



**GOOD LIFE
RECOVERY**

Take Control of Your Past, Present and Future

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What Does it Mean to Be "Present"

Being 'present' is psychologically a bad idea and actually impossible.

Why? Because the view of our present is based on our past and the view of and goals for the future.

So, the 'present' is made up entirely on your past and how you imagine your future.




How The Past Relates to the Present

If you believe that who you are in the present is based on what happened in the past, you are letting your past dictate who you are in the present.

In other words, you are using the past as an excuse or a reason to explain your present.

In fact, the present causes the meaning of the past – who you are right now, when you think of the past, it is a "reconstruction" of the past – (which is the neuroscientific definition of memory).

How we think of what happened to us is key, and sometimes we get stuck defining ourselves by that. Framing the past as a negative does not promote a positive future.



Post Traumatic Growth

Victor Frankel believed our present behaviour was determined by our goals and meanings of the future, not our past.

In fact, research shows that post-traumatic growth is possible. This is when you have pro-actively approached your past. If trauma still exists it means that you have been avoiding it.

We either approach or avoid life.

If you are avoiding your past, that means you are avoiding your present and your future.

If you are willing to approach it, with humility, openness, with gratitude and a willingness to learn from it and shape the meaning of it, looking at it from different perspectives, you are not the same person you were in the past.



Mastery Over the Past

This is Mastery over the past. Rather than devalue the experience because it was painful, we increase its value by what it taught us. How am I a better person because of this?

You can turn any experience into a gain. You develop post-traumatic growth. You have to go at it with gratitude and with an eye to learning and integrating what you learn.

When we measure our experiences against what we believe "should" have happened, we don't benefit. We evolve when we realize we are further along than we were before.

Post-traumatic growth is to acknowledge something tough happened – and we are better for it, not bitter.

"It happened for me not to me."



The Role of Gratitude

Gratitude enhances the effects of post-traumatic growth.

It acknowledges that you have more awareness, more knowledge, & more wisdom. It's when you believe that you have gained from the experience and are better off as a result.

When you have a positive psychology in the present, you have an increasingly better view of the past and a brighter and bigger future.

Mastery of your past, is transforming what happened and the lessons you learned and the gratitude you have for them. When you do this you have a positive present and a brighter future.



How the Future Works Psychologically

Most people project the present onto the future.

When actually the future is very different from the present as is your future self.

To prove the point, think about how different your present self is from your past self – from 5 years ago, 10 years ago, to before you got clean and sober.

There are no mistakes in life, just lessons. Lessons are repeated until they are learned.

We are the ones who determine how much value to get out of any experience – determined by how much more ownership we take from our past - we approach it, face it and learn from it.



Growth Mindset vs Fixed Mindset

Fixed mindset means you put a lot of stock into the past and how it dictates the present and how the present will dictate the future.

You have a rigid perspective of yourself. "This is who I am" based on what happened to me.

Psychologically flexibility – you can change your views on things, face things and move toward committed goals (like recovery).

To have Mastery over the past and future, means mastery over your identity, (the story of who you are based on what happened and how that predicts what is next).

In a growth mindset, you use your imagination to continually create purposeful futures and then operate in the present from that future self and use that future to determine how you see your past.



Growth Mindset vs Fixed Mindset

So your future becomes the frame and the filter for who you are, the friends you make, the things you do.

Research shows that those who very emotionally connected to their future selves, and who imagine and decide who they want their future selves to be, make much better decisions in the present.

Decisions in the present are made based on who you want to be in the future. The Clearer the vision, the better the decisions.

Use your future ideals as a tool in the present, not as a way to measure yourself against, and somehow diminish yourself. If you measure yourself, do it by measuring against your past self, so you can see you are always further along than you were – it's the only way to see how far you have come.

So, rather than comparing yourself against other people, or your ideals, only measure yourself backward to where you were before.



Positivity Practice

At the end of the day, rather than scroll social media, if you write down 3 things you are grateful for, not only will you be happier, you will sleep better.

Take control over your day – don't see your day as neutral or negative – pro-actively frame the day as positive; how am I better than I was, what was the gain I got, what growth did I get.

Look for gains, lessons and progress – that is what you see.

If you see that in your past, you will see it in your future.

So, take any experience and turn it into a positive.



How Does it Relate to Recovery

What do you project your future self to be regarding sobriety?

How do you see yourself with respect to ongoing use of alcohol, drugs or unhealthy behaviors?

Do you see yourself as controlling and enjoying alcohol/drugs in your future and if so, how is it affecting your present sobriety?



How is Your Past Dictating Your Present

Have you taken control of the narrative of what happened to you in a positive way? or

Do you still see yourself as a victim?

Do you think that who you were in the past is determining who you are in the future? This is a big and important question to answer.

Do you avoid thinking about this at all, resulting in stagnation in the present?



Vision and Purpose

Can you spend time creating a vision for your sober self in the future?

What would you look like, be like, who are your friends, what is your work and play?

What are the values and purpose that can drive this vision? What matters to you and how does it relate to whether you are sober or not?

Can you share what you discover with someone, so you can hold yourself accountable for post traumatic growth?