

Solution Focused Therapy

Goal-setting · reference list

Research-informed use. Use as a flexible question menu. Solution-focused evidence is promising but heterogeneous; the questions do not replace assessment, formulation, or responsiveness to risk and context.

QUICK-REFERENCE LIBRARY

- Goal-setting
- a sense of urgency and helps
- Identify the desired outcome: Begin by clarifying what you or the group wants to achieve. The desired outcome should be
- maintain focus and momentum. Prioritize: Evaluate the importance
- specific, measurable, attainable,
- and urgency of each goal or step. Determine which goals need to be addressed first and which can follow afterward. Prioritizing helps in
- relevant, and time-bound (SMART). This helps to create a clear target
- allocating time and resources
- for your efforts. Define success criteria: Establish criteria or indicators that will measure your progress and
- effectively. Monitor and review: Regularly monitor your progress toward each goal. Assess whether you're
- determine whether the goal has been achieved. These can be quantifiable metrics, observable behaviors, or specific outcomes
- on track or need to make adjustments. Reviewing your goals allows for course correction and ensures alignment with
- that reflect the desired change. Break it down: Once the desired outcome is determined, break it down into smaller, actionable steps
- changing circumstances or
- or milestones. These smaller goals make the overall objective more manageable and provide a sense
- priorities. Set realistic goals: Ensure that your
- of progress along the way. Set deadlines: Assign specific timeframes or deadlines to each goal and milestone. This creates

goals are achievable and realistic

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- goals are achievable and realistic within the given context and available resources. Setting overly ambitious or unattainable goals
- your efforts and
- can lead to frustration and demotivation. It's important to strike a balance between challenging yourself and setting
- accomplishments to stay motivated and maintain a
- goals that are within reach.
- positive mindset.
- Celebrate milestones: Acknowledge and celebrate the completion of milestones or the achievement of goals. Recognize

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COLLABORATIVE PROMPT MENU · ADAPT, SKIP, OR REPHRASE AS NEEDED

— SOLUTION-FOCUSED QUESTIONS

— SCALING QUESTION: "ON A SCALE OF 0

— TO 10, WHERE 0 IS THE WORST POSSIBLE

— SITUATION AND 10 IS YOUR DESIRED

— OUTCOME, WHERE WOULD YOU SAY YOU

— ARE RIGHT NOW? WHAT WOULD IT TAKE

— TO MOVE ONE POINT HIGHER ON THE

— SCALE?"

— SCALING FOLLOW-UP QUESTION:

— "WHAT ARE YOU ALREADY DOING,

— EVEN IN SMALL WAYS, THAT IS

— MOVING YOU CLOSER TO YOUR

— DESIRED OUTCOME?"

— MIRACLE QUESTION: "SUPPOSE A

— MIRACLE HAPPENED OVERNIGHT, AND

— THE PROBLEM THAT BROUGHT YOU HERE

— WAS SOLVED. HOW WOULD YOU KNOW?

— WHAT WOULD BE DIFFERENT IN YOUR

— LIFE?"

— GOAL-SETTING QUESTION: "IF THINGS

— WERE TO CHANGE FOR THE BETTER,

— WHAT WOULD BE THE FIRST SIGNS THAT

— YOU'RE MOVING IN THE RIGHT

— DIRECTION? WHAT SPECIFIC GOALS OR

— OUTCOMES WOULD YOU LIKE TO

— ACHIEVE?"

— EXCEPTION QUESTION: "CAN YOU THINK

— OF A TIME WHEN THE PROBLEM WAS

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— NOT AS INTENSE OR WHEN THINGS WERE

— GOING BETTER? WHAT WAS DIFFERENT

— ABOUT THAT TIME? HOW DID YOU

— CONTRIBUTE TO THAT POSITIVE

— SITUATION?"

— EXCEPTION AMPLIFICATION

— QUESTION: "TELL ME MORE ABOUT

— TIMES WHEN THE PROBLEM IS LESS

— FREQUENT OR LESS INTENSE. WHAT IS

— ALREADY WORKING, AND HOW CAN WE

— BUILD ON THAT?"

