

# Swim Out to Your Ship

...don't wait for it to come to you

Sandy Leong



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# **Swim Out to Your Ship**

...don't wait for it to come to you

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Swim Out to Your Ship: don't wait for it to come to you

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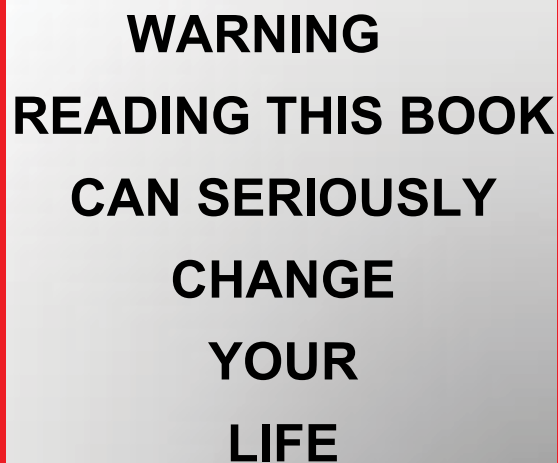
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# About the Author

Sandy Leong is a professional speaker, and published author, married to a Malaysian, spending time living and working in the UK & Malaysia. She has had a lifelong career as an educator and developer of people; she works as a trainer and coach, running personal development programmes and management development programmes for a wide variety of people.

She is a qualified teacher, past CEO of a Racial Equality Council; Guest Lecturer at Universities and Colleges of Further Education; a regular speaker at conferences; guest speaker on cruise ships; and sought after speaker for U3As, WI's, Historical Societies and other groups.

Other interests include, Chairperson of the Board of Trustees for a large Charity and Immediate Past President of Loughborough (Charnwood) Speakers Club, and an active member of the National Association of Speakers Club, holding the Advanced Speaker Award.



**WARNING  
READING THIS BOOK  
CAN SERIOUSLY  
CHANGE  
YOUR  
LIFE**

# 1 Standing on the Shore

Image yourself standing on a shoreline, looking out to sea. In the distance you can see a ship, it is a little bit hazy and not very clear, but you can just make out the outline. Imagine that the image you can see is your future. It symbolizes what you will do with the rest of your life; what you will achieve and where you will go to. What does the ship you can just about see, look like? Is it more of a rowing boat bobbing around with a look of no sense of purpose or is it a sleek yacht that needs someone to be at the helm to take it on a fabulous journey? Whatever this ship looks like you can redesign it. You can have control over the ship that you want and its' destination. It is in your power to change a forlorn looking rowing boat into a great super deluxe yacht or a great ocean liner.

What does the future hold for you if you do nothing to change it? None of us can predict our future however we can plan to make it what we want it to be. You can decide what you want your future to be and work towards having the life that you desire. It may not be an easy path but once you take control of your life it can be a very exciting one.

Did you know that you have three futures; your probable future; your possible future and your preferable future? Your probable future is where you are heading if you stay the same as you are now, doing the same things, mixing with the same people and thinking the same thoughts.

Your possible future is all the possibilities there are in the world that you could choose from, for your future, some that you may not even know about at this moment. Thinking about all these possibilities is both exciting and at the same time can be a little frightening. To think that you have so much choice can be mind blowing. Perhaps you have been brought up to think that there are only a few ways or even only one way to live your life. Many people are constrained by what parents thought they should do or be; what their schools taught them; the influences of their community and peer groups and the role models that were and are around them.

The third future is your preferable future. This is the future that you choose from all the possibilities that you can think of and during the course of working through this book, all the ones that come into your mind that you hadn't even thought of before you started to read Swim Out to Your Ship.

The possible future is your ship brought into focus, with you at the helm and a route plan chosen to sail to the life that you desire. To make this happen you need to work through this book, deciding how to design your ship; looking at the charts of the different routes you could navigate and who will be on board travelling with you.

An exciting thought? Are you ready to start your journey? Are you ready to Swim Out to Your Ship so you can see it better and begin to bring your future into focus? If you are then continue to read this book, answer the questions you are asked and complete the exercises. Take this exciting journey, design your ship, decide on its' colour, its' shape and size; and plot the charts that will take you on your journey for a life time.

Ready to jump into the water? Let's start swimming to your ship. Soon you will be ready to climb on board your own freshly designed ship and sail into your chosen life. Make sure you get the most out of reading this book by having a pen and paper near you and answering each question or doing the exercises in the order that they appear in the book.

Let's start small. If you could change one thing in your life right now, what would it be? It could be something that you have been thinking about for a while; something small or something big. It could be changing how the furniture is arranged in your bedroom or sitting room; changing your hairstyle or colour. It could be something bigger like moving house or changing jobs.

Write down the first thing that comes into your head. It doesn't matter if it is instantly achievable or perhaps even possible at this time. Write it down.



One thing I would change in my life right now is...

Don't be concerned about whether you are going to be able to make that change or even if you want to do it or not now that you have written it down.

The important thing is to start to think about change, because this book is about changing your life in either a big or small way. Some of us like change, some of us find change frightening and some of us will run away from the idea of changing anything, whether it is big or small.

Now what about a lifelong ambition? If that feels too big a word to use then how about something that you have always wanted to do? What comes into your mind? Write it down. It could be anything. Something that you wanted to do as a child; something that has always attracted you; something you have been thinking about doing for a while.



My lifelong ambition/something I've wanted to do for a long time is...

Now what about something that 'lights your fire'. What are you passionate about? What do you get enthusiastic about when you hear people talking about it or when you start thinking or talking about it?



'What lights my fire'/I'm passionate about...

Next, think of three words that you think describes you. What do other people say about you? Are you quiet, thoughtful, energetic, noisy, confident, artistic, logical, funny, caring? Write down any three words that you think describe you, not necessarily any of those written above. Then write down three words that others use to describe you. Are they the same or different?



Three words that describe me.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_ (and please don't be modest!)

Three words that other people use to describe me.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

What you have answered to these questions will have told you a lot about yourself. Already you will be thinking about your hopes and aspirations and about who you are as a person. This is the beginning of deciding what kind of ship you want and where you would like it to go.

But to be clear about the design of your ship and where it will go, you need to think about how you are going to set it on the right course for you by setting some goals.



But first let's have a look at some more broad questions.

What would you like to be?

What would you like to do?

What would you like to have?

Answer these questions by writing the down the first things that comes into your head. No thinking, 'oh, I could never do that,' or I could never have that, or I could never be like that.' Ignore all those types of thoughts and also the ones that you could hear other people say about you not being able to do that.

