

CLEAR Actions Menu

On this menu the CLEAR category names have been simplified. For instance, 'Capacity-building' becomes 'Getting Better' and 'Adding to the World's Stability' becomes 'Protecting Yourself and the World.' Each of the five CLEAR categories is divided into 'Tasks' which are easy to do; 'Projects' which take more time and effort; and 'Habits, Skills & Ongoing Relationships' which take the most effort but yield ongoing results. Also note that the Helping Others section is followed by a section focused on children and youth. Finally, 'Ripple Effect' is called 'Passing It On.'

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Getting Better

Tasks

- ___ (learning) Learn something new by reading or by watching an educational program related to something useful to you.
- ___ (personal organization) Clean out ten unnecessary things from a file or drawer that you often use.
- ___ (stress) Don't put up with something that isn't working right. If your faucet, alarm clock, windshield wiper, zippers, etc. is bugging you, get it fixed or get a new one.
- ___ (time) Create a list of things to do for today or tomorrow.
- ___ (time) Rewrite the above list, putting the things that you want to do most at the top of the list.
- ___ (organization) Back-up the data in your computer.
- ___ (organization) Decide on a single place for things that you put in different places, such as new addresses and phone numbers when you get them.
- ___ (attention & mood) Make a list of what's bugging you.
- ___ (attention & mood) Directly address one of the items on the above list.

- ___ (attention & mood) Make a list of things that are physically stressing you. (Lighting, noise, dust, clothing, shoes, chair, room temperature, clutter, wall color, lack of plants...)
- ___ (attention & mood) Directly address one of the items on the above list.
- ___ (attention & mood) Make a list of 3-5 times when you were very happy. Spend a minute to relive the feeling of each.
- ___ (attention & mood) Today, have a forgiving view of events and people. Accept the fact that you live in a world that can't live up to your definition of perfection.
- ___ (attention & mood) Delay gratification, (put off eating, watching TV, etc.) for 15 minutes or whatever is a stretch for you.
- ___ (attention & mood) Put up reminders to do the things you want.
- ___ (personal organization) Make a copy of all important records. Put in a secure place in a different location from the originals.
- ___ (personal organization) Put all your credit cards and identification cards on a photocopy machine and make a copy of them. Put the copy with your important documents.
- ___ (personal organization) Make a new place for clothes, papers or other things that seem to have no place.
- ___ (personal organization) Give away five books or articles of clothing that you are not using.
- ___ (stress) Start something that you need to do early, and not at the last minute.
- ___ (stress/mood) If an especially unpleasant task faces you today, do it early in the day to get it over with. Then the rest of the day will have less anxiety.
- ___ (stress) If you have a lot on your mind at the end of the day, empty the stresses onto a piece of paper by quickly writing them down, so you can get a good night's sleep. In the morning, pick them up again by writing them on another sheet of paper, either bigger or smaller than the original sheet.
- ___ (money) Balance your checkbook.
- ___ (knowledge) Review some materials from a workshop you took or a book you read, but have forgotten, if they would be useful to you now.

Projects

- ___ (time) List five activities that you often do that are not a good use of time. Find a way to drop one.
- ___ (mood) Discuss your problems (or opportunities) with a trusted family member, friend or counselor.
- ___ (organization/stress) Practice preventative maintenance. Your car, appliances, home, and relationships will eventually break down without preventative maintenance.
- ___ (energy/stress) