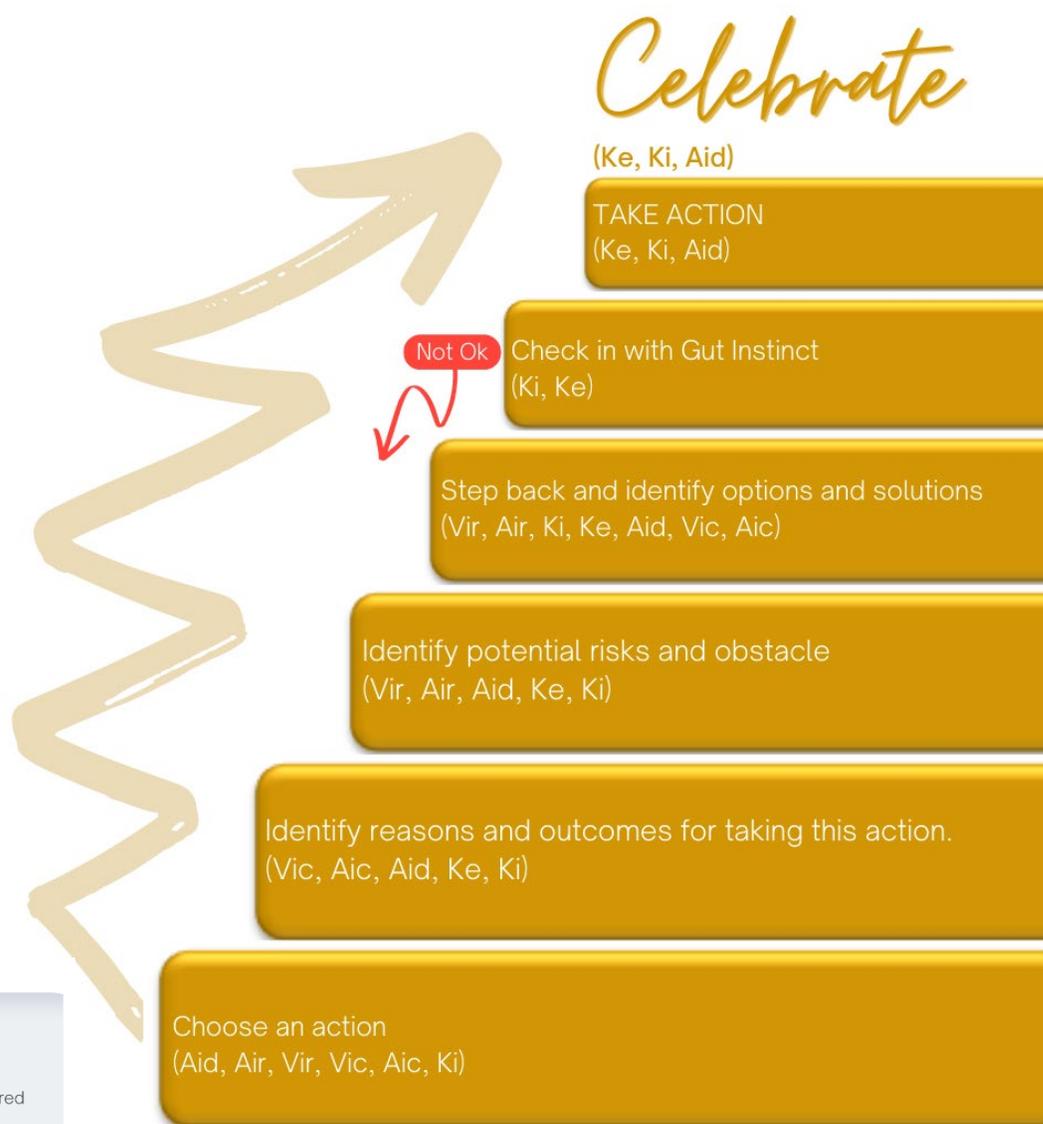
Modelling people who take action with ease and whose natural state appears to be balanced, energised, calm, in the moment, joyful, flexible and open to opportunities is important so we can understand what it is that enables them to be this way.

Adopting this way of life and sharing it with others enables us to live more freely, in the moment and experience joy in everything we do!



Aligning Self for Action Diagram

Use the Aligning Self for Action Steps to guide you through each step of the diagram. The Key explains the NLP coding associated with each step. Coding is a way to break down and understand what is going on internally and externally for a person as they do what they do. An image we see externally is Ve, Visual/external, an image in our mind that we remember is Vir, Visual/external, an image we create in our mind is Vic, Visual/internal/construct, , a sound that we remember, Air, Auditory/internal/remembered, , a sound that we construct, Aic, Auditory/internal/construct, an inner dialogue, Aid, Auditory/internal dialogue, a feeling that we experience physically, Ke, Kinaesthetic/external, an emotion that we feel, Ki, Kinaesthetic/internal. As we become aware of what is happening for ourselves and the strategies, we use we then have the choice to adopt and try out other strategies that are likely to take us closer to where we want to be.