Just write it as it comes into your head, e.g I would like to **be** successful (at what?); I would like to **be** happy (what would make you happy?); I would like to **be** a teacher; I would like to **be** a missionary, I would like to **be** an accountant, a mother or a father, a manager.

I would like to (**do**) travel the world; bring clean drinking water to every child who hasn't got it; write a book; invent a kitchen implement.

I would like to **have** a big house; a new car; a big garden; a simple life (define it); a holiday home.



I would you like to be?...

I would you like to do?...

I would you like to have?...

Did you enjoy writing those things down? Did you find it exciting or frightening? Stating what you want out of life can often bring up the idea that you don't deserve something. If you do feel like that then get rid of those thoughts. We will be looking at the 'but I don't deserve to have...' later on, try not to think about them right now.

You have now thought about some general things that you would like to be, have and do. You have given a bit of thought to who you are as a person, what you are passionate about, interested in, maybe a lifelong ambition or something that you have always wanted to do. And you have thought about three words that you would use to describe you and three words that others might use to describe you. You have got your toe in the water ready to Swim Out to Your Ship. But to get to the ship you need to do some planning.

It is absolutely necessary to work in detail and be specific when you are planning something. Few of us would decide to go on holiday and just turn up at an airport or train station without any idea of where we wanted to go or wanted to do. We would have made a fairly detailed plan of how we were going to get there, where we were going to stay and what we would do when we arrived.

You should give your life the same attention. Often if you ask people what they want out of life they will invariably say something like health, wealth and happiness. These are general principles to live by that everybody would like. However they aren't specific enough. They need to have enough detail for you to be able to achieve these principles. It's the same as planning a holiday. It would be no good simply saying I want to go on a really good holiday without deciding what a really good holiday would be and therefore where you would go and what you would do.

So now you need to start the serious work of deciding exactly what you want your ship to look like and where it will sail with you at the helm – steering your life. It's time to start setting some goals.

When you are setting goals you need to think about them in detail and spend enough time working on them until you can actually see yourself doing, having or being in whatever it is you are working towards. If you are clear about your goal or goals then it will increase the possibility of you achieving them.



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Once you can see your goal, or your ship clearly it will make you feel that bubble of excitement in your tummy. Do you remember that feeling as a child? The day before your birthday or a big trip, something you have been wanting to happen for a while; that overwhelming excitement at its arrival. That is how you will feel when you have decided what type of ship you are going to design.

To help generate that feeling of excitement write your goals in positive language, that is, not what you don't want to do, but what you do want to do, be or have. Setting goals isn't the same as making New Year's Resolutions. The majority of people make New Years' Resolutions and then have forgotten about them or given up on them a few days afterwards.

One of the reasons that New Year's Resolutions generally fail is because they are stated in negative terms. They are usually about stopping doing something or giving something up. When you think in negative language the result is that you are thinking of what you don't want, not what you do want.

Try thinking 'I'm not going to drink any coffee or tea today' – you will find yourself thinking about coffee or tea all day and probably wanting to drink it more than you normally do!

Substitute that thought for, I'm going to drink fresh fruit juice all day because I can see myself as a healthier person without caffeine. It is more likely that you will achieve this.

When you are beginning to think about setting goals you need to believe that you can achieve it; it needs to be in the realms of your possibility, but it should be challenging, but not so difficult that you think it is impossible before you even start to work at it.

Also make sure that what you are going to be working towards is in your control and doesn't require other people to change. You cannot set goals for other people. If what you want requires other people to change in some way or do things to contribute to your goal then it isn't in your control.

As said earlier, make sure you go into as much detail as possible when you are setting your goals. Be as specific and detailed as possible when you are thinking about what you want. When you come to write down your goals then you will be writing them as if you had already achieved them, using language that describes the goal in terms of what you can see, hear, feel and sometimes even smell. You should use all of your senses.

If you decide a goal is wanting to change jobs, then this isn't specific enough. You need to build up a picture in your head of the change, be able to describe the job, where you will be working; exactly what you will be doing; what type of people you will be working with; what you will be wearing, and even what you can smell, what you will be thinking and how will be feeling whilst you are doing the job – the whole picture.

Now think about what you wrote down when you thought about what it is you want to be, do or have. What you want your ship to look like and where you want it to go. Imagine that you have achieved this. Imagine it in as much detail as possible.

When you have finished reading this paragraph close your eyes and visualise exactly what you would be doing, who you would be doing it with, what you would be wearing and where you would be doing it and what you can smell around you. By visualising something it becomes real and assists you in process of getting there.

Now sit quietly, close your eyes and take yourself to the place in the future when you have swum out to your ship and are living the life that you want.

Open your eyes, hold the picture in your head and now draw everything you saw in your head. It doesn't matter whether you can draw or not. Use stick people, add a few words as you go, and build up the picture that you saw in your head of you in your new ship sailing into the life you have designed.

If you want to set different goals for different parts of your life then do this exercise again for each goal you are setting and draw a picture for each one.



Great work so far. Take a break. Reflect on what you have thought about and written down before you start the next chapter in this exciting voyage.

An advertisement for Linköping University. On the right, two young women with long brown hair are smiling and peeking out from behind a red door frame. On the left, the text reads: 'Sweden Sverige' with the Swedish flag icon; 'Linköping University – innovative, highly ranked, European'; 'Interested in Computer Science? Kick-start your career with an English-taught master's degree.'; a blue button with a right arrow and 'Click here!'; and the 'li.u LINKÖPING UNIVERSITY' logo at the bottom.



## 2 The Swim to Your Ship

You have visualised a goal or some goals and drawn a picture of yourself having achieved your goal or goals. All goals need a plan to get there, these are called milestones. Each goal has to be broken down into milestones, smaller achievable steps that can be measured, e.g. the goal of getting a new job may have to be split down into smaller milestones of getting new qualifications or work experience first or whatever you need to do to be able to move towards getting the job you want. For each milestone you need to write an action plan or a 'to do' list breaking down the milestone into small achievable steps.

It is important to ensure that the goal(s) that you have set are 'in tune' with others e.g. your family responsibilities. It is a delicate balance between getting stuck in the 'I can't do...because my family wouldn't like it, and making sure that the people involved in your life are supportive of your goal.

You will need to think about your goals in the wider context of those people that they will have an impact on. It is said that every action has a reaction. Whatever you do will have an effect on other people. This is about looking at the advantages and disadvantages in the bigger context, of pursuing your goal and how it might affect your family or any dependants you may have and other responsibilities. There is a difference between being selfish and doing just what you want and designing your ship to make sure you have the life that you want whilst still considering the people around you who are important to you.

