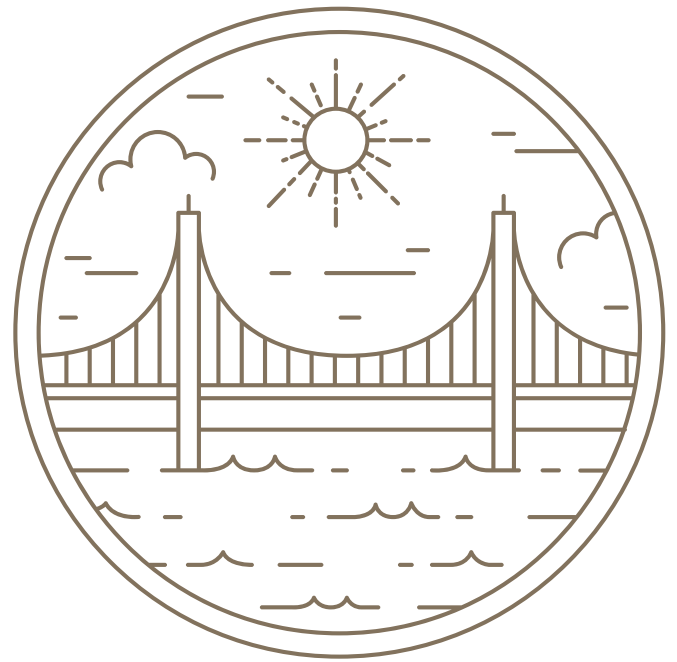


# Future Self Intervention



## Create and Envision Your Own Future

### Instructions

Options are provided to develop a future as an imagined vision, a movie, or a book. Distancing strategies are also included. Using creative art modalities (colored pencils, markers, paint, clay, collage, etc) will deepen the felt sense of the Future Self. This can also include web-based programs like Canva and Mind Movies. This intervention is to be developed over several sessions and each time using a different art modality can enhance the future goals. Therapists can record details on this document and the client can use the Future Self Storyboard to record their future and their steps along the way.

**Words in bold are therapist guides.**

*Italicized words are therapist scripting.*

Boxes are for therapist notes.

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The first part should be done in a slow, steady, invitational voice, as a way to guide the client to begin to slow down, settle their nervous system and enter a comfortable place in their mind. This may take a few moments for the client to find comfort by adjusting their surroundings. For example, settling in their chair, having cushions, blanket, lying down, blinds lowered, and taking some slow deep breaths. The client can hold a special item in their hand, smell soothing scents, and if possible lowering or closing their eyes. Or if desired, the client can be engaged in a grounding creative arts activity.

## Future Self Introduction:

*In these last few sessions, I have gotten to know your strengths and your present struggles. We have talked about your thoughts and feelings regarding the past and things going on inside of your mind, heart, and body. What if today we try something different and look into your future? I know it might be hard to think about that right now with everything going on in your life.*

## Beginning to Dream:

*I want to ask you about what your life might be like or could be like. Let's spend some time creating your dreams and future goals and steps along the way. Close your eyes, if this feels comfortable to you and begin to go inside. As you begin to dream, your future can be anything you want it to be. You get to be the designer of your future goals and a creator of your future dreams. You can manifest your future in any way you want!*

## Offering Choice:

*Let's talk about how you want to design your future? We could explore your future vision by telling me the details, or you can be a filmmaker and imagine a movie or you can be a writer and an author of a book?*

**Option 1 (Vision):** *Let's imagine that I can see a vision of your future. (Optional Distancing Strategy: Let's imagine that I see the future of a \_\_\_\_ year old.)*

**Option 2 (Movie):** *Let's imagine I am watching a movie about you. (Optional Distancing Strategy: Let's imagine I am watching a movie about a \_\_\_\_ year old.)*

**Option 3 (Book):** *Let's imagine I am reading a book about you. (Optional Distancing Strategy: Let's imagine I am reading a book about a \_\_\_\_ year old.)*

**The therapist and client can make a choice as to how to proceed with the versions above. Three options are provided and one should be picked for consistency throughout the intervention. If a distancing strategy is used, continue to use it throughout the intervention for consistency.**

## Time Frame:

*I will need your help to fill in the details. Let's say that 6 months, (1) (2), (5), (10) years from now—how old will you be?*

**Therapist helps make the decision of how many years.**

## Client's Struggles:


**The therapist can offer options to utilize creative arts modalities for the next part.**

**It's important to get details but important to not overwhelm the client with too many problem behaviors.**

## Past Struggles:

*Some difficult things happen to this person. The \_\_\_\_\_-year-old is not doing well and having some struggles. What would these struggles be? You can tell me, write or draw what they would be. Examples: traumas, family problems, issues at school or work, health or mental health issues, etc.*

*Write, draw, or imagine the struggles they might be having.*



## Add Client's Problem Behaviors:

*With all of this buildup of stress, this person starts to...*

Examples: oversleep, overeat, overuse alcohol, drugs, have excessive use of TV/games/movies/social media, not doing college/school work, fighting with family, criminal behavior, or have episodes of low motivation, anxiety, depression.)

