

# Top tips for a rich life



Do you ever ask yourself “what am I doing with my life? Is this it?” It’s natural and normal to reflect on your life at this time of year – a bit of a hangover from our school term times. Hopefully you feel content and happy with where you are and where you’re going. But sometimes darker feelings arise. Have you ever asked yourself any of these questions?

*How did I end up here?*

*What am I doing with my life?*

*Is this it?*

I’ve been coaching since 2008. Since then, every single one of my clients has said at least one of these sentences to me in our very first meeting. They usually come to see me thinking that they need a new career. A milestone birthday has been and gone and they are dissatisfied. Something is not right. They presume their career is the culprit, but then we start talking and they realise it’s not the job that is to blame for their case of the blues. It’s their whole life.

**Why am I so unsatisfied? I am feeling bored with myself and my life**

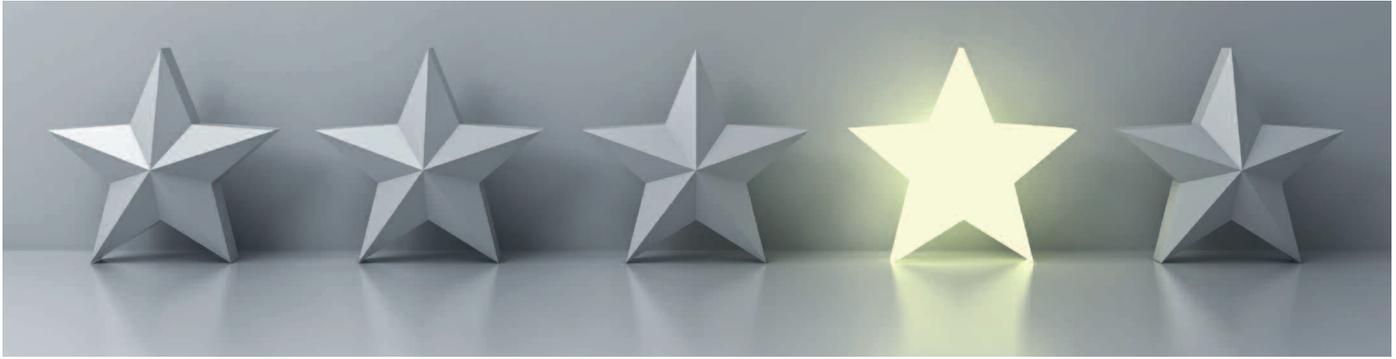
If you’re feeling the way my clients have, it may be that you’re experiencing ‘individuation’, the beginning of the process of self-actualisation coined by Carl Jung.

If you listen very carefully, you’ll hear a tiny voice inside you trying hard to get your attention. It’s this voice which is grumbling in your head as you stack the dishwasher, jump on the Tube or write yet another report for your boss. This tiny voice is your true self.

Your true self has been buried for a while. In the course of growing up, maybe raising a family and climbing the career ladder, you’ve been able to silence it with the added pounds on your pay cheque or the soft feel of your toddler’s arms around your neck. But the pile of pounds has become meaningless, and the sweet toddler is now a stropky teen or has left home. Now that dissatisfied voice – your true self – is shouting at you louder and louder.

**Listen to it and you can feel truly fulfilled and satisfied.**

You can discover your true potential, feel happy and live a more fulfilled and meaningful life. But how?



Ask yourself the question  
**“if I wasn’t scared and if I  
 knew I couldn’t fail, who  
 would I be?”**

*How do I change my life? I’ve got a well-paid job, a mortgage and bills to pay. I can’t just jack it all in!*

Don’t worry. I’m not going to suggest that you trek to faraway lands and while away your years in a yoga pose atop a verdant hill. But you can ask yourself some searching questions and you can start your journey towards a happier life. Here’s how:

#### Tip 1: Get clarity

- Put aside 5 minutes and set a timer on your phone.
- Sit in a comfy position and daydream. Ask yourself “if I wasn’t scared and if I knew I couldn’t fail, who would I be? What would I be doing? What would my life actually look like?”
- Visualise your ideal life. What would you do day to day? Who would you spend time with? What would your life look like? This is not a time to be practical or be scared to dream. Imagine you could not fail. What would you do? Faces, places and activities will spring to mind. Write them down.

Next, think about the themes and identify the core values that are most important to you in your vision.