Let's start to develop some details about how you are going to reach your ship.



Take a blank sheet of paper.

At the bottom of the page, in the middle, write your goal, as if you had achieved it. Use the word 'I' e.g. I have my dream job at...company, doing...

Now draw a box around what you have written and then draw a straight line from the box to the top of the page. Next, at the top of sheet of paper, write the first thing you will have to do to start you on the road to reaching your goal by the side of the line and draw a box around that.

Now think about the other steps you will need to make to get you to that goal and write them on what is in effect a timeline, with your start date (today's date) at the top of the page.

When you have thought about the steps you are going to take and written them down on your line, write a realistic date in the box where you have written your goal.

Then go over the steps you have written, the milestones, and write a date next to them. At the top of the line put today's date.

Now you should have a broad plan of how you are going to swim out to your ship. Feeling excited? You will need to write an action plan or a 'to do' list under each milestone so you know exactly the steps you need to take to achieve your goal(s). Go back and complete your plan when you have finished reading the rest of this book.

Now let's think about what you are good at, your strengths that will help you to reach your goal. The things that you are needing to know more about or change. First of all think of all the things that you are good at, maybe you are able to persevere, and maybe you already know something about what you need to learn to get to your goal. What transferable skills have you got that could help you?



My strengths – the things that will help me reach my goal.

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What about the things that you aren't so good at. It is best to identify these and then you can decide how you are going to overcome them. It might be that you have a lot to learn in order to reach your goal, it could be that you are a bit of a procrastinator and will have to change your attitude, or it could be that you lack confidence and think that you don't deserve should a wonderful ship and the great journey that you are planning.



Things I'm not so good at/need to improve/change.

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It is easier to deal with things that might hinder you reaching your goal once you have identified them.

Now look at each statement you have written down about what you are not so good at, and next to it write what you are going to do about it.

Your statement – I am prone to procrastinating

What I'm going to do about it...every time I find myself saying 'I'll do that later' I will make sure I do it straight away.

You have set your goal(s) but just pause a moment and to check out that you are going to swim towards the right ship. You don't want to get halfway there and change your mind or think that it's not quite the right direction.

To do this you need look at your values as these are an important part of choosing not only the right ship but the right path for it to sail. Read through the list of values and write down any that you feel are important to you. Add any values that are important to you that aren't on the list.

Achievement	Freedom	Justice	Security
Adventure	Growth	Kindness	Self-discipline
Beauty	Happiness	Knowledge	Self esteem
Charity	Health	Leadership	Service
Community	Honesty	Love	Spirituality
Creativity	Honour	Peace	Strength
Dignity	Humility	Power	Supportiveness
Ethics	Independence	Pride	Surrender
Family	Individuality	Reason	Trust
Friendship	Integrity	Respect	Truth
Fun	Intimacy	Risk	Wisdom



The values that are important to me are...

You have probably written quite a long list of values. Now take a look at your list and choose 10 that are the most important to you.





The 10 values that are important to me are...

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....
6. ....
7. ....
8. ....
9. ....
10. ....

Now, perhaps the most difficult to do.

Choose 3 out of your list of 10. These are the 3 most important values to you, those that you will want to live your life by. These will influence the design of your ship and where you want to sail.

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My 3 most important values.

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....

It was probably quite easy to start this exercise choosing the values that are important to you and then narrowing it down to 10 and then it was perhaps more difficult to choose the top 3 values.

However where do your values come from? These values shape your world and what you do; who your friends are; what actions you decide to take and what you choose not to do. They are integral to whom you are and how you behave, even how you talk and the language you use.

Your values have been part of your growing up. What your parents and those around you have passed on to you and of course the ones you have decided as an adult to live your life by.

Your ship is coming into focus and the harder you work at answering the questions this book is asking you then you will be able to make sure that the ship you are going to sail on is the right one for you and the more exciting your journey will be.



Take a break and reflect on what you have thought about and learnt about yourself in reading this chapter and answering the questions.

### 3 What Type of Ship do I Deserve?

Your values will help you decide on the type of ship you want and where you want it to go. You should check out the goal(s) that you have been working on to make sure that it or they fit with your values.

But what about your beliefs. You wrote down in the last chapter what you thought your strengths were that would help you get to your goal and also what you thought might hinder you.

What can hinder you is often the beliefs that you hold about yourself. When beliefs are deeply rooted and strongly held, they can often lead you to being dogmatic about how you live your life, finding it difficult to change or accept new ideas or different things into your life.

However, you don't arrive into this world with your beliefs ready formed, when you are born. You acquire them as you live your life. A lot of your beliefs and values are formed in your childhood. Up to the age of 7 significant experiences can form beliefs that can be difficult to change in later life. Difficult but not impossible.

Of course your parents have played a large part in shaping how you think. You will often see children taking the same stance as a parent on lots of things from the sport they are interested in to what food they are willing to try.

Do you ever find yourself saying things that your parents used to say to you? These values and beliefs or ways of doing things are often hanging around in our subconscious mind and will emerge sometimes to your surprise. That's when you say, 'I sound just like my dad, or my mum'!

You also copy, often unconsciously, the behaviours of others, your peer group, relatives and other family members and also the values and beliefs that they hold. Sometimes to be part of a group you have to adjust your beliefs and values to be more similar to them.

Another important factor is what you are told as you are growing up by the adults around you, e.g. what you are good at or not good at, whether you were naughty or good. Maybe you were compared less favourably to a sibling who was thought to be better at something than you.

Think about a belief that was held, or is still held generally speaking by your family. It could be belief in how clever you or your brothers and sisters were; a belief that you will succeed or conversely you won't succeed.



A belief about me held by my family that I remember from my childhood is

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Do you still live by this belief? Is it something that you still think is important? Do you still hold this belief? The answer is quite possibly 'yes' to each of these questions. Your upbringing is usually quite deep seated and influences your approach to life.

Repetitive experiences can confirm your beliefs and values, e.g. always coming second in a school race can confirm the belief that you aren't good enough to be first. Having a brother or sister who is very good at science in school can confirm that you are not very good at this subject. Or always being praised for being able to sit quietly could develop a belief that being quiet is a good thing.

However your beliefs can change. Sometimes when you change your peer group you might come across different beliefs and values and change or modify yours to fit in with the new peer group; or a one off event where you do something that you previously thought you couldn't can change your beliefs.

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Some people often act as if beliefs are facts when, actually, they are only their personal perceptions. They guide an individual's thinking but can and do change over time.

Beliefs can be a positive force in people's lives but they can also be a negative. Holding limiting self-beliefs can be a real obstacle for people wanting to achieve something. When you believe in something you usually act in a way that proves to yourself that it is true. This can be true of positive beliefs too.

