

# START WITH “WHAT,” “WHERE,” “WHEN,” AND “WHO”

To unleash your desires and determine what you want, hold off asking “*How* will I achieve this goal?” In the beginning, stick with *what*, *where*, *when*, and *who*:

- What do I want?
- Where do I want to be in the future?
- When will I make my desired future occur?
- Whom do I want to be with in the future?

There’s nothing wrong with asking the *how* question. There’s a time and place for choosing strategies to fulfill your goals. But that step comes later.

## Avoid resignation

When we begin determining what we want, questions of strategy can easily be overdone, leaving us focused on how to *control* the future instead of how to *create* it. Focusing on *how* can even drive us into resignation and keep us from taking action: “I don’t know how to meet that goal, so why even try?”

In 1960, President John F. Kennedy articulated a huge desire for his nation. He set a goal for Americans to land a person on the moon by 1970. Kennedy had a clear vision of *what* (a space landing), *where* (on the moon), *when* (by 1970), and *who* (the National Aeronautics and Space Administration) would work to meet the goal. However, in 1960 he did not know exactly *how* to achieve this long-term goal. And had he waited until NASA figured out how, he might never have spoken his vision.

When you’re clear about *what* you want, you’re more likely to discover an effective *how*. With a clear vision of the future, you can make spontaneous, moment-to-moment choices that bring you closer to your goals.

## Add details

Another benefit of focusing on *what*, *where*, *when*, and *who* is that they add detail to your vision.

There’s power in detail. Every time you eat in a restaurant, you draw on this power. When the server asks for your order, you don’t just say, “I want dinner” or “Steak, please.” You get more specific. When ordering a steak, you might say, “Rib-eye, 12-ounce, medium rare, please.” And a good server won’t let you stop there. He also asks, “Would you like salad or soup? And what would you like on your salad?” The more details you give when answering these questions, the more likely you’ll get the dinner you want.



This is what I'm suggesting you do when determining what you want: Put in your order for paradise with all the trimmings added. Serve yourself the life of your dreams by adding details to your vision for the future.

Ask two people what they want in life. One says, "I just hope to be happy, somehow." Not many details. Another says, "I want to become financially independent in 10 years so that I can devote my time to writing a novel and working with homeless people." It's not hard to guess who is more likely to realize her goals.

Right now, you can begin to bring your dreams into sharp focus. Start by asking *what*, *where*, *when*, and *who*.

## EXPAND YOUR CREATIONS WITH "HOW" AND "WHY"

Once you've gained some clarity about what you want, you can create even more details by asking two more questions:

- How will I achieve this goal?
- Why do I want to achieve this goal?

Caution: We can ask such questions in ways that erect obstacles to our goals and actually prevent us from getting what we want in life. I love to see people liberate themselves from these limiting options and discover more creative ways to ask *how* and *why*.

### Ask "how" to create multiple pathways

Asking *how* assists you in developing action plans to meet your goals.

When asking *how*, we can avoid answers that lead us to a prescription—the idea that there is only *one* way to accomplish any goal. Most goals can be reached through multiple pathways. While generating more details about what we want, we can create more precise action plans—several of them—for satisfying any desire.

For example, you might determine that you want to earn \$100,000 per year while working from your home as a freelance consultant. To meet that income goal, you could choose from several strategies. One is to charge \$50 per hour and work 40 hours per week for 50 weeks per year. Another is to charge \$100 per hour and work only 20 hours per week for the same number of weeks per year. You could also consider working more hours during the winter months so that you could take summers off and still earn \$100,000 yearly. These are just a few examples.

