

January Activities

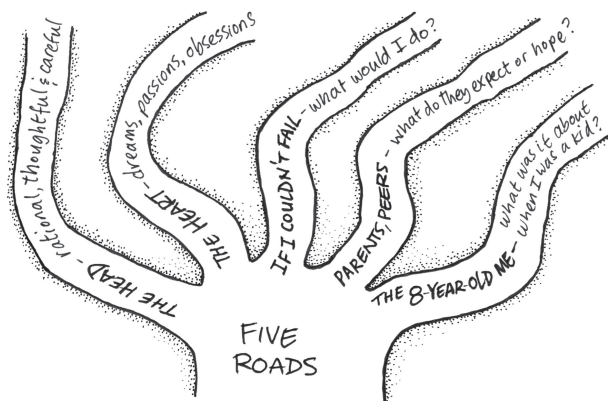
Just like September, January is one of those turning points in a year. The break gives us chance to re-focus, and to figure out what we want from the year ahead. We know there are only five months left, and that we're in complete control of what those summer results are going to look like, no matter what anyone else might tell us. This month's activities try and help you figure out what success looks like, so that you can remind yourself why you're doing this, and where it's going to take you. We've also focused on feedback this month – chances are you'll be collecting your mock exam results. If you're anything like most people, there will be results you're not happy with. Feedback becomes crucial in teaching you how to improve, yet sometimes we ignore it because we're angry or afraid.

19. Vision Activity: Five Roads

In this simple activity, all you need to do is imagine yourself at a crossroads with five possible ways forward. Each way forward represents a possible choice for you. The aim of this activity is to make those possible choices clearer. That way you can objectively review your options, which is the first step in making a good decision. Don't feel a decision has to be made yet – it doesn't. But knowing what options are in play is always helpful.

Use the image below to think about what might lie at the end of each road, and scribble some notes at the tip of each road. Make the notes as detailed as you can.

You might need to spend some time thinking about these. And it might be a good idea to begin by putting two or three options at the end of each road, and coming back to add more or cross others off as your preferences become clearer.



The Head: here, you put the choices that occur to you when you think rationally. This is the careful and thoughtful road. There will be low risk on this road – it's safe and certain. It might not be your most exciting road forward, though!

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The Heart: this road is about wholeheartedly pursuing your passions; the stuff that makes you excited and that you would willingly spend time on doing for free. This might be a riskier road, with greater levels of uncertainty, but you'll be fired-up as well as slightly fearful as you travel it!

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If I Couldn't Fail: at the end of this imaginary road is guaranteed success in something. It will be a hard road to travel, and there may be tough times but it will, 100%, end in success. In other words; if you knew you couldn't fail at something, what would you choose to do?

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Parents, Peers: here, you consider what others are expecting of you. You may be surrounded by people with strong opinions; teachers, tutors, parents and extended family all telling you that you have to pursue something, or that you're a natural at something. You might, or might not, agree with them. Make a note of all the things you feel a pressure to pursue here.

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The 8 Year Old Me: if you'd done this activity in primary school, what would you have said you wanted to do in the future? Often, we find elements of our early passions still exist today – you might write something down here and suddenly remember a passion that you've forgotten, or forced yourself to ignore. Maybe it's time to revisit it. Maybe there are just parts of it that are still relevant today.

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Once you've got some ideas scribbled at the end of each road, let these ideas and thoughts develop for a few days. Consider returning to this activity more than once as the year goes on, adjusting your responses.

Final Thoughts

Don't feel you need to make a decision yet. Just knowing the possible ways forward puts you in a strong position. And when you travel a road, it doesn't mean you can never return to try another. You can!