Key

Aid: Auditory / internal / dialogue
 Air: Auditory / internal / remembered
 Aic: Auditory / internal / construct
 Vir: Visual / internal / remembered
 Vic: Visual / internal / construct
 Ki: Kinaesthetic / internal
 Ke: Kinaesthetic / external

Aligning Self for Action Steps

1. **Choose an action** that perhaps you have resisted or that you want to take and haven't taken yet. (Aid, Air, Vir, Vic, Aic, Ki)
2. Imagine you have taken this action, step into the moment of completion so you are seeing this moment of completion through your own eyes, listen to what you are saying to yourself and feel what is happening in your body, and as you do this be aware of what is important to you about this feeling, what is significant about having taken this action, what is this action satisfying in you and notice to what extent taking this action has got you closer to where you want to be. Keep in mind these **reasons and outcomes** for taking this action. (Vic, Aic, Aid, Ke, Ki)
3. Now, take yourself back to the moment just before you decided to take action and notice any resistance or tension in your body, self-talk about any **risks or obstacles** that you may come across as you plan to take action. Allow yourself to see, hear and feel what they are and as you do take any emotions associated with these potential risks and obstacles and imagine you are moving them out of your heart/head or wherever they are in your body, to a place behind you, a place where you can deal with them later. (Vir, Air, Aid, Ke, Ki)
4. With this clear head, take a **step back** so you are able to observe each potential risk or obstacle and as you do follow the steps below for each one:
 - Recall the reasons and outcomes for doing this activity. (Vir, Air, Ki)
 - Bring to mind one of the risk/obstacles you identified and tell yourself 'there is always a way'. (Aid)
 - Imagine the obstacle/risk as a little hill or a small step. (Vic)
 - As you take a step onto this hill or step ask yourself, what your options are to enable you to proceed, what would be acceptable to you, and what would you like to happen to 'get ahead of it'. (Vic, Aid)
 - Take a moment to allow **options/solutions** to appear, you may hear or see these options. You might draw on similar past experiences, gain more information/knowledge, ask for help, find out what others have done, construct a contingency plan or a get out clause should the activity not go as planned. These may come in the form of photographs, videos, drawings, words, audio - allow them to emerge. (Vic, Vir, Aic, Air, Aid)
 - As the options appear be aware of a sign, like a 'ping', a 'light', or a 'good feeling' that appears to indicate that it is a good option. If this does not happen in this way, that's ok, this will be different for everyone. (Aic, Vic, Ki, Ke)
 - Once you have this option/solution in mind, own it, and trust you are absolutely making the best decision that is important to you and this will enable you to move forward. (Ki)
5. **Check in with your gut instinct.** Bring to mind taking this action and take a moment to sit with whatever feelings and emotions come up.....Now, be aware of your energy and feelings in your chest and stomach, notice what is happening, you may experience grumbling/butterflies in your stomach if this action is unfamiliar or it's exciting for you. Your heart might light up, you may feel it skip, sing, dance, you may experience a glow of colour, sunshine, a positive shift in some way. If it feels good/right in your gut and heart 'got for it'. If it feels heavy and dark, you feel low energy or bad feeling, this action may not be in-line with who you are or who you want to be – if this is the case reconsider taking action. (If you are unable to identify what your gut is telling you, sit with it for a bit longer and notice what happens). (Ki, Ke)
6. **Take action.** As you proceed, go with the flow, shake off/laugh off any setbacks, use the steps in step 4 to deal with any obstacles that may occur and trust it will be ok. Knowing that every situation gives you an opportunity to grow, choose to see any obstacles or setbacks as learning opportunities. (Ke, Ki, Aid)
7. **Celebrate.** Allow the feelings of being proud of yourself to come up, say 'yes' to yourself, punch the air, do a little dance, pat yourself on the back, whatever works for you. Celebrate achievements, however, big, or small, this will help you to remember and draw upon this experience when/if required in the future. (Ke, Ki, Aid)

Aligning Self for Action Model

This model encompasses the common filters, beliefs of excellence and neurological levels of my exemplars. The age of my exemplars ranges from age 8 to 67 and I was amazed at how much my exemplars had in common.

When aligning themselves for action they had the following in common:

- Internally referenced and had self-belief.
- Ability to see the bigger picture when deciding to take action and broke the action down into smaller steps when processing reasons, outcomes, obstacles, and risks.
- Present and associated when making the decision and the ability let it be when executing.
- Always looked for the positives and options/solutions available.
- Choice to use 'get out clause' and/or contingency plan was important.
- Strong understanding of their own wants and needs and how they can best support others by attending to these first.
- Use visualization and feelings to form outcomes that they want.
- Used their gut feel to determine if the action is in line with what they want.
- Strong sense of who they are and what they want in life.
- Know and understand their limits.
- Check in with themselves often.
- Pause/slow down before taking action.

Neurological Levels that are important for this model:

Purpose – A sense of what you want.

Identity – Self-belief, self-awareness, self-love and self-trust

Beliefs of excellence -

- There is always a way.
- Every situation provides an opportunity to grow - obstacles/setbacks are learning opportunities.
- Gut instinct is always right.
- If they can do it, I can do it.
- Stepping back helps you to move forward.
- What will be, will be, let go and enjoy the ride!

Values -

- Open-mindedness
- Honesty with self
- Positivity
- Courage
- Resilience
- Passion
- Trust

Capabilities - Resourceful, flexible/adaptable

Behaviour - Calm and in the moment

Environment – Adaptable

Choosing who to Model

I first thought about the people I know who I love being around and who possess something that I want.

This led me to:

- My daughter. Ellie, my youngest child, is still very much **carefree** and has not been/refuses to be moulded to conform to society! Ellie is a **joy** to be around, **lives in the moment** and has an **inner strength** that makes her unstoppable.
- My Tai Chi teacher and friend has an amazing outlook on life and exudes a **calming energy** and a **spark!**
- My cousin is a strong, **calm** and has a **zest for life**. She is just wonderful and **fun** to be around.
- My relatively new friend is **courageous** and **resilient** and has the ability to use **humour** to navigate through life.
- My boss has both a serious and **playful** side and the ability to **make light** of any situation.

I then looked at someone who I admire and who would be a stretch for me to ask... I contacted Stacey Copeland, former England Women's footballer and Commonwealth Boxing Champion. She is a **strong, determined, humorous** and an **unstoppable** force of nature.