— COPING QUESTION: "HOW HAVE YOU

— MANAGED TO COPE WITH THIS

— SITUATION SO FAR? WHAT STRATEGIES OR

— RESOURCES HAVE YOU USED THAT HAVE

— BEEN HELPFUL?"

— RESOURCES QUESTION: "WHAT

— PERSONAL STRENGTHS, SKILLS, OR

— QUALITIES DO YOU HAVE THAT CAN

— HELP YOU OVERCOME THIS

— CHALLENGE? HOW HAVE YOU USED

— THESE RESOURCES IN THE PAST?"

— COPING RESOURCES QUESTION: "WHO

— ELSE IN YOUR LIFE CAN PROVIDE SUPPORT

— OR ASSISTANCE DURING DIFFICULT TIMES?

— HOW CAN YOU REACH OUT TO THEM OR

— MAKE USE OF THEIR SUPPORT?"

— FUTURE-ORIENTED QUESTION:

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—

"LOOKING AHEAD, WHAT ARE SOME

—

WOULD BRING YOU CLOSER TO YOUR

—

SMALL STEPS YOU CAN TAKE IN THE

—

DESIRED OUTCOME?"

—

NEXT FEW DAYS OR WEEKS THAT

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— EXCEPTION-SEEKING

— EXCEPTION AMPLIFICATION QUESTION:

— "CAN YOU THINK OF A TIME WHEN THE

— PROBLEM WAS NOT AS NOTICEABLE OR NOT

— PRESENT AT ALL? WHAT WAS DIFFERENT

— ABOUT THAT TIME?"

— PREVIOUS SUCCESS QUESTION: "THINK

— ABOUT A TIME IN YOUR LIFE WHEN YOU

— SUCCESSFULLY DEALT WITH A SIMILAR

— ISSUE. WHAT STRENGTHS OR SKILLS DID

— YOU DRAW UPON TO ACHIEVE THAT

— SUCCESS?"

— SCALING EXCEPTION QUESTION: "ON A

— SCALE OF 0 TO 10, WHERE 0 IS THE

— PRESENCE OF THE PROBLEM AND 10 IS THE

— COMPLETE ABSENCE OF THE PROBLEM,

— WHEN HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED YOURSELF

— AT A HIGHER POINT ON THE SCALE? WHAT

— ALLOWED YOU TO REACH THAT POINT?"

— ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVE QUESTION:

— "HOW MIGHT A CLOSE FRIEND OR FAMILY

— MEMBER DESCRIBE A TIME WHEN THEY

— SAW YOU DEALING EFFECTIVELY WITH THE

— PROBLEM?"

— COPING EXCEPTION QUESTION: "HOW

— HAVE YOU MANAGED TO COPE WITH

— SIMILAR CHALLENGES IN THE PAST? WHAT

— STRATEGIES OR RESOURCES DID YOU UTILIZE

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— THAT WERE HELPFUL?"

— RESOURCE-BASED QUESTION: "WHAT

— PERSONAL RESOURCES OR STRENGTHS DO

— YOU POSSESS THAT HAVE HELPED YOU

— NAVIGATE CHALLENGING SITUATIONS IN

— THE PAST? HOW CAN YOU DRAW UPON

— THOSE RESOURCES NOW?"

— SMALL EXCEPTION QUESTION: "CAN YOU

— RECALL ANY SMALL MOMENTS OR

— INSTANCES WHEN THE PROBLEM WAS NOT

— AS PROMINENT OR WHEN YOU WERE ABLE

— TO HANDLE IT BETTER THAN USUAL?"

— EXCEPTIONS IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS

— QUESTION: "ARE THERE ANY SITUATIONS

— OR CONTEXTS IN WHICH THE PROBLEM IS

— LESS PROMINENT OR DOES NOT OCCUR AT

— ALL? WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THOSE

— SITUATIONS THAT CAN BE APPLIED TO

— THE CURRENT CHALLENGE?"

