

The Path of Life

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This is a cognitive process I developed (and in all honest probably adapted from something else though I'm not entirely sure what) to help young people set goals and engage with the future consequences of their present actions (or lack of actions).

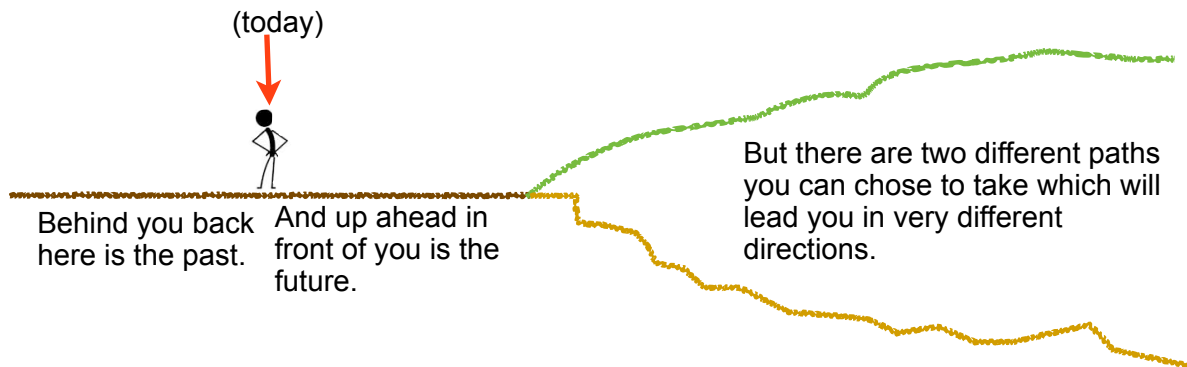
It is useful for building motivation to change, for behavioural problems and for creating a clear visual image of their options and outcomes.

It is also useful as it creates leverage for those who are both "towards" and "away from" driven in their metaprogrammes.

To start with I say something like:

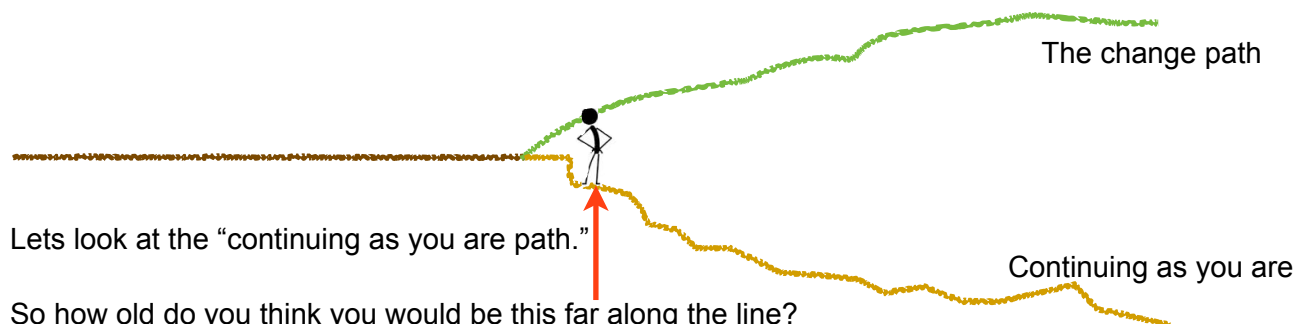
"We both know that your behaviour could be better, only when you are busy behaving that way, my guess is you don't think too much about the outcomes of it or the long term consequences. Let me show you what I mean.....

Lets say that this here is you



One is the path you can take that will simply lead on from where you are, and one requires you to make some changes.

Now lets take a closer look at how your life might be on both of these paths.



So how old do you think you would be this far along the line?
What would you be doing in your life?
Where would you be?
Who would be with you?
What kinds of friends would you have?
What would your family think about you?
What would you think about yourself?"

I help them build up some very concrete concepts by saying things like “Would you still be going to school? What clothes would you be wearing?”

Then we skip forward on the line, establishing their age and again asking the questions that reflect miles stones around that age such as:

“Did you learn to drive?”
“Did you go to college?”
“What’s your/girlfriend/boyfriend like?”
“What kind of job do you do?”
“Where do you live?”
“What kind of car do you have?”

As they respond I write some brief notes about the descriptions they are giving alongside that point in time.

We keep going along major points until we reach the end of their days. Then I ask things like

“Where are you?”
“Who is with you to say goodbye?”
“Do you have any worries or regrets?”
“Is there anything you are sorry for?”
“What would you say about your life looking back on it now?”
“Are you proud of the person you were?”

Then we do exactly the same for “The change path” but before I begin the questions I give them a warning that is something like this:

“Let me tell you before we look at taking this route, I need you to know it’s going to be tough. I know the other one looked a bit grim but really it was an easier way. On this path, you have to work harder, get smarter and have more motivation and drive. Not everyone is designed to be successful and that’s because to achieve success takes a certain kind of person. To do well, I mean *really well* in life you need to be prepared for a climb to get to the top. But, assuming you can do it, and there’s every reason you *can* do it, then lets take a look at how your life can be.

I know some of the worlds best entrepreneurs and business owners, some of them you would know the names of too, and *many* of them have said that they started out on the wrong path and could easily be in a very bad place by now. *But* they knuckled down and raised their standards about the kind of person they wanted to be and the quality of life they wanted to have. They decided to ignore the setbacks that come from “the change path” (because you definitely get some of those along the way) and to keep going regardless of the challenges. So if those people can do it, maybe you can too, if you put your mind to it.”

Then I ask the same questions that I asked before about the change path, again at different points in time along it.

There have been some amazing moments as a result of doing this exercise. One girl said to me “So the easy path looks easy but it leads to a hard life and the change path looks hard but will give me an easier life!”

The 14 year old boy with the mother that unravelled my session (that I mentioned earlier in the manual in the parents section) scrubbed off half of his line on the “continuing path” and said he didn’t think he would live that long so the line should be shorter. It was heart breaking.

It was coupled with such amazing relief when he looked at his “change path” and “saw” himself driving a BMW and being able to buy a house for ... guess who ... his mum.

Sometimes in life we prevent ourselves from doing the things that are well within our capabilities. After all, we have “all of the resources we need inside of ourselves” to be able to achieve what we desire.

However what we do sometimes lack in order to take action is a big enough reason *WHY*. Why bother to tow the line when you can have more fun being disruptive? Why bother to do the work you need to do when you can chill out instead?

It’s my belief that this process enables young people to formulate their own reasons why. Their own motivation for showing up to your sessions each week, and their own investment in their future.

I hope you like it.

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And if after all that, you still have an unanswered question or just want to say 'Howdy', here are the many different ways you can reach out, including carrier pigeon instructions:
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Thank you for listening to my podcast with Andy, I hope you enjoyed listening to it as much as I enjoyed chatting with him.

Gemma