

Most Important Tips – Future, Reality, Actions

Welcome back to Guidestone University.

In this session, I want to give you just a few tips that will help you significantly as you write out your simple personal plan.

In fact, these are a couple of areas where people struggle, and where we get a lot of questions asked in these couple of areas. I'm going to give you real quick the three things that we're going to talk about. You can follow along, and what will be best is if you're either making some significant notes or writing out some things, as we talk through these couple things here real quick.

There are three things here we're going to look at. Number one, when you're writing the future — the future part of your simple personal plan — write it as if it's current. Then we'll come back and explain what that means here in just a second. Number two, when you write the reality portion of each personal plan account, write it as it relates to the future. Number three, you compare the future and the reality, and you're going to identify the gaps, and use them to draft your actions. Here's what we mean by that.

Number one, we're going to write the future as if it's current. I'm going to read you the future that I've written for my account that has to do with my daughter Madison. Here's the future account:

"Madison and I spend substantive time together regularly. We go on dates, we ride bikes, we take walks, we talk about saving and spending, we discover and pursue her dreams together, we read and pray, we play soccer, we talk about horses, we do chores together, we plan business ideas. She knows that I love her, and her mom, and her brother. She knows that she's lovely, exquisite, and chosen. She's radiant with affirmation, as a result, she seeks me out to love on me."

That's my whole envisioned future for my Madison account in my simple personal plan. There's a couple of things I want you to notice; I wrote it as if it had already happened. What that does is while I read through this on a regular basis, whether I've just written it

and I'm reviewing it every day for the first ninety days, or if it's something that I'm just reviewing weekly now, or reviewing more if I've spread out my regular reviews for my personal plan, my simple personal plan. In my mind, it emphasizes the importance that I want to see this accomplished. While it really does have to do with semantics, it really helps us to solidify in our mind this is something that we want to see accomplished, and this is how I envisioned my future in this situation with my daughter. So, write the future as if it's already happened or as if it's current. That make sense?

Okay, then the second thing is, write the reality as it relates to the future, and there's a reason why we're going to do that. We'll look at it here in just a minute, but here's what I mean by that. I'm going to read my reality for my account for my daughter Madison, and then we'll go back and look at how the two relate. So, here's how the reality – and you can watch this there on your screen:

"Madison and I are spending regular time together, although, I'm regularly distracted. We're doing a good job with her spending and savings plan. I'm spending time with her helping her with her equestrian activities, her work projects, and art projects. She knows I love her and her mom, as is evidenced by the fact, that she's seeking me out more to love on me and to show affection to me."

I want to show you a couple of things that we've done here. I'm going to break these down. In the future, the first two lines were, "Madison and I spend substantive time together. We go on dates, we ride bikes, we take walks...", and we list all these activities that we do. So, the first line of my current reality, I start out the reality by saying Madison and I are spending regular time together. We're doing those things but I'm regularly distracted. I identify a gap. A gap between my reality and where I want to be in the future.

The second sentence has to do with spending and savings, and that's something that was a real big deal to us before. We've got a handle on that, and so I don't even have that listed. Although, I might should go back and list that in – well, we talk about spending and saving there in those activities there, and so, I mentioned in the current reality that we're doing a good job with her spending and savings plan.

The next sentence or two have to do with a couple of things. I'm spending time with her helping her with her horse, and school, and work projects. Those are things that we do on a regular basis – we're doing a pretty good job with.

The last section has to do with her knowing that I love her. And, just a little bit of background on this; the reason why this is in here is there was a time, even when she was very young, when she was three or four years old, that I noticed that she would push me away when I would go to embrace her, or when I would want to spend time with her, she would want to spend time either with her mom, or with other people more than she wanted to spend with me. What I decided was, I was going to love her unconditionally, and go overboard in my love for her, and the way that I would know that I was getting through to her was when she would reciprocate that love or show that love back to me, and so, that's when I wrote this in my envisioned future for her. "She knows I love her, her mom, and her brother. She knows she's lovely, exquisite, and chosen. She's radiant with affirmation." Here's how I know that's true; the very last phrase there. "She seeks me out to love on me."