Beliefs come from a number of sources during your lifetime not only from parents. It can be from your education, schools, further education, from your peers and what your teachers and parents said to you and how this was reinforced; from the environment where you grew up, your extended family, the attitudes and aspirations of those around you; from past events in your life. These can be major events, such as divorce, bereavement, success and/or failures; or from smaller events that perhaps seemed insignificant at that time but left a resonance with you and on what you believed about yourself

When you believe you can't do something then your behaviour will be such that it can actually make you fail, maybe by not trying hard enough. Beliefs can also be so strong that they can make you ignore evidence that would make you think that the belief was wrong or outdated.

The type of language you use is often an indication of the beliefs that you hold. If you use words such as can't, shouldn't, etc. this give a good indication of your beliefs that you hold about yourself.

Someone might say to you, 'that was good', and you might dismiss this as insincerity, flattery or even that the person does not know what they are talking about! So strong is the belief. Many limiting beliefs can also originate from not being able to do something. But if you dare to try and do whatever it is that you think you can't do, then the belief can change. However, if you struggle in the initial stages of learning then you might give up and go back to your original belief. So you must make up your mind to try enough and for long enough to really give yourself a chance of succeeding.

In the book 'Teach Yourself NLP' by Steve Bavister & Amanda Vickers, they talk about the work of Dilts & DeLozier. In their research, they discovered there are 3 main ways that people limit themselves:-

Hopelessness – is when we don't believe it's possible to achieve something, there is no hope.

Helplessness – is when we believe something's possible but we don't believe we are personally capable of doing it.

Worthlessness – is when we don't believe we deserve to attain something, we are not worthy of it.

However, it is possible to change beliefs. Sometimes when you examine a belief objectively you will realise that it is either outdated or actually makes no sense at all. Then you can decide not to hold this belief anymore and choose beliefs that will help you to achieve what you want.

Your beliefs have been growing within you ever since you were a child. If you want to change some of your beliefs it will take time and effort and a certain amount of self will.

Have a look at the statements below and score yourself on a scale of 1–10, 1 being you don't believe you have this trait and 10 being you fully believe you have it and the numbers in between indicating how much you agree or disagree with the statement.



- I am able to do whatever I choose to do.
- I accept accountability and ownership of all my actions and what I achieve or don't achieve in my life.
- I am aware of others around me, of their needs and wants.
- I am aware of myself and my needs and wants.
- I can hold a commitment to something I want to achieve.

Everybody holds beliefs about themselves that can hold them back from doing what they really want to do. However it is possible to change those beliefs. But not always easy if you have held them for a long time.

Although you can't change anything that happened in the past you can change how you perceive it and by doing this create new beliefs. Some beliefs that you hold about yourself (usually the self-limiting beliefs) are not always completely true.

Think about something you think you are no good at. When you are reading this example substitute badminton for what you think you are no good at.

Self-limiting belief – I'm no good at playing badminton.

I avoid playing badminton and therefore never get any better.

If I do play I will only notice how I miss shots and feel surprised and that I am lucky when I hit a good shot.

All in all, the experience you allow yourself to have will reinforce your belief that you are no good at playing badminton. However, if you want to change that belief, to you are an average player (maybe you will never be brilliant) then you can.

To do this you have decide that you want to change. Then you have to start to play 'badminton'. Choose a partner who is at the same standard as you or a little better. Now go on court ready to collect evidence that you are okay at playing badminton, not to collect evidence that you are rubbish at it.

To change a belief you need to look for evidence to support the new belief. So you could come off court thinking – 'I got that difficult shot back' or I was in the right position at least 50% of the time. It is about noticing what you can do, not what you can't do.

Now think of another self-limiting belief that you hold about yourself and work through the following exercise.

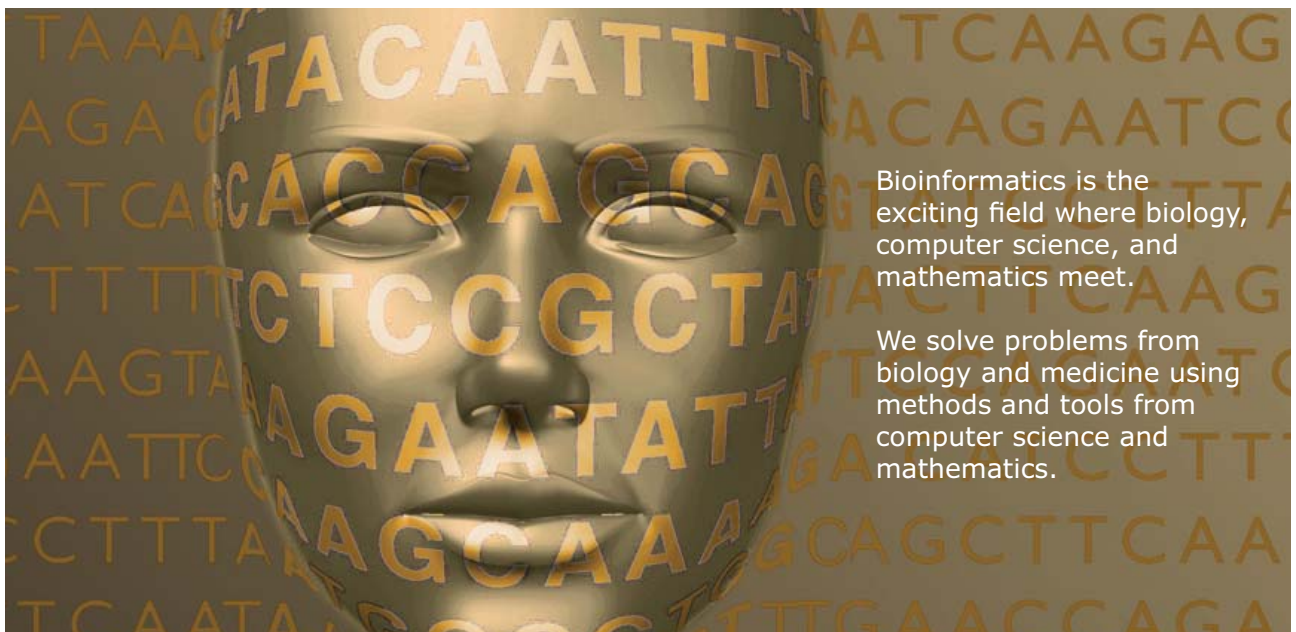


Write down your belief about yourself.

Underneath it write down the evidence that currently supports this belief, in your opinion.



