

# My hopes and dreams

*Use this resource to establish your hopes and dreams for the future.*

The following resource is divided into five sections:

1. **What are hopes and dreams?**
2. **Brainstorm your hopes and dreams**
3. **Prioritise your top 3-5 hopes and dreams**
4. **Reflection questions**
5. **What to do with your hopes and dreams**

## 1 - What are hopes and dreams?

Your hopes and dreams are essentially the things you would like to achieve now and in the future. Unlike goals however, your hopes and dreams should have more connections to other things in your life, e.g. your values and beliefs, what's important in your life or your long term direction. It is these connections that make your hopes and dreams more compelling to achieve and give them 'added value' when comparing them to a more traditional goal. As a result your hopes and dreams will ultimately be one of the most important factors in determining whether or not you make a long term change.

While simply being motivated to change is admirable, it's unlikely to be enough on its own. Unless you have a clear direction and a specific hope or dream for the future, your motivation will likely be misdirected as there will be no clear path or end point to work towards. It is ironic that people often get to a point where they are highly motivated to change, yet when you ask them exactly where they want to be in the future they are still unsure. Don't make this mistake! By establishing exactly what it is you want to do, and being clear about where you want to be, you will always be able to draw on your own motivation to change.

After all... why would you put effort into doing something that is likely going to be difficult, when you're unclear as to why you're even doing it? Think about it! Make it easy on yourself by first establishing what it is you want to do, and then secondly, after you have a clear set of hopes and dreams, put plans in place to get there.

Good luck!

## 2 - Brainstorm your hopes and dreams

Start by brainstorming all of the things you would like to do or achieve in the future. 'Future' in this context could mean months and/or years. As long as you feel it is relevant to you and the changes you want to make it will work.

A note on brainstorming: At this point don't be afraid to consider ideas that you feel are too unrealistic, or ideas you're not too sure about. Use this space to think of anything and everything you MIGHT want to do. When you complete the next section (prioritising your hopes and dreams) you can cull ideas then.

Several questions and prompts (exercise and health related) to trigger thinking have been included below:

<b>Questions</b>
<i>If you could change anything what would you change?</i>
<i>What are the things that are important to you in life?</i>
<i>What do you like doing the most?</i>
<i>What would you like to be different in your life?</i>
<i>What would you like to do more/less of?</i>
<i>Where would you like to be in 6 months or 1/2/5 years from now?</i>
<b>Prompts</b>
<i>Body recomposition (gain (x) cm in chest, lose (x) cm in waist etc.)</i>
<i>Comfort (walk without puffing, play with kids etc.)</i>
<i>Diet (eat well 6 out of 7 days, eat more of (x), portions etc.)</i>
<i>Goal weight (weigh (x) kg)</i>
<i>Health (lower cholesterol, blood pressure, heart health etc.)</i>
<i>Injury and sickness prevention and/or recovery</i>
<i>Mental health (well-being, depression, alertness etc.)</i>
<i>More energy to (x)</i>
<i>Physical events (marathon, triathlon, specific race etc.)</i>
<i>Regular exercise (maintain 3 sessions per week etc.)</i>
<i>Relationships (meet someone, get someone back etc.)</i>
<i>Role modelling (for children, friends, colleagues etc.)</i>
<i>Self-confidence and body image</i>
<i>Sex appeal and desirability (in togs, underwear, naked etc.)</i>
<i>Special occasion (weddings, holidays, reunions etc.)</i>
<i>Weight loss lose (x) kg</i>

### 3 - Prioritise your top 3-5 hopes and dreams

Review your brainstorm and choose which 3-5 hopes and dreams are the most important, relevant or valid to you. Loosely prioritise each of your hopes and dreams, starting with the most important.

When you're done, review your list then consider and record why achieving each individual hope and dream would be important to you.