In my reality, again, I'm writing this as it relates to the future, "She knows I love her and her mom, and is evidenced by the fact, that she's seeking me out more to love on me and to show affection to me. Now, that ebbs and flows. She's getting ready to go into the middle of her teen years, and those things will probably change significantly at times for her. I wanted you just to see that.

Those are two important things. One, write the future as if it's current or as if it's already happened. Number two, write the current reality, or write your reality; the way things are right now, write that as it relates to your future so you can identify gaps. Number three, here's why we want to do that. We're going to use those gaps then to draft the actions we want to have.

Now, I'm going to give you several actions here. I want you to remember the tip that we gave you. We only want you to identify one or two actions per account in your personal plan. I'm going to give you several because I've been working on these for years. Some of these things I already do. They're part of my life and my work on a regular basis, so I have several actions here. I don't want you to get derailed by seeing that I have several actions here, but I want to illustrate the point that we're making with future and reality in your simple personal plan.

Here's the specific commitments. I noticed that I was – when I noticed several years ago, that I was having trouble communicating with her, and her knowing my love and embracing my love, and even showing that back to me or seeking me out to love on me.

One of my actions was, number one, I'm going to spend time every day when I come home communicating with her with no interruptions. I'm going to do one activity with her every evening. So, whether that's sit down and watch something that she's created, or have her explain something she's created, or — she loves to write — listening to one of her stories or something that she's written. I'm going to give her my undivided attention, so that she gets significant one-on-one hand. Go very deep with her even if I can't do it for an extended period of time. So, that was number one.

Number two, we have this action that we eat dinner together at the table any time that all of us are in town, or that any of us are in town. We eat dinner together at the table every night and we play what we call The Best and Worst game; what was the best part of your day and what was the worst part of your day. Some friends of mine, they do the same game and they call it highs and lows; what was your high for the day and what was the lowest part of your day. The reason we do that is to get them to open up and to tell us what they're experiencing, both good and bad. That helps us to know how to interact with them on a more personal level to help me to connect with them.

Number three for me was, breakfast dates every Saturday. So, with Madison, in order to really connect with her, I realized that I needed to spend substantive time with her when it was just one-on-one, and this really goes to in the reality or in the future I mentioned, "She knows she's lovely, exquisite, and chosen. She's radiant with affirmation." I spend those breakfast dates on Saturday getting to know her and communicating with her how special she is, how proud I am of her. Occasionally, we'll do a dinner date and that's very important for us as well.

Number four, take the family on two-week long vacations each year. Again, you may have to modify this as it makes sense for you, but for us, this is just what works, and this is not when we go visit family. This is not when we go do a bunch of crazy stuff. This is when we go — we'll go to the beach, or we'll go to a ski place, or we'll go to the mountains. Somewhere we just go and hang out with each other. When we're on our game in this area, then we're just hanging out, spending time together, going for long drives, hanging out as a family.

That's been a huge, huge thing for us, again, as it points back to the areas where I'm seeing gaps in my relationship with Madison, and even with our son. That's a huge thing for us. So, I wanted to show you that where you use the gaps in future and reality to

help you draft the actions. And, when you do, you'll make more significant progress toward your future.

Here's action step number one for this session. We're going to look at all three of these real quick. Go back and look at the future and make sure that you wrote it, you worded it as if it's current, and you're going to do that for each of your Personal Plan Accounts, okay?

Action step number two is, you're going to go and look at the current reality that you wrote for each Simple Personal Plan Account, and make sure that you wrote it related to the future that you wrote. So, you took the future, you copied and pasted it, and then you just edited it to show how you're doing as it relates to the vision that you have for each one of your Simple Personal Plan Accounts. Make sense?

And then our third action step is to go back and look at our actions for each one of the accounts, make sure that the actions identify the gaps between our reality and the future that we envisioned for that area. So, you have the future that you envisioned for that area, you have the reality where you are today, and you want to make sure that your Action is helping that Reality get closer to the Future that you envisioned for that particular area of your life, work or leadership. Sound good?

If you have any questions about this, submit them inside the Guidestone University Leader Community in Facebook or email them to us using the email there inside Guidestone University. And we'll be happy to give you feedback, other people can give you feedback if you feel comfortable sharing those things.

We're looking forward to seeing you get some great progress.