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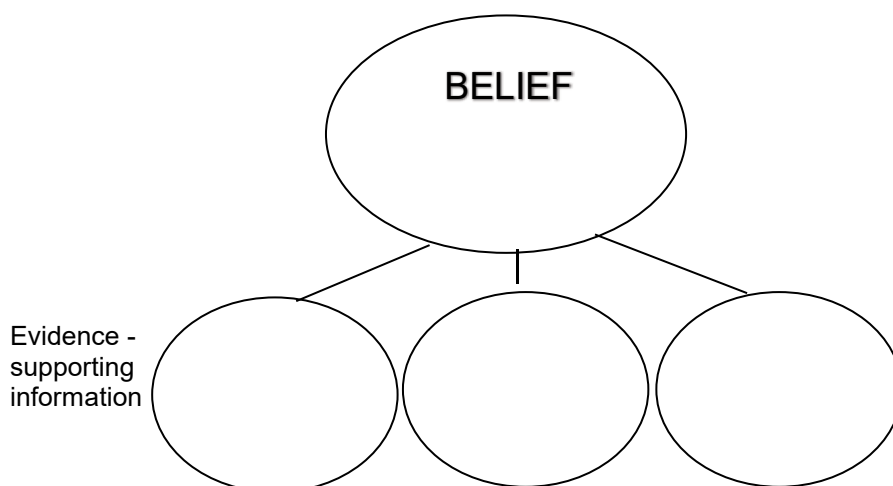


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You can do this with any limiting belief you hold and work on changing your thought process from 'I can't do \_\_\_\_\_ to I can do \_\_\_\_\_. Then look for the evidence to support your new emerging belief. Rather than looking for evidence to reaffirm your self-limiting belief.

The limiting beliefs that you hold about yourself will limit the design of your ship, so spend a little time thinking about those statements that you make to yourself that start with... 'I can't do...' or 'I'm no good at...' or 'I don't deserve...'



I can't do .....

I'm no good at .....

I don't deserve .....

Some people are more negative about things than others, the classic 'glass half full or empty' idea. Which type would you say that you belong to? Are you a negative thinker or positive thinker? Do you think of your glass being half full or half empty?

Negative thinking is about looking at what will go wrong or what you haven't got. Positive thinking is about thinking about what will go well and what you have already got.



Both positive and negative thinking is powerful. Negative thinking has its own power and it can be so overwhelming that it can stop you doing things. But positive thinking also has power. It has the power to mold your personality, power to shape your future, and power to create your destiny, the ship that you are working on in this book.

The difference between negative and positive thinking is the outcome it will bring about. Positive thinking is more likely to bring about positive reality. Negative thinking is about thinking about what can go wrong and focusing on things that have gone wrong in the past.

Similar to planting seeds, the beliefs that have been buried deep in your minds will grow and flourish if they are fed and will be a hindrance to your ability to be someone and to do something that you want to do. They will be a hindrance to designing the ship that you want. So try and feed the positive beliefs and do not feed the negative or self-limiting beliefs.

Feeding your negative thoughts can cause fears start to develop, and damage your confidence and trust in yourself. Then, you might find yourself saying the words that would destroy your dreams even before they are fully formed, *I can't*, and worse, acting the unwillingness it implies, *I won't*.

Some people prefer to stay in a place where everything is safe and secure and where dangers are low and minimal. For instance, you may avoid joining competitions because you believe you can't win.

But this is also where you realize the vastness of your limitations. Because of this, you can decide that you have already lost even before you begin, and then you have already failed even before you have tried.

What you must realise is that the greatest failure in life is not losing, but not trying at all. After all, who knows? No one can really say what could happen in the competition.

This is the power of negative thinking. It makes you fail before you even start because you believe that that you can't. It will give you just a small, tatty rowing boat for your future instead of an ocean going yacht because you believe that that is all you can have.

The power of being a positive thinker is immense. So if you answered the question of whether you are more of a 'glass half empty or glass half full' person, as 'glass half empty', think about the consequences for you when you are designing your ship.

You have identified some of your limiting beliefs and explored how many are really true. The next part of designing your ship is to practise being a positive thinker, especially as you work your way through this book.

Time to practice your positive thinking. Think about what you can do, what you are good at and what you deserve.



Swim Out to Your Ship:  
don't wait for it to come to you

What Type of Ship do I Deserve?



I can do .....

I'm good at .....

I deserve .....

...and some more

I can do .....

I'm good at .....

I deserve .....



Well done. Now take a break and reflect on how positive thinking as part of your everyday life will get you to your ship faster.



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## 4 A Yacht or an Ocean Going Liner?

Changing your thinking from being a negative thinker to being more positive isn't always that easy. However if you practice it will become easier like everything else does that you work at.

Here are some positive habits to practice every day to get you into that positive 'state' that will help you get to your ship.

1. Smile – as often as you can.
2. Compliment and praise other people.
3. Turn negatives into positives in as many situations as possible
4. Don't worry – it just uses up energy.
5. Eliminate negative talk – don't say 'can't', it's terrible.
6. Look for the good in others.
7. Try and improve yourself each day in small ways
8. Have a purpose in everything that you do – set goals to achieve this.

Now look at the list of positive habits you have just read and write down any that you already do.



Positive habits that I already do.

---

Now look at it again and list the ones you don't already do but would find easy to start doing.



Positive habits that I could easily do on a daily basis.

---

Now look at what is left on the list. Are there any? Would you find these difficult to do on a daily basis? If so why?



Positive habits that I would find difficult to do on a daily basis and why I would find it difficult.

---

Before you move on think about why you would find these positive habits difficult to do and how you could overcome this.

Part of being a positive thinker is the idea that you can control what 'state' you are in. The Collins English Dictionary describes 'state' as 'the condition of a person'.

If you believe that you can choose your 'state' you can put yourselves in a powerful position. This is not the 'in a state', in the more colloquial usage of the word 'state' that usually means feeling upset or agitated.

It is thinking about what is going on for you and how you are feeling. If this is a negative 'state', perhaps feeling a bit miserable or anxious then you have the power to change these feelings. Unless of course you are suffering from a medical condition that is not in your control.

The behaviour you choose to use is in a direct relationship to your 'state'. If you are in a state of panic then you will perhaps, run away from the situation, either physically or mentally. If your 'state' is happy or enthusiastic then you are more likely to make a success of what you are about to undertake.

In a typical day most people go through a whole range of 'states'. Some are experienced as positive, some as negative, and some as neutral. Some states last a few seconds, others go on for longer.

Many people are unaware of how they are feeling for a lot of the time. So check out what 'state' you are in now. Knowing what 'state' you are in is the first step to be able to change it, if you need to.