*Write, draw or imagine the behaviors.*



**Add Client's Beliefs:**

*They have all sorts of thoughts...*

Examples: I am not good enough, smart enough, worthy, I cause problems, etc.

*Write, draw, or imagine the thoughts they might be having.*




**Add Client's Emotions:**

*They have all sorts of emotions...*

Examples: feeling worried, sad, anxious, angry, hopeless, etc.

*Write, draw, or imagine the emotions they might be having.*



**Add Client's Body Sensations:**

*They have all sorts of sensations in their body...*

Examples: headaches, stomach problems, numbness, etc.

*Write, draw, or imagine the body sensations they might be having.*



## Vision Continues:

*So as the stress and feelings keep piling up inside, more bad things happen,...they feel worse and worse and the future doesn't look so good for this person. It's hard to watch (a hard movie to watch, a hard chapter to read). I am not sure I can keep going...*

*Then, one day, something happens and this adult/teenager/character decides to dream again. They want good things and want a different life. They want to pursue their dreams and goals.*

*In this vision/movie/chapter, they start doing some positive things. They do more and more good things that help them get to their future goals. And \_\_\_years later they look back and can't believe what they went through! Their life is better and their dreams and goals are actually real!*

*If you can, look through the eyes of the future self and tell me what you see? In \_\_\_ months/years, what is life like? What does your future self see you doing? (Distancing Option: What is the 25 year old's life like?)*




## Storyboard:

**If the client has a preliminary idea, write it down or use an art modality. Then proceed to ask the following questions to strengthen and embody the future self. If some hesitation and resistance, the therapist should be sensitive and normalize the strong negative beliefs. This is an opportunity to invite the client to visually create their negative belief barrier.**

## Negative Belief Barrier:

*Can you draw or write all the negative thoughts or strong emotions that are coming to your head right now?*



## Optional Questions:

**These questions are designed to help the client get a stronger, more vivid image of their Future Self. The list is not exclusive and therapists can formulate their own questions to support the process. Introduce the storyboard to the client so you or them can record the details.**

### School/College:

- *Are you graduating from high school/college? Is there a ceremony? A graduation party?*
- *What college are you going to? What is your major? Do you have an internship? Study abroad?*
- *What knowledge or skills have you gained?*

### Career/Work:

- *What would you be doing for a living? Are you self-employed? Do you have employees? What company/business/store/team?*
- *What hours do you work? Do you work inside, outside, at different locations? Do you travel for work?*

### Wealth/Finances:

- *How much money are you making?*
- *What is your bank balance?*
- *What investments do you have?*

### Living/Home/Transportation:

- *Where are you living? On campus or off campus? Do you have roommates?*
- *In a city, country, suburbs?*
- *Do you live in your own house or an apartment? How many rooms? Can you describe it?*
- *How is your home decorated? Do you have plants, art?*
- *Do you take public transportation? Drive? What kind of car? What color?*

## Optional Questions Continued:

### **Relationships:**

- *What relationships do you have in your life? Who are the most important people in your life? Is anybody living with you?*
- *Who do you trust? Who do you feel comfortable with? Who do you have fun with?*
- *Do you have friends? What are they like?*
- *Do you have a spouse/romantic partner, then: What's he/she like? Are you married?*
- *If kids, then: How many? Boys or girls? What age?*
- *What is your relationship like with all of them? How do you act or show up?*
- *Do you have animals? What kind? How many? Names?*

### **Activities/Hobbies:**

- *How do you spend your time? How do you spend your money?*
- *Dinners with friends, travel, vacation, walk the dog, sports, etc*
- *What else do you own? Camera, Instruments, Boat, motorcycle, ski's, kayaks, bikes, second home?*
- *Do you make art? Write poetry? Make music?*

### **Physical Health:**

- *How is your health?*
- *How is your sleep?*
- *What kind of food are you eating?*
- *Are you exercising? Walk? Yoga? Weightlifting? Cycling? sports? Gym? Run marathons?*
- *How do you take care of your physical health on a daily basis?*

### **Emotions/Mental Health:**

- *What is your emotional state of mind?*
- *What is your primary emotion?*
- *What are you doing for self care? Coping skills?*
- *How do you take care of your mental health?*

### **Spirituality:**

- *What spiritual or religious practices support you? Prayer? Meditation? Reading? Singing?*
- *Are you part of a spiritual or religious community?*
- *Do you have a daily spiritual and religious practice?*

