



PLAN CONCEPTION WORKSHEET

PURPOSE: *Up to this point in the DISCIPLINE STRATEGY® process, you have used a lot of hard work, logic, and research to prepare to conceive your plan. Now you must integrate all you have learned in order to make a plan that will support your decision. This requires abstract and creative thinking. This guide will help you step through the process - no matter where your decision is taking you.*

<p>Develop a roadmap</p> <p>COMPLETED</p> <input data-bbox="94 699 191 800" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Your roadmap consists of two items. First, write a one page summary that describes how you are going to go from decision to accomplishment. This is a general statement, a guiding document. It does not have to include details that may change (specific methodologies or timing) but should state a clear path that you can follow to reach your goal. See the DISCIPLINE STRATEGY® book, Chapter 4: Conceive, for an example. Imagine that you have told a friend, I am going to _____.” And your friends asks how are you going to do that? This one pager is your answer. For now, jot down notes, below, that will support the creation of this document. Later create the one page document. This is worth the investment of your time and you should seek some feedback from a friend or advisor.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p>
<p>Create an action plan that anticipates challenges and poses solutions</p> <p>COMPLETED</p> <input data-bbox="94 1461 191 1562" type="checkbox"/>	<p>You need to develop two types of action plans. The first is a general life schedule that shows where all the activities and pieces of the puzzle fit into your life. This plan may have top level schedules, diagrams, pictures, or anything that supports a specific routine, set of habits, ways of doing things that will allow you to take all the actions necessary to support your plan. You may include specific day by day top level schedules, such as what time you wake up, when you focus on certain aspects of the plan, how your job or other responsibilities fit, and where the big allocations of time that support your plan will be placed in your schedule.</p> <p>During this exercise, you have to anticipate where the challenges are going to be and deal with them. This should force you to make choices and prioritize. If you need 4 hours a day for your plan, then you may have to give up other activities. Stretch what you envision you can do, but also keep a dose of practicality. A good focus for this exercise is the seven days of the week. Sketch out, as shown in Chapter 4 of the DISCIPLINE STRATEGY®, a top level day by day schedule.</p> <p>Second, every week, I suggest on Sunday afternoon, you need to develop a plan for the following seven days. Unlike the top level action plan discussed above, you should look at the uniqueness of the week, what is required, where the challenges are, and make a very specific plan for what you will do and when you will do it. The DISCIPLINE STRATEGY® journal page (Chapter 1) is an excellent document for this purpose. You can download the journal page from www.DISCIPLINESTRATEGY.com, print as many as you need, and insert into a loose-leaf notebook.</p>

Choose stepping stones

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Stepping stones vary in accordance with the intended goal. I like the analogy of a pilot flying across the country. When he plans his journey, he expects to cross certain points at certain times. If these points aren't reached as expected, then he knows that something is not right and evaluates the situation. This can happen even when you think everything is going as planned. Your job is to determine appropriate stepping stones or checkpoints on the way to your goal.

Look at where you are now and where your decision is going to take you. Consider the research you have completed, your roadmap, and your action plan. Now decide the stepping stones you want to hit. Be specific with metrics that can be measured. What will be accomplished by specific dates. Sketch this out below.

Create an atmosphere of accountability

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You need to be held accountable for your decision, progress toward your goal, and commitment to your plan. There are three ways to create accountability. Decide how you will do each of these:

1) Make a public declaration of what you have decided to do. This can be done using social media, an email to a group of friends and family, or by sharing in a social group setting such as a meetup, church, work place. Write exactly what you will do to make your social declaration.

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2) Establish a regularly scheduled dialog with a mentor, friend, advisor, or coach. You will have to determine the timing that works best for you - but, at a minimum, meet monthly. Ideally, consider weekly meetings even if they are just a short phone call or skype session. Make notes below on who this will be and how you will arrange the meetings.