— UNIQUE OUTCOME QUESTION: "HAS

— THERE BEEN A TIME WHEN YOU WERE

— ABLE TO RESPOND TO A SIMILAR SITUATION

— IN A WAY THAT WAS DIFFERENT FROM THE

— USUAL PROBLEM PATTERN? WHAT

— CONTRIBUTED TO THAT DIFFERENT

— RESPONSE?"

— FUTURE-ORIENTED EXCEPTION

— QUESTION: "LOOKING AHEAD, HOW DO

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— YOU ENVISION THE PROBLEM BEING

— YOU TAKE TO MOVE TOWARDS THAT

— LESS PRESENT IN YOUR LIFE? WHAT

— VISION?"

— WOULD BE DIFFERENT? WHAT STEPS CAN

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— SCALING QUESTIONS	— THIS AREA OF YOUR LIFE?"
— PROBLEM SCALE QUESTION: "ON A SCALE	— RESOURCES SCALE QUESTION: "ON A
— OF 0 TO 10, WHERE 0 REPRESENTS THE	— SCALE OF 0 TO 10, HOW WELL DO YOU
— WORST THE PROBLEM HAS EVER BEEN AND	— THINK YOU ARE UTILIZING YOUR PERSONAL
— 10 REPRESENTS THE COMPLETE ABSENCE	— STRENGTHS AND RESOURCES TO
— OF THE PROBLEM, WHERE WOULD YOU	— OVERCOME THIS CHALLENGE?"
— CURRENTLY PLACE YOURSELF?"	— CONFIDENCE SCALE QUESTION: "ON A
— SUPPORT SCALE QUESTION: "ON A	— SCALE OF 0 TO 10, HOW CONFIDENT ARE
— SCALE OF 0 TO 10, HOW SUPPORTED DO	— YOU THAT YOU CAN MAKE POSITIVE
— YOU FEEL BY THE PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE IN	— CHANGES OR PROGRESS IN ADDRESSING
— ADDRESSING THIS PROBLEM?"	— THIS PROBLEM?"
— IMPORTANCE SCALE QUESTION: "ON A	— COPING SCALE QUESTION: "ON A SCALE
— SCALE OF 0 TO 10, HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR	— OF 0 TO 10, HOW EFFECTIVELY DO YOU
— YOU TO MAKE PROGRESS OR CHANGE IN	— THINK YOU ARE COPING WITH THIS

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— PROBLEM IN YOUR DAY-TO-DAY LIFE?"

— MOTIVATION SCALE QUESTION: "ON A

— SCALE OF 0 TO 10, HOW MOTIVATED ARE

— YOU TO TAKE ACTION AND WORK TOWARDS

— YOUR DESIRED OUTCOME?"

— RESILIENCE SCALE QUESTION: "ON A

— SCALE OF 0 TO 10, HOW RESILIENT DO YOU

— CONSIDER YOURSELF IN BOUNCING BACK

— FROM SETBACKS RELATED TO THIS

— PROBLEM?"

— PROGRESS SCALE QUESTION: "ON A SCALE

— OF 0 TO 10, HOW MUCH PROGRESS DO YOU

— FEEL YOU HAVE MADE SINCE WE STARTED

— WORKING TOGETHER?"

— FUTURE SCALE QUESTION: "ON A SCALE

— OF 0 TO 10, HOW OPTIMISTIC ARE YOU

— ABOUT YOUR ABILITY TO CREATE A

— POSITIVE FUTURE OUTCOME IN RELATION

— TO THIS PROBLEM?"

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— COPING AND SOLUTION-BUILDING

— QUESTIONS

— COPING QUESTION: "HOW HAVE YOU

— BEEN ABLE TO COPE WITH THIS SITUATION

— SO FAR? WHAT STRATEGIES OR RESOURCES

— HAVE YOU USED THAT HAVE BEEN

— HELPFUL?"

— SOLUTION-BUILDING QUESTION: "WHAT

— SMALL STEPS CAN YOU TAKE IN YOUR

— DAILY LIFE THAT ALIGN WITH YOUR

— DESIRED OUTCOME? HOW CAN YOU

— BUILD ON THOSE STEPS OVER TIME?"