### **Service/Giving Back:**

- *How do you make the world a better place?*
- *Do you serve your community? Help others? Volunteer? Take action for a cause? Advocate? Protest?*

*Would you like to add these details to your storyboard?*

## Develop the Final Scene:

**Develop the final scene, final picture, final chapter with details.**

**Include Time, Place, and Action.**

**Option 1 (Vision):** *It's the final scene of your vision. I am looking at an impressive scene. I am thinking, "Wow, I am so happy it turned out this way!" What do I see? What are you doing? What is happening? (Distancing option: What would it be for that teen/adult in this vision?)*

**Option 2 (Movie):** *The movie is almost over, and we are getting to the last scene —you know the last picture, when the music's playing and the credits are rolling?—I'm smiling, and I am saying, "Wow, I am so happy it turned out this way!" So tell me, if this was your movie and things go the way you wish they would, what would your life be like in that last scene? (Distancing option: What would it be for that teen/adult in this movie?)*

**Option 3 (Book):** *We have come to the end of your book with only one chapter left, and I am smiling and saying "I am so happy at how it all turned out!" What would the last chapter say? What would I be reading? (Distancing option: What would the last chapter be like for that teen/adult in this book?)*

### **Additional Questions:**

Time: *What time of year is it? What is the season? What is the date? What time of day is it?*

Place: *Where are you? What is surrounding you? What do you see, smell, hear, touch?*

Action: *What are you doing? What are you feeling? What does your body feel like?*

*Take some time and add this to your storyboard. Or you can use any modality you want to represent your good ending.*

### **Creative Arts Expression:**

*Take some time to add this to your storyboard - you can then use any modality you would like to represent your good ending.*

### **Positive Beliefs/Affirmations:**

*What words do you want to say to yourself, such as: "I can do this!", "It will happen!", "I will make it!" "My future self will come true!"*

**Include details of Time, Place and Action. Include emotion, body sensation and positive phrase.**



## Eye Movements/Butterfly Hug/Tapping In :

*Okay, now I'm going to ask you to do a concentration exercise. I'll be asking you to concentrate on the final vision, scene in the movie/last chapter of the book. Notice the feelings, where you feel it, and your positive statement. Ready? (BLS) Were you able to concentrate on everything? Okay, let's try again.*

**Repeat another time or two until the client is able to hold the picture reasonably well.**

## Steps Along the Way to Reach the Vision:

**This part of the intervention guides the client in identifying the next steps to reach their dream/goal. The client can represent this visually using the storyboard, collage, drawing, or any other form of expression. The client then pairs this with the same positive cognition/affirmation or strengthens the belief with the options below.**

**It is recommended to use additional sensorial and bodily experiences to enhance the positive associations with the steps. It is also recommended to organize the steps chronologically.**

*The thing is, the future vision/this movie/ this book didn't just jump from the middle to the end; there were all these things that happened along the way to get there. So, tell me, if this was your vision/movie/book, what would need to happen for you to get to your dream? What would we see you doing tomorrow, next week, next month, next year?*

Tomorrow

Next Week

Next Month

Next Year

## Enhance the Vision:

**In this step you enhance the vision and next steps by including Cognition/Affirmation, Song, Posture, Object, and Scent.**

### **Add in Positive Cognitions and/or Affirmation:**

**This is an opportunity to enhance the positive belief that was obtained earlier in the script.**

*What positive words might fit best with your future vision? Maybe something like, I can do it, I will go after my dream, I am transforming my life, I am successful, I am in complete control of where my life goes, I am open to change, I deserve a good life, I am worthy, I can do it, I move closer to my goals every day, I am an inspirational example to others, Every day, in every way, I am getting better and better.*

### **Song to go with the Future Vision :**

*What song reminds you of your dreams?*

### **Posture to go with the Future Vision :**

*Is there a physical posture that you can do to remind you of your dreams? For example, superwoman/man, mountain pose (arms/hands straight up in the air), or any other posture or movement that fits best for you?*