Think about how you are feeling and describe it with one word or a short phrase.



My current 'state' is...

As your behaviour is driven by the 'state' you are in, if your 'state' is in the negative range it is useful for you to recognise this and change your 'state' before you start to do anything. The possible 'states' are not just positive or negative but cover a whole range of feelings including feeling confident or nervous, enthusiastic or bored, in fact the whole range of human emotions.

Most people have only a few states that they frequently inhabit. The first one is the baseline state. This is the one that comes to you naturally and feels most comfortable. This is not always a neutral state it can be positive or negative.

If you can get into the habit of asking yourself what 'state' you are in, it can help you to cope with situations more effectively. You can create the 'state' you want by choosing how you want to perceive the world.

In NLP (Neuro Linguistic Programming) it is believed that human beings are able to choose their 'state' and are able to run their own brains, rather than it running them. That is, everyone is in control and you don't have to go with the 'state' you find yourself in.

Think about your 'state' in relation to reading this book. You will achieve much more if you can put yourself into a positive 'state'.



Now time to pause for a few moments and reflect on what 'state' you usually find yourself in and whether you think as a positive or negative person.

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## 5 Happiness is a Ship called...

What makes you happy? What type of ship and life would make you happy? It is often a difficult question to answer. Most people go about their day to day business not thinking about whether they are happy or not.

Happiness is experienced in different ways and created by different things for different people. However as a base line for being happy there are four basic human needs, to feel welcome; to be understood; to feel important and to feel comfortable. Everybody needs to feel these in their lives to feel happiness.

Do you ever stop and think about what makes you feel happy? From the large event to the small everyday thing of smelling your favourite smell, listening to your favourite song, meeting a friend, scoring a goal, closing a deal. Write down 25 things that make you happy. Don't stop until you have a list of 25.



Write down 25 things that make you happy.

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. ....  | 13. .... |
| 2. ....  | 14. .... |
| 3. ....  | 15. .... |
| 4. ....  | 16. .... |
| 5. ....  | 17. .... |
| 6. ....  | 18. .... |
| 7. ....  | 19. .... |
| 8. ....  | 20. .... |
| 9. ....  | 21. .... |
| 10. .... | 22. .... |
| 11. .... | 23. .... |
| 12. .... | 24. .... |
|          | 25. .... |

Was that an easy exercise or difficult? Sometimes you can forget what it is that makes you happy as you are so busy just getting through the day.

As well as the four basic human needs there is an extended six human needs which make us think in a little more detail. These are usually identified as; Certainty, Variety, Significance, Love and Connection, Growth and Contribution.

Each needs a balance. Too much certainty can lead to boredom but too much variety can overwhelm.

To feel significant most people want to distinguish themselves in a small or larger way to feel different from others, but too much of this can lead to feelings of being unconnected. But needing too much love and connection can lead to feelings of dependence on others and a lack of self-esteem.

The last two, growth and contribution are the highest human needs and can only be satisfied when the other four are being fulfilled.

To be committed to your goal(s) then they should fulfil the six human needs. Think about each of your goals and how they fit in with these and what is important to you. If your goal is going to take you away from your friends that might leave a hole in your life. Could reaching your goal lead to you having too much variety, more than you would be comfortable with?

Check out you goal. Simply put, when you think about the goal or goals you have set yourself does it make you feel happy? Does it make you feel excited? Does it make you feel enthusiastic?



When I think about my goal(s)

I feel happy because .....

I feel excited because .....

I feel enthusiastic because .....

Now reflect on your answers to the questions you have just answered. Do you goal(s) need tweaking in anyway? Either get out the drawing you have already done of your goal and add to it or draw a new picture of you having reached each of your goals.

Swim Out to Your Ship:  
don't wait for it to come to you

Happiness is a Ship called...

Put your picture somewhere you will see it every day. Put it on the front of your fridge, in the bathroom, on the wall in the kitchen, next to your kettle, take a picture of it and make it your screen saver on your computer or on your phone.

Make sure it is in view so you will be reminded about what your ship will look like and where you will be sailing it to.



Take a break. Go and pin up your picture of your goal and then go and do something that makes you happy.

A promotional advertisement for Nido Student Living in London. The background is a photograph of a young woman and a young man smiling and looking off to the side. The Nido logo is in the top right corner. Several yellow text boxes with black text are overlaid on the image, listing benefits like 'Luxurious accommodation', 'Central zone 1 & 2 locations', and 'Meet hundreds of international students'. A large orange and white banner at the bottom reads 'Nido Student Living - London'. Below this, more yellow text boxes provide a website URL and a phone number.

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## 6 Who's Steering Your Ship?

What is it that motivates you to do something? It is usually a need. But some people are not fully aware of what their needs are, but still feel they are not getting/doing what they want. Knowing what your needs are makes it easier to move forward, to perform at your best and to reach your goal.

The more you understand yourself and recognise what makes you tick the easier it is to get the life you want. If you are knowledgeable about what needs are critical to you, then you will understand the effect it has on you in both making decisions and the actions you take, as well as how you feel when this need is threatened.

For example, the threat of redundancy can make someone whose critical need is certainty fall apart as they see it as the end; but for someone else whose need is more on the variety end of this need they can get excited about the possibility and see it as an opportunity. In both cases, understanding what their critical needs are will make it easier for them to deal with their reactions and plan according to their needs.

To identify these needs you must think about what drives you. Is it security, money, status, fame, etc.? If it is money that drives you, you need to go below that and think about why you need the money. Do you equate money with security, with power or luxury? Money on its own is not a driver. Few people collect money just for the sake of it.

Needs can be met in all areas of our lives; at work, at home and in our leisure time. Once you have identified your needs and started working on getting them met, you will be able to see your ship and its' direction very clearly.

When setting and working towards goals, to enable you to move into having or doing what you want; developing the lifestyle that excites you it is worth noting that this way of doing things suits people who fall into the 'towards' category of motivation, as opposed to the 'away from' style of motivation.

'Towards' motivated people are able to achieve by having something to aim for in their lives. If they have a goal then they will be motivated to put a great amount of energy into achieving it. This type of person is achievement oriented. They will pursue what they want quite relentlessly once they have made up their minds that this is what they want to do, to have, or a life style of their choice.

The 'away from' individuals are not motivated by goals but are more concerned with avoiding potential problems. They tend to work at doing something in order to avoid been given a hard time by someone else. They are motivated to achieve something to make sure that their lives will not be too difficult.



Which 'type' of person are you? Do you think you are a 'towards' or 'away from' type of person? To discover which type you currently fall in to read the statements below and choose an answer which most describes you.



