

A Map to Your Goals

By Cindi Myers

The movie, *What the ?*&! Do We Know?* explores the idea that our perception of reality affects that reality - that we can influence our own futures more than we may realize.

I've long been a believer in writing down my goals and dreams as a way of putting them 'out there' in the universe, and reminding my subconscious to be on the lookout for every opportunity to make these goals and dreams reality. Recently I discovered another tool that I've found to be even more effective.

It's called Goal Mapping. Because we respond so well to visual stimulus, goal mapping gives our brains a picture of what our goal looks like - and what the steps to achieving that goal look like as well. Developed by Bryan Mayne, goal mapping is an easy and fun tool for goal setting.

If you'd like to make your own goal map, it's a simple process. Step one involves brainstorming about your goals. You might write down a list, but for the purposes of a goal map, you should pick one primary goal to illustrate.

Then think about *why* this goal is the one you chose. What emotions does the idea of reaching this goal kindle in you? We respond best to things we can feel passionate about. Since some goals can take years to reach, it's good to choose one that's significant enough to inspire us on the sometimes long road ahead.

Next, you're going to find a picture or pictures to illustrate this goal and what it means to you. You could draw the picture yourself if you're a better artist than I am. You can cut images from magazines or download them from the web or photoshop your own snapshots. Or you could use a combination of all three.

Let's say your goal is to become successful enough as a writer that you can quit your day job. So you might use a picture of yourself at your desk, working, with the words 'Full Time Writer' underneath. You might have a picture of a retirement party, with a banner proclaiming 'Good Luck, Yourname.' Whatever quitting your day job means to you, find some pictures to illustrate that.

Next, think about what steps you'll need to take to get to this goal. Depending on where you are in your journey, you might need to start with publishing a first novel, or even finishing one. Next might come subsequent sales, bigger contracts, more savings in the bank. Whatever you think it will take to reach your ultimate goal, list these steps. Then find pictures to illustrate them.

You might have images of contracts, booksignings, dollar signs, paying off your house - whatever resonates with you and makes you think of that step.

Then get out a sheet of colored paper, some glue and a marker. Paste the picture or pictures that illustrates your ultimate goal at the top of the page. Write a caption underneath to describe the goal. Then add your other

illustrations to the page, underneath the big goal. Start at the bottom left hand corner of the page with the first step, then move left to right and up the page. Add a caption for each step.

When you're done, you'll have an illustrated 'map' of what you need to achieve to reach your goal. Now put this some place where you'll see it every day. Having this visible reminder will nudge you to do something every week or every day toward achieving your goal.

I've found goal maps are useful tools for all kinds of goals - not just writing. If you're training to run a marathon, you might post a goal map with an illustration at the top of you crossing the finish line, and pictures below showing the various training steps you need to take and things you need to do like registering for the race, etc.

Goal mapping works for me because it forces me to think about what my goal means to me and why I chose this as a goal. It also requires that I come up with concrete steps I can take to reach the goal. Since my goal map is posted right beside my computer, I see it every day when I sit down to work, so it keeps my goal in my mind.

If you'd like to know more about goal mapping, you can check out Bryan Mayne's site at <http://www.positivelymad.co.uk/pd/goalmap.htm>