Exemplars Demonstrating IT

Ellie, my daughter, makes decisions at lightning speed based on what she wants to do. This is not to say they are not thought out, the thinking and justification just happens very quickly. If she wants something or wants to do something, she just goes for it whether that be climbing a tree or a new skill at gymnastics that she practices over and over again until she 'gets it'.

An example of my Tai Chi teacher demonstrating aligning herself for action is a year after her husband died of a brain tumour she went walking across Spain on her own. Not feeling the need to keep up with others when she hurt her foot, she chose her own route and when the inn was full one night, she trusted that it would all work out and as if by magic it did!

My cousin and her family who were fed up with the long hours and with not seeing each other up sticks, leaving their high paid jobs behind and moved to Spain so they could live a calmer and more harmonious life. Putting herself 'out there' she found a way of making friends and ended up broadcasting on the local radio. When circumstances changed, they made the tough and right decision for them to come home and start again! And all with a big smile and the belief it would be ok!

Once my friend decided that her job was no longer serving her, she made the bold decision to leave the corporate world and, in the process, found her herself and a life truer to herself that includes humour.

At the age of 25 my boss set up his own business and although he works hard, he has maintained a good work life balance that includes lots of family time and football coaching for his sons' team. He turns stressful situations around with action and humour.

Stacey Copeland overcame lots of stereotypes to follow her dreams. Not only did she break the mould she lives her life true to herself and empowers others to do the same.

Life is not always plain sailing yet all my exemplars, in my opinion, have a fabulous outlook on life and the ability to just do IT – whatever IT is that they decide to do, or not to do! They own what they do, and remarkably find joy during and following adverse situations.

How do they do this?

Have they always been this way?

What is the difference that makes the difference?

You can find out more about their individual strategies in the appendices.



Imparting the Model

The first person I took through the model took action there and then! They were motivated and inspired to do something they had wanted to do yet had been putting off.

“logical and certainly works”

“Gives good confidence that there is a possibility and that feeling of possibility of achieving that state of mind is great”

The model brought awareness of the issues preventing friends and family from moving forward and provided them with clear steps to making change and shifting barriers. The barriers became less significant as they looked at options to overcome them. It brought up choices that really helped them to make a decision to move forward. A metaphor that came to mind when going through the model was “It’s a leg-up to get back on the horse again, and we all need a leg-up sometimes to obtain our freedom and get going again”.

“Raises awareness”

“It works...even on a ‘mismatch”

“The model is completely transferrable to any walk of life”

“Brings up the barriers preventing us from making change and gives clear and precise steps to making change and shifting the barriers”

My brother-in-law found this model very helpful as he was stuck with taking an action and had previously been going down the route of pleasing others rather than what ‘fit’ with him and his values.

“Helpful to explore options and highlights reasons for taking action”

Learnings

What an amazing learning experience this has been. Doing this project has really helped to consolidate my NLP learning and made me more aware of what I choose to do and why I choose to do it, or not! I am more aware of my patterns and I am taking action more quickly and adapting actions to suit me and the time available. I recognized that a lot of not choosing not to take action was down to my perception of time and feeling I didn't have enough time to do the task to the best of my ability and this would be backed up with negative internal dialogue. I now find myself just starting and I am ok if it isn't completed within the time restrictions (I am now aware) that I imposed on myself and it is ok if it is not as perfect as I would have liked...it's good enough! Following the model has helped me to identify what is important about the 'action' and made me more aware of the choices I have. I recognise that if it is important and is in line with my purpose, beliefs, and values it will get done at some point. The contingency plan element really opened my eyes and being aware of when this is required and identifying what this could be has made a huge difference to me taking action. I have found myself being more present, going with the flow more and enjoying what I choose to do. *"Learning is in the experience"*.

My Model was becoming clear from the first 3 exemplars I modelled. They had all demonstrated many of the same filters and beliefs and confirmed what was becoming apparent. In hindsight I could have made my project simpler and less time consuming by sticking with the three, however, at the time I was unaware of how I sometime overcomplicate things because of my lack of alignment and ego's need to excel. I have learnt so much from all my exemplars and recognise *(with a little help from my fantastic support group)* that I sometimes get too caught up in the content!

All my exemplars align themselves ready for action and they only take action when they believe it 'fits' with their purpose, beliefs and values in some way. They use visualisation, feelings, internal dialogue, and make themselves aware of the risks and choices available and are open to adapting as situations change. When they do this, it supports them to make the decision to take action and just do it! This is what enables them to have the confidence to move forward, be light, flexible and find the joy in life. *"Joyful people are not weighed down by avoidance"*.

I recognised that a lot of my 'faffing' came from not fully trusting myself and the (now old) belief that everything needs to be your best work before sharing and asking for help! *"When you trust in yourself, you can trust in others"*.

All my exemplars gained strength and courage from adversity. For example, Ellie struggled to see 3d images for the first 6 years of her life, she would trip up regularly, she would pick herself up, brushed herself off and carry on. She made the best of her limited sight, just got on with it and adapted accordingly. After getting glasses and consistently wearing them (even whilst doing backflips) she has improved her vision as a result and has unbelievable resilience. My Tai chi teacher overcame Cancer, and injury and found self-care and self-love in the process. Stacey overcame stereotypes and stepped out of the box she had been put in order to follow her dreams and carve a way and empower other women. She overcame many physical obstacles along the way through pure determination and resilience. *"Adversity Rocks – from adversity comes strength and the greatest learning"*.

This project also reminded me that listening to your 'gut instinct' is so important. As I refined the model I got to the point when it just 'felt right' and I was finally happy with it. *"Trust your instinct"*.

