



Design your life—now

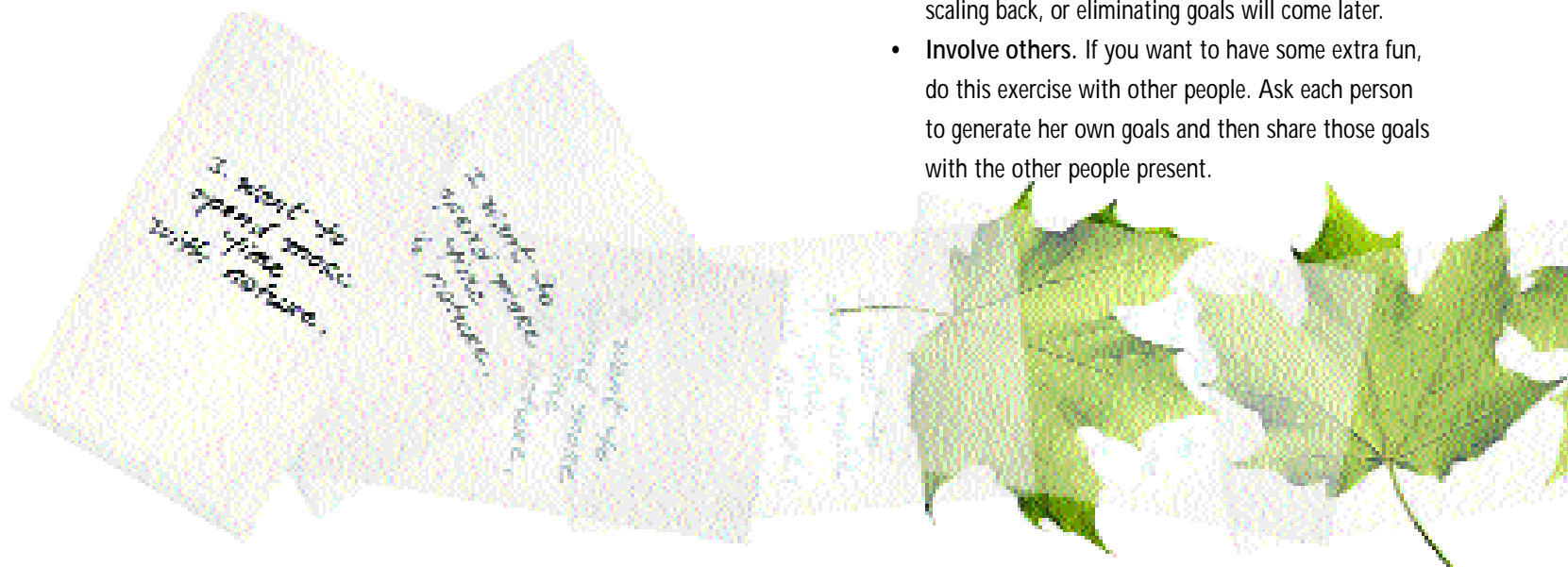
This chapter begins with an unusual request: Create a long-range, comprehensive vision for your life—right at the outset. Take a few minutes now to determine what you want for the rest of your life.

Write down what's really important for you to have, do, and be in this lifetime. If you're going to have a life of wonder and ecstasy—a life so wonderful that it brings tears of joy to your eyes—then one step is to figure out what *wonderful* means to you right now.

When I ask people what they want, they sometimes say “I don't know” or “I don't care.” This exercise can help you move beyond both responses. Use the suggestions that follow if you're feeling “stuck.” During the next few minutes, you can discover the passion and excitement involved in determining what you want.

Following are some suggested steps for designing the rest of your life.

- **Use a stack of unlined 3x5 cards.** Brainstorm as many goals for your life as you can. Write each goal on a separate 3x5 card, working quickly without stopping to rewrite. Just state something specific about what you want to have, do, or be in the future. **Note:** I recommend that you write each goal in the center of a card. Leave space in the corners so that items can be added later.
- **Think long-term.** The first goals you set might be short-term—things to accomplish within the next week, month, year, or five years. That's fine. While you're creating goals, also give some thought to the long-range future. Set goals to be accomplished within 10, 20, 50, or even 100 years from now. Be willing to create goals that extend beyond your lifetime, projects that others can take on when your life is over.
- **Don't worry about how to accomplish any of these goals.** You can create specific action plans later. Also, don't discard a goal just because it seems silly or unrealistic. The time for revising, refining, scaling back, or eliminating goals will come later.
- **Involve others.** If you want to have some extra fun, do this exercise with other people. Ask each person to generate her own goals and then share those goals with the other people present.



- **Just speak.** For another variation on this exercise, just speak your goals in the presence of another person. Ask that person to function as a supportive listener—one who will not interrupt, ask questions, or criticize any of your goals. Ask this person to write down your goals as you speak.
- **Safeguard your vision.** Put the goals you create in a safe, accessible place. One possibility is a file box for 3x5 cards.

Throughout this exercise, remember to write goals that will bring tears to your eyes and make your heart leap. Give up resignation—that idea that you might not be able to have what you want. For now, write down what you want even if you're sure you'll never get it. Write down what paradise would be for you.

Some sample goals are listed below. Remember that these are examples only—not necessarily goals for you to adopt.

Be a skilled listener.

Travel to India.

Start a consulting business.

Visit all the hot springs in the world.

Learn to play the piano.

Own a ranch in a beautiful valley.

Be more loving.

Be more physically fit.

Be funnier.

Help create an environment that will sustain life for the next 5,000 years.

Clean out my garage.

Clean out my neighbor's garage.

Stop at the store to pick up orange juice on my way home from work.

Eat a cheeseburger with coffee sometime before I die.

Build an athletic center on every Native American reservation.

Build a state-of-the-art recording studio and open it up to thousands of people for free.

Establish a foundation to give soccer scholarships to poor children.

Have a gourmet cook prepare my evening meals.

Pay for all my children's and grandchildren's education.

Give scholarships to women entering graduate school.

Grant money to people who start businesses that provide environmental or humanitarian benefits.

Have more toys.

Travel for a year throughout Africa.

Experience more sexual fulfillment.

Write full-time.

Paint full-time.

Work only six months each year.

Move to Bali and start a renewal center for social activists.

Sail around the world.

Start a buffalo ranch.

Breathe more deeply and slowly.

Start a revolving loan program

for small business owners.

Create an institute for responsible fathering.

Create cars that produce no pollution.

Eliminate barriers to worldwide trade.