— SOLUTION-FOCUSED COPING QUESTION:

— "WHEN HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED EVEN A

— SMALL IMPROVEMENT OR A MOMENT OF

— RESPITE FROM THE PROBLEM? WHAT WAS

— DIFFERENT ABOUT THAT TIME?"

— SCALING COPING QUESTION: "ON A

— SCALE OF 0 TO 10, WHERE 0 REPRESENTS

— THE LEAST EFFECTIVE COPING STRATEGIES

— AND 10 REPRESENTS THE MOST

— EFFECTIVE COPING STRATEGIES, WHERE

— WOULD YOU RATE YOUR CURRENT COPING

— STRATEGIES? WHAT WOULD IT TAKE TO

— MOVE ONE POINT HIGHER ON THE

— SCALE?"

— EXCEPTION QUESTION: "CAN YOU THINK OF

— A TIME WHEN THE PROBLEM WAS NOT AS

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— INTENSE OR WHEN THINGS WERE GOING

— BETTER? WHAT WAS DIFFERENT ABOUT THAT

— TIME? HOW DID YOU CONTRIBUTE TO THAT

— POSITIVE SITUATION?"

— FUTURE-ORIENTED COPING QUESTION:

— "HOW DO YOU ENVISION YOURSELF

— COPING DIFFERENTLY WITH SIMILAR

— CHALLENGES IN THE FUTURE? WHAT

— SPECIFIC ACTIONS OR BEHAVIORS CAN

— YOU ENGAGE IN TO SUPPORT THAT

— VISION?"

— COPING RESOURCE QUESTION: "WHAT

— PERSONAL STRENGTHS, SKILLS, OR QUALITIES

— DO YOU HAVE THAT CAN HELP YOU

— OVERCOME THIS CHALLENGE? HOW HAVE

— YOU USED THESE RESOURCES IN THE

— PAST?"

— COPING REFLECTION QUESTION: "THINK

— ABOUT A TIME WHEN YOU SUCCESSFULLY

— COPED WITH A SIMILAR DIFFICULTY. WHAT

— DID YOU DO THAT WORKED WELL? HOW

— CAN YOU APPLY THOSE COPING

— STRATEGIES TO THE CURRENT SITUATION?"

— COPING SUPPORT QUESTION: "WHO IN

— YOUR LIFE CAN PROVIDE SUPPORT OR

— ASSISTANCE DURING DIFFICULT TIMES?

— HOW CAN YOU REACH OUT TO THEM OR

— MAKE USE OF THEIR SUPPORT?"

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— SOLUTION-FOCUSED GOAL-SETTING

— OUTCOME? HOW CAN YOU BREAK

— QUESTION: "WHAT SMALL, ACHIEVABLE

— THOSE GOALS DOWN INTO MANAGEABLE

— GOALS CAN YOU SET FOR YOURSELF THAT

— STEPS?"

— WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO A POSITIVE

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— FUTURE ORIENTATION

— FUTURE PROJECTION QUESTION: "IMAGINE

— YOURSELF IN THE FUTURE WHEN THE

— PROBLEM IS NO LONGER PRESENT. WHAT

— WOULD YOUR LIFE LOOK LIKE? HOW WOULD

— YOU BE DIFFERENT?"

— FUTURE COPING QUESTION: "HOW CAN

— YOU DEVELOP OR ENHANCE YOUR

— COPING STRATEGIES TO BETTER HANDLE

— FUTURE CHALLENGES? WHAT NEW

— APPROACHES OR SKILLS CAN YOU

— EXPLORE?"

— FUTURE SCALING QUESTION: "ON A SCALE

— OF 0 TO 10, WHERE 0 IS THE CURRENT

— SITUATION AND 10 IS YOUR IDEAL FUTURE,

— WHERE WOULD YOU PLACE YOURSELF ON

— THAT SCALE? WHAT WOULD IT TAKE TO

— MOVE ONE POINT HIGHER?"

— FUTURE SUPPORT QUESTION: "WHO CAN

— PROVIDE SUPPORT OR ASSISTANCE IN

— YOUR JOURNEY TOWARDS A BETTER

— FUTURE? HOW CAN YOU INVOLVE THEM

— AND ACCESS THEIR SUPPORT?"