Aligning Self for Action

APPENDICES



Daughter's strategy

My daughter, Ellie, 8, is a free spirit, a girl that knows mind and has an inner confidence and a 'can do' attitude.

Methods of modelling used:

- Conversation in person about a moment in time using clean questions.
- Walking (well, running, skipping, and jumping) in her shoes.
- Ellie explaining to me/showing me how to do a cartwheel.

Conversation in person about a moment in time using clean questions

Ellie had bounded into our bedroom a few months earlier, excited that she had solved her brother's maths question that has stumped the whole family. I asked her to talk me through what went on from the moment she opened her eyes. The level of detail surprised me and told me so much about how she processes everything she does. When she entered our room that morning, I had wrongly assumed that she jumped out of bed as soon as she opened her eyes...far from it!

She told me as she opened her eyes she looked up at the swirls on the ceiling and waited for the 'energy from the sun' that comes through her window. On this day she used the time lay in her bed to think about the maths problem we had all given up on. As she recalls the moment she looks up to the right. She had solved the problem by looking outside the box and systematically thinking about all the possibilities. As she did this, she saw a **white piece of paper in her mind and a black pen drawing out options**, when the 'right' option appears and she can see it clearly on the paper, she **hears a 'ping' noise in her head**. She said as soon as she figured it out her energy went up and she got out of bed and started walking, running, then jumping before bounding into our room declaring 'I've got the answer'. Ellie remembered telling us her solution and recalls that her answer was not fully correct. Ellie happily accepted it exclaiming 'oooo' as she slung her head back to demonstrate what happened in that moment and seeing the positive side was happy that her work had taken us closer to the answer. She then remembered discussing the options and finding the actual answer with daddy, she had been excited and started speaking more quickly. She was proud of herself for helping us move closer to the answer and demonstrated this by **punching the air, doing a little dance, and saying 'yes'**.

Walking in her shoes.

This experience showed me how free and joyful it is to be in her shoes. Everything was embodied by using her whole body and being in the present. It was illuminating and taught me so much about how she operates and experiences the world. She would see something that sparked her interest and just go for it...skipping, running, ducking, and diving through trees, navigating obstacles at lightning speed. Ellie goes with the flow and is free from obstacles holding her back as she **weighs up risks/obstacles**, assesses at her options and quickly makes a decision to get to where she wants to go. She embraces trying alternatives to overcome what previously hasn't worked. As she follows her brother through the trees her **'if he can, I can'** attitude kicks in and whilst I am left thinking 'I'm not sure that is safe'...'I might hit my head'...'I might trip over that branch' she doesn't even appear to see the danger. She does of course and chooses to use what has previously worked and her options to navigate it. She is decisive in the moment and adapts her actions where necessary.



Ellie explaining to me/showing me how to do a cartwheel

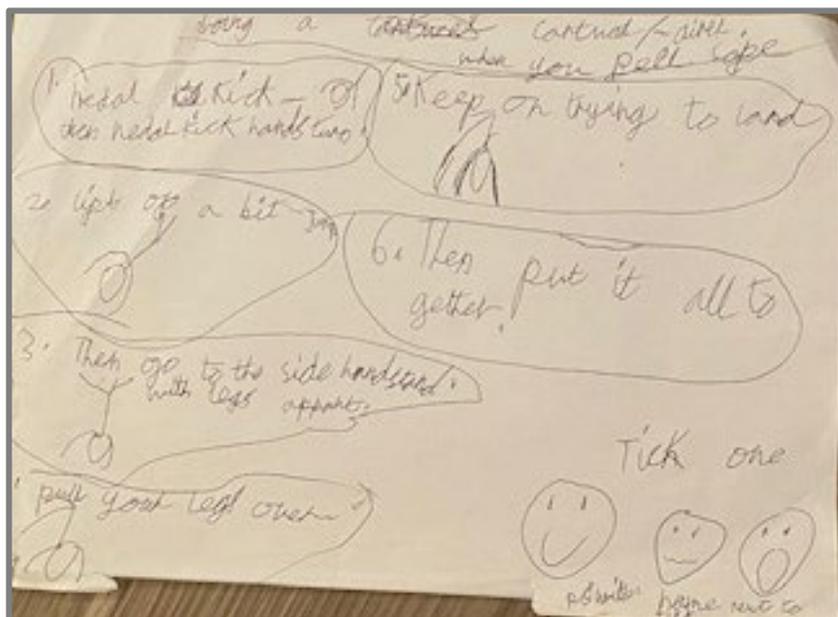
I asked Ellie to explain how to do cartwheel, she proceeded to get up and started to show me, then she grabbed a piece of paper and started writing down the steps and matching my preferred style drew pictures illustrating what to do (see picture below). She talked me through each step encouraging me and giving me pointers along the way. What caught my attention about this is that she taught by example and she reiterated to 'only proceed when you feel safe to do so', something she had remembered her gymnastics coach saying. She has also adapted the instructions giving choice for a no handed cartwheel! and inserted three faces so I could feedback to her how I felt about it.

Her instructions were broken down into stages and were clear:

- Think about doing it in your mind
- Needle kick, then needle kick with hands turning
- Lift off a bit...jump
- Then go to side handstand with legs apart.
- See it in your mind
- Pull your legs over
- Keep trying to land, and when you feel safe, just do it
- Then put it altogether, faster
- Tick a face to show how you feel

Ellie went on to explain what the smiley face mean. Feedback is clearly important to Ellie. Patterns I have noticed are that when she makes a mistake, or something does not go to plan she physically shakes her head as if to shake it off her. She also celebrates and remembers her successes and that builds her confidence and her belief that anything is possible.