### Checking out your motivations

Are you a 'towards' or 'away from' person.

'Towards' individuals – are motivated to take action by:

1. I like having something to aim for.
2. I want to be able to see my personal achievements.
3. I like being in control of what I am doing.

**Y**

**N**


'Away from' individuals – are motivated to take action by:

1. I like to make sure nothing goes wrong.
2. I want to make sure no one could accuse me of getting things wrong.
3. I do not like to take risks and therefore not move out of my comfort zone.

**Y**

**N**


Think about your answers. Did you answer 'yes' mainly in the 'towards' or 'away from' sections? These beliefs can affect the way you are working towards your goal(s). If you are a 'towards' type of person you will be excited by setting goals. If you are an 'away from' type of person then you may be anxious about taking control and setting goals for yourself.

The next thing to think about is what your perfect day would be. If you could have an absolute choice of what you did with 24 hours, what would it be? Think about it in terms of all the responsibilities you have, have been put on hold; there will be no consequences to what you do, or haven't done for 24 hours. How would you spend your time?

Write about your perfect day. Start with waking up (at what time?) and what you would do with the day; what activities you would choose, who would you choose to spend it with and where would you spend it? Think about it right through to the time you go to bed. You might want to look back on your list of 25 things that make you happy.



The story of my perfect day .....

Sometimes it can be a difficult exercise to think about what you want to do. A lot of people spend most of their days making sure that other people are cared for, that the boss is happy at work, the customers you serve are happy and a whole host of other people. Did you find that exercise difficult? Is so think about why that might be.

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What am I happy about today?

.....

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.....

What am I grateful from today?

.....

.....

.....

Who do I love?

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Who loves me?

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.....

.....

What can I do to make today fantastic?

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.....

What can I do to make a difference?

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.....

What can I acknowledge in myself today?

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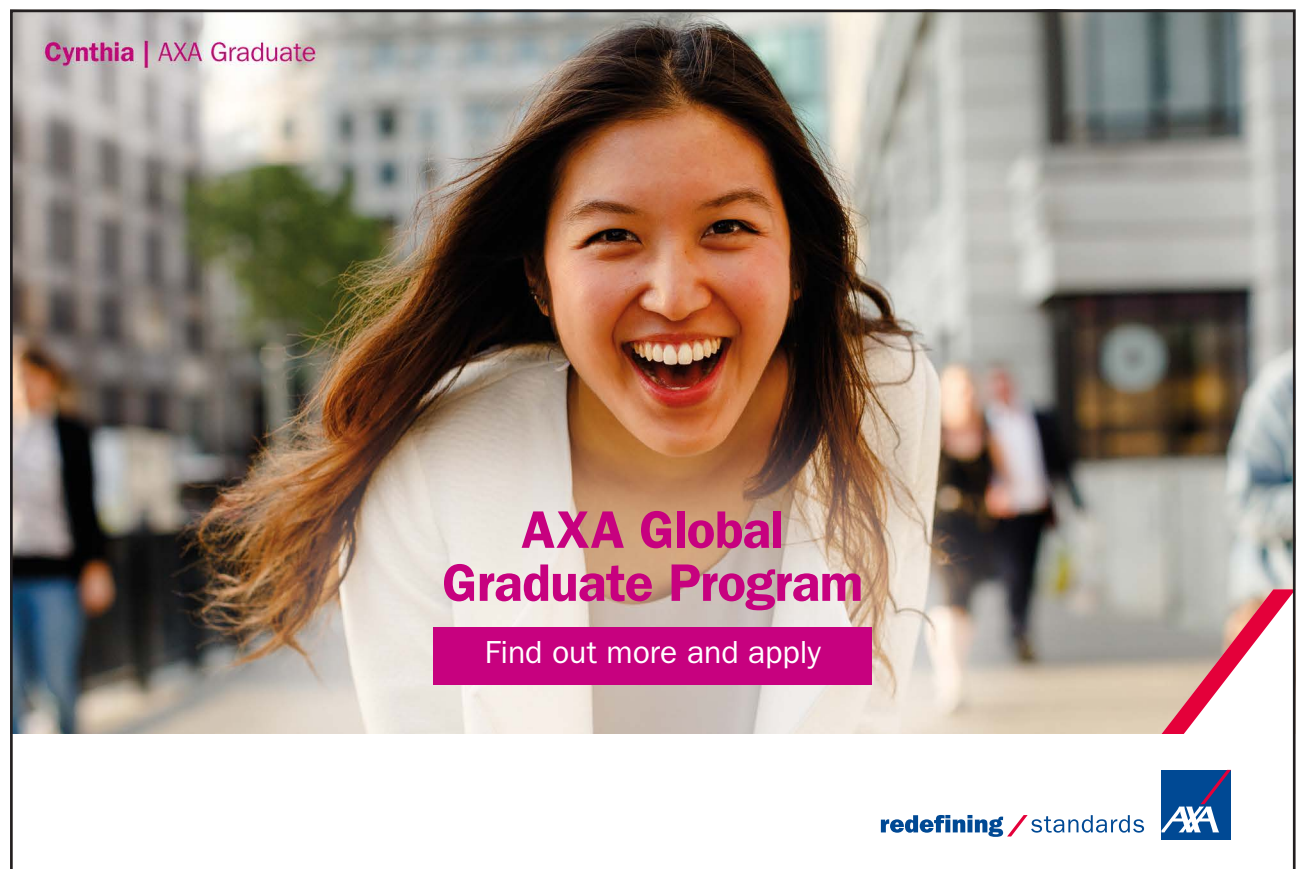
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Time for a break and a reflection of what your perfect day would consist of and whether you were driving it or you were letting others choose what you were going to do and how great today is.

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## 7 Shall I Go Out to Sea or Stay by the Shore?

Working through Swim Out to Your Ship will require you to change in some way. These may be small changes to the way you live your life or enormous changes. Some people like change others much prefer certainty.

But whichever type of person you are if you are reading this book you must want to make some sort of change to your current life. The first step in any type of change is to acknowledge that there is something you would like to change; that something isn't happening, as you would like it to happen. Remember the first question 'If you could change one thing what would it be? What did you answer to that question?

Of course to change something you need to have a plan and if it's a big thing then a goal. But you also need to acknowledge some things can't be changed and therefore the only way to deal with them if it is making you unhappy is to change how you view it or change your attitude towards it.

If you can change a situation, if it is in your power, then you need to decide how you are going to change 'it'. You cannot change others you can only change a situation and yourself.

