



Your Enchanted Life

A Journal for Discovery & Delight

*Create a Life That Works for YOU...
So Jump Into Life Today!*

by Kathie Hightower

H I G H T O W E R R E S O U R C E S

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This is a sample section from Your Enchanted Life: A Journal for Discovery and Delight.

The full journal has 50 pages full of exercises, examples, tips and tools to help you envision and create your own enchanted life.

If you enjoy doing this exercise and would like to experience the entire journal, go to my website at www.jumpintolife.net and click on “products.”

The website is also full of free articles and an invitation for a free ezine — all to help you enjoy your life on a daily basis — to add more energy, creativity and fun to life.

Here's to enjoying the journey of life.

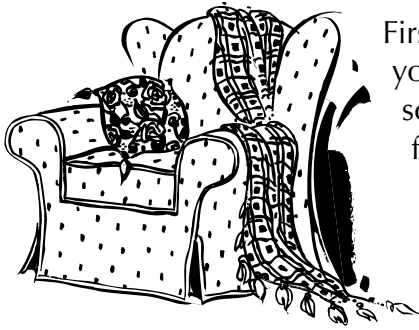
Kathie



Your Ideal Life

This exercise — or a version of it — was the trigger for me back in 1988. At that time I saw it in Barbara Sher's book *Wishcraft*. It was called the Ideal Day. I've added a bit to it and extended it a bit, partly because I couldn't pin it down to one day. I'd be bored if I did the same thing every day.

Before you do the exercise, let me explain it in detail. Then, after you do it, I'll explain what you can do with it to add more joy to your life right away!



First, when you do this, it's a good idea to carve out some quiet time for yourself. Send everyone off to the movies, or wait until your kids are in school. Sit down in a comfortable chair with a cup of tea and dream for a few minutes. The idea is to have no limitations in mind.

Picture this in your mind: I'm waving a magic wand and granting you whatever you can dream of. So no editing. You aren't allowed to think things like "well, I only have so much money... or,...I only have this much education...or...I'm too old to..." **NO LIMITATIONS.** This is dreaming here and **DREAM BIG.**

If you had a perfect life, with no limitations, what would it look like?

Include things like:

- what would you be doing, both for work and for play?
- who would you be involved with on a regular basis— what kinds of people. Maybe it's artistic people — or children — or computer geeks — or dramatic people...We are all different in the kinds of people who energize us. Your list might include specific people as well.
- what kinds of relationships would you have? what would they look like on a daily basis? — with your significant other, your kids, your neighbors, your coworkers, your friends, your family.
- what kind of daily spiritual practice would you have?
- describe who you are — what kinds of characteristics would you have? Would you be powerful or self-confident or playful or childlike or dramatic or outrageous? What characteristics do you want — you might consider what characteristics you admire in others.
- what kinds of clothes would you wear? How would you wear your hair?
- where are you living this perfect live? Your environment. It might be a specific place in the world. Or it might be more of a general description of a place. And include your immediate environment — your bedroom, your house, your office.



How to use Your Ideal Life description

There are three things you can do with it to add more joy right away.

But first, let me suggest that it's a great idea to get a couple of friends to do this exercise too. Read them out loud to each other. This does a couple of things. The first time I did this with a group, I was amazed at what other people came up with. They were truly dreaming BIG. I realized that even though I was trying not to, I really was limiting myself. My initial description was not my ideal life; it was my smaller idea of what was possible for me. Hearing those others gave me the courage to dream BIG myself (and mind you, some of those bigger things that I added have already come true in my life!)

Reading it aloud also starts some kind of magical process. Things will start happening. People and resources will show up in your life. Serendipity and synchronicity will step in. (AND, now that others know your dream, they'll help you in ways you would never have expected or dreamed as possible.)

Step One

1. Take a highlighter and highlight anything in your description that is already in your life. There will be things in your ideal day that are already in your life. Here are two important things to do about those. First is to stop and appreciate that they're in your life. To give gratitude. So, for right now, write down at least two things that are already in your life, that you are grateful for:

1.

2.

The second thing to do with the things you are grateful for is to take steps to make sure you keep them in your life. Because sometimes, when we take things for granted, they go away. Whether it's our good health or our good relationships with our spouse or a friend, if we do nothing to sustain those, if we just take them for granted, they might disappear.