Ellie's Cartwheel Instructions



Ellie's strategy for action

Decides on an action – jumping over a log.

Reasons and outcomes – want to get to the other side, brother already done it, looks fun.

Risks or obstacles -

- Could hurt self on sharp bit sticking up

Briefly steps back to consider options -

Piece of white paper appears in her mind and a black pen draws out her options:

- Go around (dismissed, will take too long, want to keep up with brother)
- Turn around and go back (dismisses)
- Cover sharp bit with something to make safe – She hears a 'Ping' that's the one and asks mum for a glove.

Checks in with gut instinct – excited, heart racing. Hearing the ping tells her that's the solution that she's happy with.

Visualizes with option in place – sees the log with the glove in place and it feels ok to jump over.

Takes action. – jumped over log

Celebrates – said 'yes' to self and does a little dance.

Ellie sees opportunities and challenges rather than problems and obstacles. She is light and has a well-timed sense of humour. Her resilience enables her to take everything in her stride.

What Ellie learnt from the experience

Ellie is aware of her internal dialogue and images she creates in her mind. She recognises why asking questions is important, Ellie went on to interview the family in a similar way and gave feedback!

Ellie is now aware of her motivation for learning and how that links to her future and what she wants in life. She has used her awareness of this strategy and applied it in unfamiliar/scary situations with success and shares how to do it with others.



Tai Chi teacher's Strategy

My Tai Chi teacher has recovered from Cancer, recovered from a damaged back that left her immobile for a year and more recently lost her husband to Cancer. She is strong, courageous, true to herself and has an amazing attitude to life. Doing and resting is her mantra.

Method of modelling used: Conversation in person about a moment in time using clean questions.

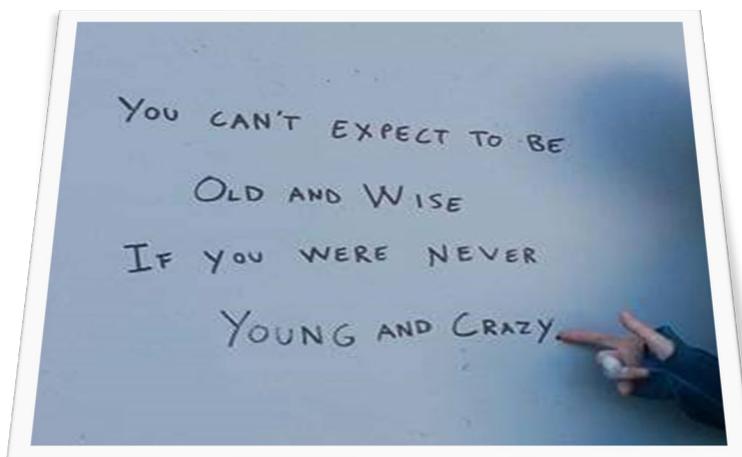
The moment I wanted to know more about was the moment she chose to go walking across Spain and carried on despite a foot injury. She exclaimed 'it was an OMG moment' as she giggled at the memory. She had always wanted to do it and when she lost her husband, she decided that the time was right to help her heal. She is a risk taker, a calculated risk taker. A get out clause if very important to her and in this case that was having enough money to get home should she not like it, couldn't do it for whatever reason. As she recalls the memory, she tells me that she said to herself 'If I can't do it, I can come home...It's ok to say I can't do it' something she had struggled with in the past. As she identifies options she searches through **photographs and videos from a catalogue of past experiences in her head**, these hold the images of the **skills and scenarios she can draw upon**. She had taken her time, so she could savour it all. In her mind she **broke the journey down into steps** and concentrated on **one step at time**. It wasn't about just walking from A-B' for her, this was an important journey in so many ways, that taking her time and building up her fitness would allow her to enjoy the journey not just arriving at the destination. The enjoyment came from the planning and anticipation and the thrill of going into the unknown. She would talk to herself (and her late husband) along the way for encouragement and whilst dealing with minor setbacks, like the day she injured her foot. She had reluctantly decided getting a bus knowing it was her best chance of getting the rest she needed to be able complete the trip. The bus ended up being 2 days away! she said she **imagined** herself sat at the bus stop for two days and that made her laugh, 'typical' she thought '**ok what is my learning now**'. She is excellent at changing state and from the moment she fell and injured her foot adapting to make it possible to continue and going with whatever came her way. She does this by **moving her emotions out of her head and heart and putting them behind her body so she can think clearly without emotions getting in the way**. She tells herself **she can deal with them later once she has looked at her options and developed a plan**. She has a belief it will always work out and if by magic it always does. This belief is confirmed to her over and over again. She had hobbled to the local bar and the owner had been to the place she was raising money for, instead of sponsorship he kindly got his barman to give her a lift. She has learnt her limits over the years with the best learnings coming from a bad back injury and recovering from Cancer. She is very aware of her patterns especially pushing herself too far. Although she still gets excited by the prospect of helping anyone and everyone, she has learnt to put herself first and this enables her to better assist others. She only ever takes action now if it's 'right' for her and she knows this through **listening to her intuition**. She sits with the decision and **waits to see if it feels good in her gut, if her heart skips, lights up, she can feel a good energy she goes for it, if it feels heavy and dark in her heart and stomach she doesn't**.

"things are ok in the end, even if you can't see it at the time"

"only given what you can cope with"

"let go and trust it will be ok"

"Doesn't always have to be you"



Tai Chi teachers strategy for action

Visualizes and feels action – Walking through Spain.

Reasons and outcomes – following her dream, always wanted to do it, lots of signs, healing journey.