<b>My top three to five hopes and dreams</b>	<b>Why is achieving these hopes and dreams important to me? How would things change or be different?</b>
<p><i>Most important</i></p>  <p><i>Not as important</i></p>	<p><i>Remember to connect your hopes and dreams with other things that are important to you</i></p>

## 4 - Reflection

Consider the work you've done on your hopes and dreams then answer the reflection questions below:

- What connections do your hopes and dreams have with your values and beliefs?
- What other benefits or positive flow on effects might arise as a result of achieving your hopes and dreams?
- Apart from you, who else would be positively impacted by you achieving your hopes and dreams? What makes you say this?
- What connections (if any) does your motivation to change have with your hopes and dreams? How could you utilise these connections to strengthen your motivation?
- What would life be like if you achieved one or more of your hopes and dreams? How would you be feeling? How might you see the world differently?
- What are you going to put in place to ensure you keep your hopes and dreams at the forefront of your mind?
- What can you put in place so that when you are thinking about doing something, or about to do something you don't want to do (not exercising or overeating for example) you remember your hopes and dreams?

## 5 - What to do with your hopes and dreams

Identifying your hopes and dreams is great, but there is more you can do to really make the most of what you have learnt about yourself. Below are some additional things you can do to strengthen the work you've done on your hopes and dreams.

### Revisit your hopes and dreams constantly

To give yourself the best chance of maintaining your motivation to change, make sure you revisit your hopes and dreams constantly. This is always important to do but it is especially important if/when you feel your motivation to change is slipping.

### Keep your hopes and dreams highly visible

In order to think about and revisit your hopes and dreams regularly, they need to be on the forefront of your mind. Forgetting about your hopes and dreams is essentially forgetting about the purpose or reason you are choosing to make changes. Getting to this point makes quitting that much easier which is exactly what we want to avoid. One way to keep your hopes and dreams visible is to put reminders in places you look at or feel regularly. Places like the fridge, your pillow, the outside of the shower door, the TV or the ceiling of your bedroom are all good places that can be used to place a visual reminder. For things you feel, try a rubber band around the TV remote, a marble in your pocket or a new key ring for your keys. Either way you need to be reminded constantly. One note if using any of the above suggestions... change them regularly so as they don't become just another thing that blends into the scenery.

### Link your hopes and dreams to your values and beliefs and to what's important to you

Linking your hopes and dreams to your values and beliefs is important if you want to achieve long term change. Doing this will strengthen and maintain your motivation to change. For example your hopes and dreams could be to lose 10 kilos and to run 10 kilometres without stopping. You could link this to your values of 'being physically fit' and 'being an active and involved parent' and to your beliefs that 'I should be able to play with my kids without puffing' and 'I need to be a good role model for my kids, part of which includes being physically fit and active'.

### Develop discrepancy between your current and desired situation

Developing discrepancy, also known as 'creating cognitive dissonance', involves identifying what you want to do or find important (hopes and dreams/values and beliefs), then holding these things up side by side against what you are 'actually doing'. For example you might tell yourself that... *"Losing 10 kg and lowering my heart age is one of my hopes and dreams, yet I'm still eating large portions of high fat food and not doing any exercise."* Essentially what you are trying to do is to create discomfort between your current position and your desired position. It's important to remember that change doesn't happen when you're 'comfortable' with life. Why would you put effort into changing a situation that you considered to be comfortable or not too bad? What developing discrepancy does is grow

any underlying gap between where you are and where you want to be and in doing so creates discomfort that will hopefully drive change.

### **Use your hopes and dreams as a filter for future behaviour**

We all have a pretty good idea when we are doing things we have told ourselves we don't want to do. For example you might have decided that you won't eat past 8:00pm every night for a week. When you get up from the couch at 8:45pm and you start looking in the pantry for food, there will no doubt be a little voice in your head saying "you said you weren't going to do this!" Most of the time, as you probably know, this voice is ignored. One way to get around this or at least give you a better chance of making the right choice, is to keep reminding yourself of your hopes and dreams. Using the same example, it might look something like this:

*8:00pm – Your deadline for not eating arrives but instead of letting it pass unnoticed you tell yourself... "Right this is it! I've promised myself that I will not eat until tomorrow. If I feel the urge I'm going to remind myself that good health, including lowering blood pressure and my heart age (hopes and dreams) is important to me."*

*8:45pm – You're watching TV when in an ad break you find yourself drifting to the kitchen. You realise what you're doing as you grab the pantry door and at this point you remind yourself of your hopes and dreams (as above) and that achieving these goals is important.*

This might not always work but it will definitely make you think more about whether or not to follow through with a specific undesired behaviour.