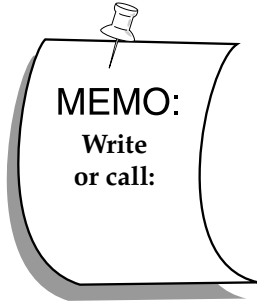
Here's how this works. Since I include this coffee mug on my seminar handouts, people often say to me, "So, Kathie, you must appreciate coffee." Well, I do appreciate good coffee. But the mug is a reminder to me that when I wrote my Ideal Life description in 1988, I put down that one thing that was very important to me was to spend time with good friends — to talk and laugh with good friends — to have coffee and conversation with good friends, especially for hours after a good dinner (with decaf coffee!).

In 1988, I wasn't doing that. Number one, I was so overworking myself that I wasn't spending time with good friends who lived nearby. And as a military spouse who moved a lot, I had lost touch with a lot of good friends. I mean, (see if this sounds familiar to you), I'd think about them and I'd mean to write them, but I never got around to it. And since I wasn't one of those organized people



who got Christmas letters/cards out each year, by the time I did get around to it, those friends had often moved too and the cards came back “forwarding address information expired”.

I decided that if they were really important to me, I needed to take steps to keep those friendships alive. I set goals for myself. I’m the instigator with friends who are close by, calling to go for walks or to have coffee. When I get somewhere on a business trip, I call ahead to meet with friends who live there. I pared down my list to my most important friends and set a goal to write at least one a week. Now, I may go weeks without writing but will then do a bunch at once (because I’ve set that intention.) Often it’s just a card to say “I’m thinking of you.” I do an annual letter now (that I send out in February or March, not during that hectic holiday season.)



When I mention this in seminars and workshops I’ve found I strike a chord. Many of us get so caught up in life that we let our friendships slide. For right now, think of one friend that you’ve meant to write to but haven’t, and either stop right now and write a card, or at least put an entry in your day planner to write a card or to call this week!!! Write their name here as a reminder (just in case you forget).

Action Plan

Now, for each item that you identified from your ideal life as being something already in your life, write down an action plan, some mini-steps that you can take, starting today, to keep them in your life. If it’s your health, it might be as simple as starting to walk daily, or to join the gym or to eat two fruits and three vegetables daily. If it’s your relationship with your spouse, it might be writing down all the things that you love about them and to tell them more often that you do! (We’ll do more with goal-setting so you can add to this later, but for now, just list a few steps — and take action!)

I’m grateful for:

I’m going to:

I’m grateful for:

I’m going to:



Step Two

Now, look at your description of your ideal environment and figure out, what's in that description that you can add into your life right now? I guarantee you there are ways you can do this.

For example, my ideal life includes living on the water, at the ocean or on a big lake, with a beautiful "secret" garden, near the mountains, with green all around. My immediate environment description includes wall-to-wall, floor-to-ceiling built-in bookshelves and a wood-burning stove and a big overstuffed chair with an ottoman and cats on my lap and...You get the picture.

*I don't know if it's
the memory of
them, or the antici-
pation of them, or
the beauty of them
— but they bring
me joy.*

When I did this in 1988 I lived in the top floor of a building in downtown Richmond, Virginia, not near the water. But I did have two cats! Since then we've lived all over — in Washington state, Kansas, Germany, Oregon, and now back in Washington. Until now, I haven't lived near the water. Until Oregon I did not have a garden. But in all those places, I carried pieces of my ideal environment with me. I have big photos of the ocean and the mountains that I put in my home office. I have things like a crystal box filled with beach sand and shells to remind me of the ocean. I have cards on my desk of beautiful flowers and have fresh flowers when I can (like right now when daffodils are so cheap!) All of those things bring me joy even without having the real thing. I don't know if it's the memory of them, or the anticipation of them, or the beauty of them — but they bring me joy.

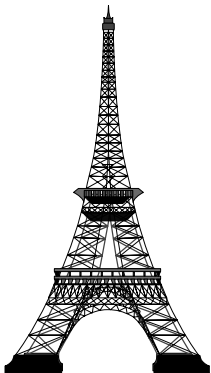
With your ideal environment in mind, think: "What can I add in now?"

Here's one more example that might trigger ideas for you. One woman in a session I did lives in a rural environment now (and needs to right now because of a family situation). Her ideal environment?