Calculates risks -

Internal dialogue

- Might not like it
- Not fit enough
- Risk of injury

Steps back to consider options –

Takes time to search through photographs and videos from a catalogue of past experiences in her head, these hold the images of the skills and scenarios she can draw upon.

- Can always get a flight home
- Can postpone to get fit
- Can rest or get a bus/taxi if necessary

All options felt ok.

Visualizes in more detail with these options in place – walking with a backpack through villages.

Checks in with gut and intuition – tells herself, yes I can do this and is excited, scary and exciting, heart sings, just knows right thing to do, can feel it in her gut.

Takes action - went walking, injured foot – rested and carried on. **Checks in with self** throughout, goes with the flow, accepts what is, and adapts.

Celebrates – said 'yes' to herself and punched the air with right fist.

My Tai Chi teacher has many metaphors for life and she is amazing at mirroring and asking herself what the learning in any challenging situation is. This has been developed through adversity.

What my Tai Chi learnt from the experience

For her it was more of a confirmation than a learning. A confirmation that we are only given what we can deal with and that every situation gives us an opportunity to grow. There are no negatives just opportunities. My favourite quote by my Tai Chi teacher is, 'if you don't listen to your body or life when it is crying out for change, life will give you something to make that change!'

Idol's Strategy

Stacey Copeland was my 'stretch' exemplar. I had seen her speak at an event and was amazed by her passion, motivation, resilience, and drive to empower women.

Method of modelling used: Conversation on Zoom about a moment in time using clean questions.

I had recalled a moment from the speaker session she had given about being picked for the women's England football team and her boss being reluctant to give her the week off.

As Stacey went back to that moment, I could tell from her body language it was not a great experience for her. It should have been as she had just been called up to play for England. Before receiving the letter, she had previously failed to make the squad. Using her belief that if someone can, anyone can, she went away and watched and learned from videos of professional footballers and practiced until she knew she was good enough. Finally, she received a letter with the three lions on and was ecstatic. When she got to work, she could see that there were already too many people off that same week and her boss was unlikely to let her take it as holiday. Believing **there is always a way**, she used her internal dialogue to **look at options** and decided that if he wouldn't allow her to take unpaid leave, she would quit as it was too important to miss, and she could always find another job. As she entered the room all excited to be showing him the all-important letter, she'd received his response of 'why would you want time off for that' left her feeling deflated and the total opposite of the euphoria she had been feeling. He let her take unpaid leave and she he never told anyone at work about her amazing opportunity! That conversation had a massive impact on Stacey, and you could see this in her body language as she spoke about it. She looked deflated. It reminded her of all the stereotypes she had fought and was still fighting. She had shaved her at school, so she did not stand out playing on a boys' team. She had felt there was something wrong with her as she wanted to do something that was not seen as 'normal' for girls. Her sexuality had been questioned and she felt like everyone was trying to put her back in a box that she did not want to be in.

Pure determination and resilience got Stacey through and she broke the mould and when injury left her unable to play football anymore she turned to boxing becoming Commonwealth super-welter-weight champion and fought for women to be given the same opportunities as men and campaigning for woman to be awarded an official boxing belt.

In order to move past unhelpful attitudes, myths, perceptions, and adverse situations she would use **visualisation and internal dialogue** to pick herself up and look at her options to enable her to take action. She did this throughout her career and continues in her quest to empower others through her charity work and by example. As she talks passionately about her empowerment quest, she is energised, animated and speaks quickly. She oozes with confidence and passion and is still a force to be reckoned with even out of the boxing ring!



Idols strategy for action

Visualizes action- Playing football no matter what.

Reasons and outcomes – following her dream, watched endless videos of the England team and trained hard to become good enough to be given this opportunity.

Identifies risks/obstacles - No holidays available to take on the Rota at work. Boss might not let her take time off.

Steps back and considers options-

Steps back from the Rota board and sees and feels the options in her mind/body.

- Not having time off (not an option, dismisses immediately)
- Unpaid leave
- Quit job
- Get another job

3 options felt ok - following her dream is more important to her and she told herself, she could get another job.

Checks in with gut instinct – nervous, scared, excited, happy to do what it takes,

Does it -tells herself she's got a plan so it will be ok'. Spoke to boss, took unpaid leave.

Adapts - Setback - Boss didn't understand why she would want the time off to play 'women's football for England' – left deflated, a learning opportunity.

Celebrates – Get to play football, jumped for joy inside.

Stacey has a strong belief that if someone can, anyone can. She looks for and grabs opportunities and can change state to feel better and that usually involves taking action to help someone else– win, win. She believes life is a gift and we can deal with whatever comes our way.

What my Idol learnt from the experience

Stacey is more aware that she uses setbacks as opportunities.

Cousin

I always love being in my cousin's company. She is calm, courageous, down to earth, has a real positive energy and ability to go with the flow and adapt to whatever life throws at her. To find out more about how she takes action I invited her to our home for a conversation.

Method of modelling used: Conversation in person about a moment in time using clean questions (notes taken)

My cousin is such a breath of fresh air and the conversation could have gone on all day. I found myself asking very few questions only speaking to get her to elaborate on a feeling or for clarification. Her openness and trust in herself and others is refreshing and I learnt so much from her and her attitude to life. I wish I had recorded the session so that I could have been more present.