— EXCEPTION PROJECTION QUESTION: "IF YOU

— WERE TO WAKE UP TOMORROW AND THE

— PROBLEM HAD SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED,

— WHAT WOULD BE THE FIRST SIGNS YOU

— WOULD NOTICE? WHAT WOULD BE

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— DIFFERENT IN YOUR LIFE?"

— FUTURE GROWTH QUESTION: "IN WHAT

— WAYS DO YOU SEE YOURSELF GROWING

— OR EVOLVING AS YOU WORK TOWARDS

— YOUR DESIRED FUTURE? WHAT NEW

— INSIGHTS OR PERSPECTIVES CAN YOU

— GAIN?"

— FUTURE-ORIENTED GOAL QUESTION:

— "WHAT SPECIFIC GOALS OR OUTCOMES

— WOULD YOU LIKE TO ACHIEVE IN THE

— FUTURE? WHAT STEPS CAN YOU TAKE TO

— MOVE TOWARDS THOSE GOALS?"

— FUTURE POSSIBILITIES QUESTION:

— "WHAT ARE SOME ALTERNATIVE PATHS

— OR OPTIONS THAT YOU CAN EXPLORE TO

— CREATE A POSITIVE FUTURE? HOW CAN

— YOU EXPAND YOUR THINKING AND

— CONSIDER DIFFERENT POSSIBILITIES?"

— FUTURE RESOURCES QUESTION: "WHAT

— PERSONAL STRENGTHS, SKILLS, OR
RESOURCES

— CAN YOU DRAW UPON TO HELP YOU

— CREATE A MORE DESIRABLE FUTURE? HOW

— CAN YOU LEVERAGE THOSE RESOURCES

— EFFECTIVELY?"

— FUTURE CELEBRATION QUESTION:

— "WHEN YOU HAVE ACHIEVED YOUR

— DESIRED FUTURE, HOW WILL YOU

— CELEBRATE AND ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR

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— PROGRESS? WHAT REWARDS OR

— YOURSELF ALONG THE WAY?"

— ACKNOWLEDGMENTS CAN YOU GIVE

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— BRIEF AND TIME-LIMITED

— BEST HOPES QUESTION: "WHAT ARE YOUR

— BEST HOPES FOR OUR TIME TOGETHER?

— WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO ACHIEVE OR

— CHANGE?"

— SOLUTION-BUILDING QUESTION: "WHAT

— IS ONE THING YOU CAN DO DIFFERENTLY

— TODAY THAT WOULD MOVE YOU CLOSER

— TO YOUR DESIRED OUTCOME?"

— PREFERRED FUTURE QUESTION: "IF

— EVERYTHING WENT AS WELL AS POSSIBLE,

— WHAT WOULD BE DIFFERENT IN YOUR LIFE?

— HOW WOULD YOU KNOW THAT THINGS

— HAVE IMPROVED?"

— FEEDBACK QUESTION: "WHAT

— FEEDBACK OR SUPPORT HAVE YOU

— RECEIVED FROM OTHERS THAT CAN HELP

— YOU MAKE PROGRESS? HOW CAN YOU

— LEVERAGE THAT FEEDBACK?"

— SMALL STEPS QUESTION: "WHAT SMALL,

— MANAGEABLE STEPS CAN YOU TAKE

— TOWARDS YOUR DESIRED OUTCOME? WHAT

— IS ONE THING YOU CAN DO RIGHT AWAY?"

— TIMEFRAME QUESTION: "GIVEN OUR

— LIMITED TIME TOGETHER, WHAT IS THE

— MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE OR ASPECT YOU

— WOULD LIKE US TO FOCUS ON?"

— EXCEPTIONS QUESTION: "CAN YOU THINK

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— OF A TIME WHEN THE PROBLEM WAS LESS

— INTENSE OR NOT PRESENT AT ALL? WHAT

— WAS DIFFERENT ABOUT THAT TIME? HOW

— CAN YOU REPLICATE OR BUILD ON THAT?"