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3) Holding **yourself** accountable can be an effective accountability measure. Our mind is great at playing tricks on us, modifying our commitments for convenience, or forgetting details. Using the DISCIPLINE STRATEGY® Journal page will help keep a focus on your decision and goal. However, you should put in your calendar a reminder to review all of your notes and plans and to judge how you are doing. This needs to be a serious self-reflecting analysis of what is going well and what needs to be improved. This is when the action plan gets tweaked based on feedback from actually doing things. I have done a monthly review of my goals for many years - it is one of the best ways to stay on track and identify problems and threats before they become critical. Stop and go set this up NOW in your calendar. Turn on a notification so you will be reminded. I use Google Calendar for this purpose and have it setup to email me a couple of days before the end of the month to remind me to complete this review.

Prepare your mental game

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Mental toughness has a nice ring to it. But it is not a scientifically rigorous topic. However, both the military and sports psychology fields have developed techniques that can be helpful to you as you take on the mental challenges of life change. As part of the plan you are conceiving, consider how to integrate mental toughness training as outlined below.

1) Meditate. Practicing mediation is mostly about calming your mind and learning to move past thoughts and to control your response to thoughts. I suggest the Headspace app for beginners. Just search for it in your app store or Google “Headspace app.” You will start with a daily short exercise and build from there. This is very doable and worth the time invested. The skills developed will help you become more mentally tough and resilient. Go download it now!

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2) Square breathing. Square Breathing is used to calm the mind and to overcome fears. To do this, inhale for a count of four, hold the breath for four seconds, exhale for a count of four, and hold the exhale for a count of four. Do this ten times each day. You can also Google square breathing and find numerous resources and YouTube videos. Go find one now and bookmark it for later reference.

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3) Become an imagineer: Disney popularized the term “imagineering,” but the concept works well for turning visualization into a much richer, all-senses experience. This can be done early in the morning after your meditation time. Also, each night before you go to bed you can create a compelling movie in your head of you reaching your goal. This mental rehearsal will make it easier to overcome unexpected obstacles and will increase your mental toughness during difficult times. Stop for a few minutes now, where ever you are, and practice this exercise.

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4) Nurture psychological resilience: Resilience is the ability to recover from negative emotional experiences. You can nurture resilience through improvements in your own well-being. First, start a gratitude journal where you write down at dinnertime or bedtime each evening several things you are grateful for. Second, commit to five acts of random kindness each week. You can define what those acts are, small or large, but I want you to jot them down in your gratitude journal. Finally, resilience is about controlling your emotional reflexes and quickly moving back to a solid base of emotional stability. By focusing on gratitude and expressing kindness to others on a regular basis, you are training your mind to maintain a positive view of the world.

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5) Use visual cues and reminders: So much of mental toughness is training and controlling your thoughts. One way to keep your mind on track is with visual cues and reminders. This can be your one page roadmap taped on your bathroom mirror. Or, perhaps you take a snapshot of your vision board and print copies to keep in different places. I personally like quotes and I literally have several of them written on the wall of my office. You can make signs, notes, even bracelets that you find motivating reminders of your positive mental toughness and the importance of reaching your goal. Write down several ideas on how you will do this:

Re-prioritize your life

Your life is about to change significantly. In order for you to implement your plan, you will have to prioritize what is most important. Some old things, activities, and habits will have to be put at the bottom of the list. Below, give thought to the prompts and then communicate your priorities to those who may need to know. If you are ending your involvement in certain activities, communicate this to others. If you are changing your schedule and it effects some people, communicate this. Make the decision and let the world know. Don't expect everyone to be happy with your new priorities. That is ok, you are on a life changing mission!

What are your new top 5 priorities in life?

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- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

Activities I will stop doing so I have time for my priorities.

You should open up more space in your life and schedule than you may anticipate needing. The change effort you are about to undertake, no matter what it is, will take more time and mental energy than you anticipate. But you have undertaken it because you believe that the goal is significant enough to justify the sacrifices needed to get there. So make lots and lots of space. Err on the side of creating extra room in your life. List below things you will give up, activities you will stop, habits you will break, and any other ideas for creating a massive amount of space in your life for your new focus: life change!

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- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____
- 9) _____
- 10) _____