As soon as my cousin arrived the way she processes the world was apparent in her body language and her first few sentences. She arrived a little late and came in as composed and as vibrant as ever. She owned it. She had accidentally taken the scenic route whilst driving her son's car. Her new car unexpectedly was not ready. Many would have cancelled or postponed the meeting. As luck would have it (not for her son) her son broke his arm the day before and therefore could not drive leaving his car available for the journey. The fact her son had broken his arm may have been reason enough to postpone. That option did not even cross her mind. As I expressed my concern and shock that she was standing in front of me considering the circumstances she said, 'he can call me if he needs me'. He had shown this on the evening he broke his arm, he could have phoned his mum to come and get him yet he decided not to worry her and picked himself up, made a make-shift sling and pushed his bike to the front door where he rang the bell to be let in. She was not surprised at the fact her son chose not to call her in his hour of need knowing full well that he had all the resources he needed within himself to deal with the situation he found himself in. She trusted that he would make the best decision for himself at the time and should he have required help before being unable to use his key to get through the door her would have asked. There was no panic as they assessed his injuries wondering if they needed to bother the already overstretched NHS during the pandemic. As my cousin recounts the evening, she appears light and humorous as if it was no big deal. And it was not to her. Worry was present but only for a moment, as she told herself that going down the road of worry is not helpful. In this moment she demonstrated going with the flow, trust in others and herself, inner confidence and a strength of character that led me to want to know more about how she does what she does.

Her journey to becoming this person that lights up the room as she enters and making everyone, she meets feel comfortable and relaxed is not one without bumps along the way and it is arguably those bumps that have shaped the amazing woman she is today. She had grown up with an alcoholic single mother and had used all her resources to survive the years of turmoil. She has taken from that experience valuable life lessons and beliefs that helps her navigate the world today.

The moment I was interested in this project was what was it that made her give up a prestigious, highly paid job and relocate to rural Spain. The answer was that they wanted quality family time and as she **saw scenarios playing out as a silent colour video** in her head of family time at the beach, lake, countryside, being with Spanish families she knew in her gut that was what she wanted, and she **smiled to herself**. Her life lessons and beliefs enable her to navigate through the many obstacles (not that she sees them as this) with ease. When it is something, she wants or something she is going to do a scenario immediately appears as a video in her mind and if it is ok with her, she smiles to herself and when the scenario she sees in the video isn't ok for her she gets a **sinking feeling in her tummy** and the video immediately fades away and changes into another option. When it is a scenario she likes, she acts, and the video keeps playing and changing in a part of her mind until she is close to her 'pink fluffy imaginary world' (as her husband calls it). When considering her options she said to herself that they could always come home if it doesn't work out.

Their move to Spain wasn't all plain sailing, they had a language barrier 2 children and she knew she would need to find a friendship group and work to be content in Spain. My cousin is very resourceful and is ok living outside her comfort zone. She has an inner confidence, self-belief and constant video scenarios appearing, that enabled her to imagine meeting new friends which she did through joining exercise classes that then led to a job opportunity on the local radio station and teaching.

Driven by the desire for more quality time with her family they had many happy years in Spain until the economic crisis that meant that her husband then had to go further afield for work leaving her lonely and bringing up the children mainly on her own. This was away from what she wanted and not acceptable to her, therefore, she imagined new scenarios that would work for her and her family and put **steps in place** to make it possible to move back to the UK. When making these decisions she **puts her negative emotions to one side** so she feels better and can act and make decisions with a clear head. Changing something in order to do what is right for her and her family is something she has mastered and has demonstrated on so many occasions.

My cousin has many principles she lives by and is appreciative of all the opportunities and joy that life has to offer:

- Never Dwell
- Don't pry
- Let it go - some things are not important enough to warrant taking it further.
- Do not try to control others. Everyone has the resources to help themselves.
- Ask questions to get information, find out more before advising.
- Belief that she can handle anything.
- Grabs opportunities that fit.

Cousin's strategy for action

Decides on action- What is important to me, does this get me closer? (Quality family time) – moving to Spain

Sees it - Video scenario being in Spain appears. (calmer way of life, experience another culture)

Feels it - Uses gut to check if right, nervous, scared, excited, smiled at the thought/vision and happy to do what it takes. (visited Spain to get a feel for it - excited, optimistic)

Identifies risks/obstacles - Might not like it. Finding friends, language barrier

Steps back and considers contingency plan -

options-

Tells herself...

- they can always come home.
- Can join clubs to make friends.
- Can learn Spanish

Checks in with gut instinct – smiles at options.

Acts - takes action and goes with it (sell up, buy plane tickets, start adventure)

Celebrates – enjoys calm feeling with a glass of wine!

A couple of phrases that came up during our conversation....'let it be' and 'Just do it'



What my Cousin learnt from the experience

Our conversation has made her more conscious of her reactions and even more chilled. She briefly questioned if she 'cared enough' by not overreacting to more serious situations. Paula was unaware she was viewed as someone that takes life in her stride. When she informed those close to her, they confirmed this too!

Boss

My Boss is a Director of a successful SME. He has challenging situations to deal with regularly yet is able to switch his state from serious to playful using humour even during stressful situations. I was interested to find out how he does this.

Methods of modelling used: Conversation in person and on the phone about a moment in time using clean questions (notes taken) and Observations over 10 years

Conversation in person about a moment in time using clean questions

This was a short conversation as time limit was limited, some clean questions didn't work as well as with the others and led me to elaborating and asking in a different way. The information gleaned and a phone call to ask more filled in the gaps. Observing him over the last 10 years was useful too as I was able to see the changes he has made and the new beliefs he's formed over the years and he's grown in confidence.