Very specific. Paris, France, where she lived for a year as a college exchange student. So what can she add? Seminar audiences have come up with the following ideas: Travel posters of France, of the Eiffel Tower, French music, take French language lessons (by audiotape if no class is available), drink French wine, eat croissants (learn to make them if you have to), wear French lingerie...

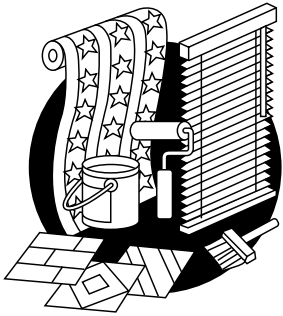
... and my favorite, "get a French man in your life!"

So, what can you add? Make a list and start adding them as you find the posters or music or whatever works for you. You'll change your experience of your everyday life as you start to live that "enchanted life" in your surroundings.



Creating a Yummy Environment

Since our environment has such an effect on our overall experience of life, I'd like to spend a little more time on it. I spent too many years of my life doing two things: 1. Buying into everyone else's "rules" about my environment. 2. Just accepting what was there.



At work

I think back to the work environments I've "just accepted." Grey dividers and file cabinets, boring art that didn't appeal to me — or no art at all. An overall institutional feel. No good lighting. No fresh air. No music — and often constant irritating noise. Nothing personal. No color. No life.

What do you think spending so many hours in an environment like that does to your psyche? Do you think it encourages your creativity?

At home

Recently, I was talking about painting my kitchen a certain color. An acquaintance said to me, "But I thought the rule was you had to have the same color flow from room to room."

Who's rule? Who says?

I've spent so much time decorating my home based on the rules and the current fads, not based on what really speaks to me. I also spent years not creating what I wanted because "we'll be moving." No more. Now I create what I love even if it is temporary.

My goal is to create the yummiest home I can. A home that my husband and I love to spend time in. That feeds our souls. That welcomes our friends. A home designed on how we really live, not on anyone else's rules.

I'm making my home office work for me, to encourage my creativity and flow. I've added color and whimsy, posters and art that make me smile. I use music and lighting to help spark my ideas. I have fresh flowers when I can and photos of flowers always. I'm about to add the wonderful sound of flowing water. I took a "tabletop fountain" class and learned how inexpensive and personalized a fountain can be.

I've learned to take control of my environment, even if it's very temporary (like during my two weeks of annual training at the Pentagon where I add color and flowers and photos I love.)

You can too.

Whenever we feel at home, our soul is nourished with loving energy.

— Alexandra Stoddard



Step Three

The third thing that will come out of your Ideal Life description will be some of your bigger goals in life. First, be sure it's a true goal. Not a "should." And figure out what is central about that goal. As Barbara Sher says, "What's the touchstone?" Or as Dr. Phil McGraw asks, "How would that make you feel? So that's what you really want...to feel...?"

Now, here are the basics of goal-achieving. You identify the goal, you commit to it by writing it down, and you come up with a plan of action — the mini steps that will work you towards that goal. Then, this is key, you schedule appointments with yourself in your day planner — in ink! — to do those mini steps.

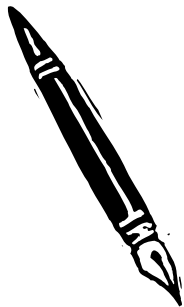
Mindmap



As to coming up with the plan of action, here's one great way to do so. Start by using the next page to "mindmap" your goal. That means to put your goal in the circle in the center. Then just brainstorm with yourself. Think of all the things you will need to do or have to reach this goal. Don't worry about order right now, just jot them all down. Add color and sketches to activate your creative right brain. Leave it for a few days and come back to it with a fresh mind to see what you can add.

Group Brainstorm

Then, the best thing to do is to bring in other minds. If you can, put your mindmap up on a flipchart or poster. Gather four to six friends, explain what your goal is and show them your plan. Ask them if they can think of steps you have forgotten or if they have resources or contacts that might help you along in the process. What will happen is that the synergy of that many minds will kick into action and will create a much more complete action plan. Then, of course, you can do the same for your friends — for their goals.



Prioritize & Schedule

Once you have the more complete mindmap, take a little time to prioritize the steps and start scheduling them into your calendar!

Schedule appointments with yourself — in ink, in your calendar — to start working towards your goal.



Mindmap



(Note: The full journal is full of ways to help you move towards your goal, to achieve your goals, step by step.)