### **Object/Scent to go with the Future Vision :**

*Is there an object and/or scent that can remind you of your dreams?*

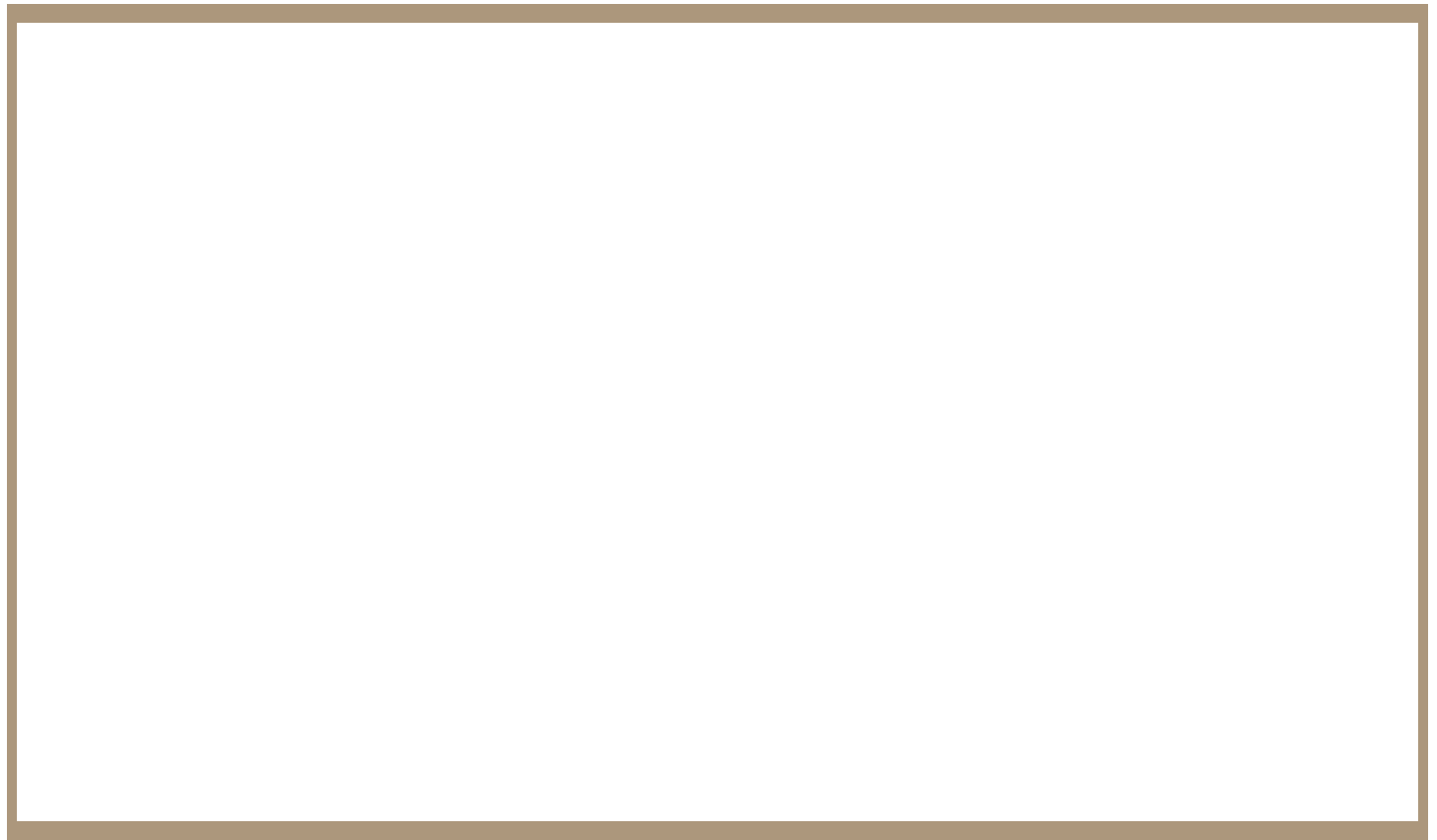
## Imagining the Whole Vision (Butterfly Hug, Eye Movement, Tapping):

*While I am doing (BLS) I want you to view the whole vision/movie/book through the eyes of your future self. Looking through your eyes, see your future from today all the way to that good end. You can say it out loud, or to yourself. Remember to say your positive statement.*

**Additional options: The client can look at the storyboard, hold the posture, hold the object, smell the scent, or sing/hum the song.**

*How did it go? What happened in the vision? (Do 2x's)*

## **The Final of the Vision/Movie/Book with Affirmation, Song, Posture, Object, Scent:**



## Strengthening the Final Vision :

**The therapist can continue to strengthen the final version over the course of treatment. For example, the client can complete the storyboard and then in additional sessions, make a collage or use Canva or Mind Movies to further enhance the future self-vision. With each additional creation, installing the vision with BLS is recommended.**

## Connecting Present Self to Future Self:

**Inviting Connection:** *Can you and your future self have a conversation? What does your future self want to say to you to encourage you towards your goals? What can your future self say to you when you are discouraged or doing a behavior that might get in your way?*

## Client's Strengths, Skills, Supports, Attributes: Optional

**This is the opportunity for the therapist to work with the client on identifying their skills, strengths, talents, supports, and positive attributes. Add in already claimed successes.**  
*What strengths, skills, supports, successes, and talents do you have to make your future happen?*

## Challenges and Obstacles (The Old You): Optional

*What is limiting you and getting in the way of your future self?*  
*In the vision/movie/book, what gets in the way of you going towards this dream?*  
*What's the biggest worry/challenge?*  
*Let's look at your attitudes, beliefs, patterns, emotions, struggle with self-care, sabotage, etc.*