The moment was what exploring how he decided to set up his own business at age 25 following redundancy. He spoke passionately about the time, looking up when recalling the memories. Believing that there is always a way and trusting in himself and his abilities he started his own business. This decision came about after considering his options that had included relocating to Australia. He was also offered other jobs. After seeing and hearing about other successful entrepreneurs something inside told him he could make a go of a business, he told himself 'if someone can, I can'. After seeing his mum and dad working and struggling financially, he wanted more for his family. He was encouraged by fellow colleagues and when his now business partner decided to get on board, he really believed they could make this work. His support and years of experience meant he felt he had a 'safety cushion' and was not alone. It was a risk especially with a pregnant wife and mortgage to pay, but it was a **calculated risk**. He would imagine scenarios, like **playing out a TV series in colour in his head** to prepare himself for every eventuality, which he admits now was exhausting and contributed to many sleepless nights. After three weeks they had 100k worth of work with no staff or finance. He is very resourceful so asked around and approached other staff that had been made redundant to build a workforce. When they won more work and were unable to finance that he knew they would **find a way**. Factoring was mentioned in a conversation and the rest is history. 10 years later the business is turning over 3 million a year. His purpose was/is to be able to provide for himself and family and that his family will be able to do as they chose comfortably.

He has the ability to switch to a more positive state and bounce off others making situations light and funny for himself and others. When taking action, the following come into play.

- Self-care (balancing work and exercise, quality time with family)
- Trust in self and others
- Good rapport and communication
- If I know I have got a plan I can put it out of my mind.
- Self-belief
- Always a way out
- Look for the positives
- More honest with self and others
- Deal with stuff head on, don't let things build up
- Explore options

When something **feels 'right'** he gets a **bullish, pumped up feeling** in his stomach that travels through his body to his head that says 'that's right' and his **whole body feels great**, he goes with it and he uses internal dialogue to coach himself. When something **isn't right butterflies appear in his stomach** and they fly all around his body, his **heart sinks** and his head says 'no that's stupid'. Instead of playing out every negative worst-case scenario in his head he is able to let it be by **pushing negative emotions down into his legs and out of his body** which has led to less stress and a more positive outlook.

Boss' strategy for action

Visualizes action – setting up own business – see's a TV series of scenarios in his head.

Reasons and outcomes – better work/life balance in long run, a challenge.

Builds Clarity and calculates risks - watching scenarios on the TV in his head, talking to others, talking through options in his head

Internal dialogue

- Can generate work with help from Partner
- Didn't have redundancy money before
- Can get another job if it doesn't work

Steps back to make plans –

Imagines himself sat in a quiet place and plays different scenarios on the TV in his mind.

- Finance options
- Staff that have also been made redundant
- Factoring for money

Checks in with gut– tells himself, yes, I can do this, and he feels bullish and pumped up and his body feels great.

Cracks on with it – takes first step and registers the company on Companies' House.

Celebrates – smiles and jumps around

What my Boss learnt from the experience

Before our conversation my boss held the belief that he makes rash decisions, this process made him consciously aware that a lot goes on before he decides to take action.



Friend

We met on the first day of our first NLP course. I was struck by her kindness and humour and since getting to know her I am blown away by her self-trust and doer attitude.

Method of modelling used: Conversation on Zoom about a moment in time using clean questions (recorded/video)

Being able to watch this back was great and it really enabled me to capture her non-verbal communication and essence of the conversation. She was great at recalling her moment with animation and humour.

She had worked very hard to become an accountant. Her determination got her through the tough exams and she quickly worked her way up the ladder in the corporate world. She loved the developing people aspect of her job, however, with less and less time to do this she eventually decided that the blue-chip company she was working for no longer matched her core beliefs and values. So, what was it that enabled her to make the decision to leave and do something more in line with her purpose?

Burn-out was the catalyst and realizing that the culture of the company was something that would take a long time to change she decided she wanted and visualized a more balanced life for herself and her young family doing something that she loved. Using **internal dialogue**, she looked at her strengths and the bits of her job she had enjoyed and concluded that she loved developing people.

In that moment she knew in her **gut** that something needed to change and went about figuring out what would need to happen for the change to take place. She had saved up some money so knew that she could have some time off to retrain and this gave her the **security blanket** she needed to let go of a job that was no longer serving her.

As she recalled the memory she looked up to the left and her demeanor was subdued as she explained that she recognised that burn-out made that decision easier. **Visualising** what it was she wanted and using her internal dialogue to **calculate the risks** of staying she was able to make the unconscious, conscious, and is continuing to get better at making decisions as a result. In the past she would take ages to make a decision.

Her pattern of overcomplicating things would lead to overwhelm and a lot of effort that was not needed. Her old fear of failure belief made her believe that if being more detailed would mean there is less opportunity to fail and this led to exhaustion and procrastination. She has learnt to **trust in herself** and do what she can in the time she has. As she spoke about the moment she decided to leave and move forward to become a coach she became more animated and energetic. She explained that her new belief no failure, only feedback, there is only learning and developing self-trust led to simplifying things, being more strategic and less detailed when appropriate which in turn has led to taking action more quickly and ultimately enabled her to take the leap from the corporate world to one that is more in line with her beliefs and values. She is a self-confessed recovering perfectionist!

As soon as she made that leap, her passion and humour that had dimmed returned.

Knowing her non-negotiables and finding what fulfils her and making time for self-care is what changed. She is able to use self-talk to help her navigate through life:

- 'Shake it off'
- 'Why is that important to you?'
- 'Let go of control'
- 'Stay in a positive space'
- 'Remember self-care'
- 'Let it be'

Friends' strategy for action

Decides on action- leaving job.

Imagines it – sees a time when her job matches her values.

Identifies risks/obstacles - burn out by not leaving

Steps back and considered a safety blanket and options -

- Save up money
- Identify skills
- Job options – retraining as a coaching

Checks in with gut instinct – feels ok in her stomach and heart

Puts plan in action – saves up money, starts training as a coach and quits job.

Celebrates – laughs and smiles



What my friend learnt from the experience

She is more aware of her inner dialogue and that she is able to change it from negative to positive.

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