

Keeping that Well-formed Outcome in Mind



By Eve Menezes Cunningham



When do you become fearful that no matter what you do, it'll never work?

A few days ago, I had a revelation. In spite of all my NLP and other experience, I'd spent a lot of time completely focused on the exact scenario I *didn't* want to pan out.

I was visualising (catastrophising) in graphic detail, *sure* that my fears would soon be a reality.

Something very small shifted in the practical sense but it was enough for a little ray of sunlight to prise through my previous doom and gloom about the whole situation. All of a sudden, I could imagine a very different outcome.

I laughed at myself, remembering my NLP.

Since that moment, there were several times when the old, well-worn worry neural pathway caught me out but I got better at remembering the future I wanted. Encouraging myself to think about this different way forward.

Then, after drafting this (feeling smug that I'd figured it out and the situation was sorted), for the first time in over a week, something happened that was very close to one of the things I'd been catastrophising about.

Furious, I imagined all sorts of responses. I visualised the worst case scenario. I calmed myself down (friends helped) and felt much better but woke up remembering it and my mind got straight back into that habitual loop of imagining the worst.

As I meditated (and attempted to include the person in my loving kindness meditation), I realised that writing this piece was my opportunity to not just imagine the outcome I want when that feels likely but when something challenges it.

Obviously, I'll take whatever practical steps are necessary too but just shifting this and going back to my imaginings of a positive outcome for all involved shifted something in me.

As with everything, it's a practice. Personally, there are certain areas of my life where it's pretty easy and effortless to stay focused on that well-formed outcome and trust. As well as taking those practical steps, obviously.

Yet, where it's something that triggers my stress response, it can take longer to talk myself back into that resourcefulness we all have.

What helps you stay on track when thinking about well-formed outcomes you're working towards?

When are you most likely to believe that they're not just possibly but maybe even inevitable?

When do you become fearful that no matter what you do, it'll never work, it's all hopeless and not even worth trying to change?

Future pacing, what might support you most in these moments (or even in these hours)?

How can you future pace to build in support for those times when you most need it?

Can you set electronic reminders – maybe on your phone – as well as leaving yourself encouraging notes and asking loved ones and / or colleagues to say certain helpful things when they notice the signs you might have identified as meaning you need some extra support?

Might working through the logical levels for this well-formed outcome help change your perspective and even the energy around certain beliefs and behaviours that might be holding you back?

How can you build more rewards in for the practical steps you're taking?

What about for the times you notice your mind being hijacked by those catastrophising thoughts and you're able to give yourself a mental hug and resource yourself enough to get out of that rut?

If you could script things unfolding exactly how you'd like, easily, enjoyable and effortlessly, what might you imagine?

How might it feel to make this feel more vivid by deliberately visualising it on a regular basis?

What else will help you make your dreams, rather than your nightmares, a reality? ●