— REVIEW AND PROGRESS QUESTION:

— "LOOKING BACK AT OUR SESSIONS, WHAT

— PROGRESS OR CHANGES HAVE YOU

— NOTICED? WHAT HAS BEEN HELPFUL FOR

— YOU?"

— COPING QUESTION: "WHAT STRATEGIES OR

— RESOURCES HAVE YOU USED IN THE PAST

— TO COPE WITH SIMILAR CHALLENGES? HOW

— CAN YOU APPLY THOSE COPING

— MECHANISMS NOW?"

— NEXT STEPS QUESTION: "AS WE NEAR

— THE END OF OUR TIME TOGETHER, WHAT

— ARE YOUR PLANS OR IDEAS FOR

— CONTINUING YOUR PROGRESS AFTER OUR

— SESSIONS CONCLUDE?"

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— FUTURE-FOCUSED

— PREFERRED FUTURE QUESTION: "WHAT

— WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE HAPPENING IN

— YOUR LIFE IN THE FUTURE? HOW WOULD

— THINGS BE DIFFERENT?"

— FUTURE ACTION QUESTION: "WHAT

— ACTIONS OR STEPS CAN YOU TAKE TODAY

— THAT WOULD BRING YOU CLOSER TO YOUR

— DESIRED FUTURE? WHAT IS ONE THING

— YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW?"

— MIRACLE QUESTION: "SUPPOSE YOU WOKE

— UP TOMORROW, AND A MIRACLE

— HAPPENED THAT SOLVED YOUR PROBLEM.

— WHAT WOULD BE DIFFERENT? HOW WOULD

— YOU NOTICE THE CHANGE?"

— EXCEPTIONS IN THE FUTURE QUESTION:

— "CAN YOU THINK OF TIMES IN THE PAST

— WHEN YOU HAVE ALREADY

— EXPERIENCED ELEMENTS OF YOUR

— DESIRED FUTURE? HOW CAN YOU USE

— THOSE EXPERIENCES TO CREATE MORE

— OF WHAT YOU WANT?"

— FUTURE GOALS QUESTION: "WHAT SPECIFIC

— GOALS OR OUTCOMES DO YOU WANT TO

— ACHIEVE IN YOUR DESIRED FUTURE? HOW

— WILL YOU KNOW WHEN YOU HAVE

— ACHIEVED THEM?"

— FUTURE POSSIBILITIES QUESTION:

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— "WHAT ARE SOME ALTERNATIVE PATHS

— OR OPTIONS THAT YOU CAN EXPLORE IN

— ORDER TO CREATE A POSITIVE FUTURE?

— HOW CAN YOU EXPAND YOUR THINKING

— AND CONSIDER DIFFERENT

— POSSIBILITIES?"

— SCALING THE FUTURE QUESTION: "ON A

— SCALE OF 0 TO 10, WHERE 0 IS YOUR

— CURRENT SITUATION AND 10 IS YOUR IDEAL

— FUTURE, WHERE WOULD YOU PLACE

— YOURSELF ON THAT SCALE? WHAT WOULD IT

— TAKE TO MOVE ONE POINT HIGHER?"

— FUTURE SELF-QUESTION: "HOW DO YOU

— ENVISION YOURSELF BEING DIFFERENT IN

— THE FUTURE? WHAT QUALITIES OR

— CHARACTERISTICS WOULD YOU LIKE TO

— DEVELOP OR EMBODY?"

— FUTURE RESOURCES QUESTION: "WHAT

— PERSONAL STRENGTHS, SKILLS, OR
RESOURCES

— DO YOU HAVE THAT CAN HELP YOU

— ACHIEVE YOUR DESIRED FUTURE? HOW CAN

— YOU LEVERAGE THOSE RESOURCES

— EFFECTIVELY?"

— FUTURE CELEBRATIONS QUESTION:

— "WHEN YOU HAVE ACHIEVED YOUR

— DESIRED FUTURE, HOW WILL YOU

— CELEBRATE AND ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR

— PROGRESS? WHAT REWARDS OR

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— ACKNOWLEDGMENTS CAN YOU GIVE

— YOURSELF ALONG THE WAY?"