- Are you connected to nature, with your family, friends or clients?
- Are you free to make your own decisions or are you employed and in your office?
- Are you dreaming about being creative, making a difference in the world?

Think, if you could take over a billboard and have thousands of people read it every day, what would it say? This is the beginnings of your life purpose.

Finally, and this is a very exciting exercise, imagine you are meeting your future self at a party.

- What are you like?
- How are you different?
- What’s stayed the same?

#### Tip 2: Feel the fear and do it any way

You’ve imagined a life you’d love and your rational brain can’t accept it. Sadly that’s just part of being human. When you dare to dream, to imagine a life you really want, up pops your old friend ‘the saboteur’ telling you all sorts of negative things:

- That’s not possible
- How can you do that?
- Why do you think that?
- Wow, if you tell anyone that they’ll think you’re stupid
- You can’t have that!

In short, you’re not enough and there’s no point imagining that you can change your life. This is called conditioning; it describes the situation where the way you were brought up to think, feel and behave is raising its ugly head to keep your behaviour aligned with what was seen to be right in your family, culture or religion.

Conditioning speaks to you in the voice of the saboteur and identifying (and ignoring) this voice is the single best thing you can do for yourself so you can stay on track to a happier, more fulfilled and meaningful life.

*I’ve been feeling like this for a long time now – I feel stuck in a rut and can’t see a way out*

#### Tip 3: Change your mind, change your life

So that’s it. Game over. Life over. This is all you can expect. If you think that you can’t change who you are, you’re probably feeling quite miserable right now. In this case, you may like to know that neuroscience research and evidence shows we can all change how we think, behave and even feel about anything in our life. Yes, even you. Our ability to do this is called neuroplasticity and it means that all of these things can be altered as they are malleable even into old age:



You may like to know that **neuroscience research** and evidence shows we can all change how we think, behave and even feel about anything in our life.

- Your thought patterns
- The way you behave
- Ingrained ways that you respond in certain situations

This completely discredits dusty old scientific thinking that the brain develops mainly in childhood and then remains fixed. It turns out that you can teach old dogs new tricks.

Isn't that amazing? It's been scientifically proven that you can change your perspective on anything you turn your mind to. If you can change your perspective and think that anything is possible, then it is.

So, you have a choice. You can design the life you want. You can achieve your dreams even if you're not sure what they are right now.

*I feel so overwhelmed just thinking about all of this*

**Tip 4: Plan & Act**

Dreaming without planning and actions can be overwhelming. But remember: this is your life we're talking about. If you really want to change things, how you feel on a daily basis and, say, the next 40 years you have on this planet, then please do something about it. As the poet Mary Oliver once wrote:

"Tell me, what is it you plan to do with this one wild and precious life?"

Here's how to start turning your vision in to reality:

- Create a vision board. If you're not sure how to make one, look online there are loads of good ones these days, or my preferred is good old cardboard and images (again plenty now online).
- Create a timeline complete with the targets and goals you know you need to hit. Make sure you have deadlines. I do this with all my clients, as when you've broken tasks down they seem much more achievable.

*Thinking about all of this makes me feel even more anxious and stressed out*

**Sue Belton** is an executive coach and life coach and founder of [www.suebelton.com](http://www.suebelton.com). She specialises in helping ambitious, high-achieving professionals discover, plan and follow a new path without fear or self-sabotage getting in the way. Contact her to learn more about finding your purpose while you're in the UK.

**Tip 5: Fill up your tank**

Changing your life can be a stressful business and it is hard work. However, it's so much more rewarding than living an unfulfilled life (and you're probably stressed and anxious now, aren't you?). To move from boredom, stress and anxiety to living the life you want, you need to make sure you are looking after yourself and that your self-care tank is always full.

If your saboteur is already saying "but I don't have the time / I need to look after my kids / partner / everyone else / I have a full time job" then here's a famous saying for you... Make sure that tank of yours is more full than empty and get your oxygen mask on before you put it on others. Here's how:

- Meditation and exercise are the best things you can do for yourself to fight anxiety and stress and nurture your mind, body and soul.
- Take time out and do something that makes you feel better, whether it is reading a good book, phoning a friend or walking in the woods.
- Get up earlier and create a morning routine that will have you actively working on changing your life on a daily basis before your usual morning routine kicks in.

When you're on your deathbed looking back at your life, what do you want to be able to say about it? What will you be glad about? What will make you smile?

**Do you really want to be one of those people who looks back and has so many deathbed regrets?**