This is what you have been doing so far with the exercises in this book. You have a goal, you have thought about your strengths and what will hinder you and about your values and your beliefs now it is time to think about how you will deal with the change that you are taking on.

Change is part of a process and can take us out of our comfort zones.

Read the list below and think about which words apply to you when you are making any changes in your life.

How do you feel when you are making changes?

Worried	Nervous	Fulfilled
Excited	Anxious	Content
Apprehensive	Happy	Joyful
Exhilarated	Unsure	Ecstatic



Write down the words from the list that best describes how you feel when you make changes in your life.

---

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If the words you have written down are in the negative range, what do you think the consequence(s) are, for you, when you are working towards your goal(s)?



Write down the consequences of feeling negative about tackling change

---

If the words are in the positive range, how do you think this helps you in achieving your goals?



Write down how feeling positive will help you when dealing with change

---

---

To embrace change and design the ship you want you have to take control of your life. As well as being 'towards' or 'away from' people individuals can be generally divided into internal or external types of people. These are two groups of people who view the world in a different way. Internal people rely on how they feel about something to decide if they are successful or not. They see themselves as being in charge of their own destiny and therefore able to change their circumstances if they want to.

External people look for others to validate their achievements. They need someone else to give them feedback on any success. They blame others for what is happening to them or what has not happened in the past.

Some people, often those with predominately 'external' tendencies maybe very good at blaming others for what they have or haven't got in life. Going alongside this are the statements that some people make about things that they see to be true e.g. it's my parents' fault that I have no confidence. These sorts of beliefs make it easier for them not to have to change, because they believe that how they feel is caused others.

Some people justify things to themselves, when in fact they are actually lying to themselves in order not to have to change things e.g. I can't get another job because I'm too old. Age is something we cannot change so that justification puts a full stop to any movement at all. When in fact this is probably untrue. The reason the person can't change jobs is because they are projecting a negative attitude to the issue, and maybe aren't even trying to change jobs.

The people who hold these beliefs have a fundamental belief that they aren't in control of their lives, so they can always lay the blame for any failure or lack of success on someone or something else. Therefore being able to justify to themselves why they can't do something or achieve something.

People who take responsibility for themselves take control of their lives and believe that everything they do and have is within their own control. They are in control of their own destiny. This type of individual finds it easier to set and work with goals.

Taking responsibility for yourself gives you power as it gives you control over your life.

The advertisement for Linnaeus University features a bright yellow background. On the left, there is a black tree logo and a black speech bubble containing the word 'Scholarships' in white script. Below these, the text 'Open your mind to new opportunities' is written in a large, black, serif font. Underneath this, a paragraph in a smaller black font describes the university's size and international focus, ending with 'Welcome to join us!'. At the bottom left, 'Linnæus University' is written in a large, bold, black serif font, with 'Sweden' in a smaller font below it. On the right side, there is a photograph of a person in a plaid shirt and jeans performing a backflip in a modern, glass-walled interior. In the background of the photo, several people are sitting at tables. The text 'Lnu.se' is in the top right corner of the photo. At the bottom right of the advertisement, a black box contains white text listing 'Bachelor programmes in' (Business & Economics, Computer Science/IT, Design, Mathematics) and 'Master programmes in' (Business & Economics, Behavioural Sciences, Computer Science/IT, Cultural Studies & Social Sciences, Design, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Technology & Engineering), followed by 'Summer Academy courses'.

Which type of person do you think you are? Are you an 'internal' or 'external' type of person?

Answer the questions below and give some examples of when you might do this.



Do you lay the blame for not being able to do something/have something on other people?

If the answer is yes, give some examples. I sometimes/often blame ..... for not being able to .....

The consequences of this, for me, is .....

The consequences for the other person is .....

Sometimes we find excuses for not changing or that we can't have something. For example, I can't change my job because I am too old to retrain (from a 45 year old).

Write down a situation when you have thought this way.



The situation .....

What I say (justifying) .....

The consequences of this .....

How I can change this justification (belief) .....

The consequences of changing this justification (belief) .....

These sort of beliefs hold us back and they are often without justification. Have you ever said or thought any of these statements without checking them out with the person to whom you were referring to?

I can't do ..... because I have a family to look after.

I can't do ..... because my partner wouldn't like it.



Swim Out to Your Ship:  
don't wait for it to come to you

Shall I Go Out to Sea or Stay by the Shore?

You are transferring (blaming) others for your lack of courage to deal with whatever it is. You can change these stories you make up to keep you feeling safe. These type of stories can keep you trapped in the character that you choose to play in your life. You can choose to play a different character.



Take a break, reflect on how this change you are going to be making is going to affect you and others close to you.

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## 8 Getting on Board Your Ship

Do you feel ready to board your ship? Are you clear about who you are and what you want from life?

Are you thinking in terms of what you want not what you don't want? Always try to work with the positive. Make sure you do something every day that takes you nearer to achieving the change that you want to make.

However you must also accept that sometimes things will not go forward as you had planned. Moving backwards as well as forward has to be accepted as part of the change process.

You need to acknowledge it and get back on track. Don't see it as a failure but an inevitable part of changing something. When the change has occurred you should celebrate it and not forget or minimise the effort that you have put in to making the change. Remember you have been designing the ship that you want. It won't be all plain sailing you will hit rough seas as you navigate your path. Sometimes you will have to dock into a bay to shelter from the storm. But if it is important enough for you will succeed.



Answer these questions:

- How important is it to change your current circumstances?
- What is your single most important reason for wanting to do this?
- What are you prepared to sacrifice in order to achieve your goal?
- How strong is your desire to succeed?
- How will it make you happy?
- What is the driving factor that will keep you going?
- On a scale of 1 to 10 how much does this matter to you?

I hope you have scored 10 for the last question. This is your life, your story, your ship. In the words of the old cliché 'life is not a dress rehearsal, we only get one chance'.

Before you get on board your ship...think about where you started this journey and what you have achieved.

Visualise yourself when you first picked up this book. What did you look like? What were you thinking? What were you feeling? Try to make this picture come to life. See yourself in colour.

When you have that image in your mind reduce it in size and put it into the distance.

Now with the first image reduced and in one corner of your mind, visualise your journey up to today. What do you look like today? What are you thinking? What are you feeling?

Now reduce this image and put it next to the first one, so that you are holding them both in your mind. Now bring them both to the fore (like using a split screen on a computer).

What are the differences you can see and feel between the 2 images? When you have looked at them, reduce the first image again. Now close it down. Leave yourself with your new, positive image of yourself.

It is time to board your ship, stand at the helm, sail it out of harbour and navigate it into the life you want.



Well Done!! What a great feeling!!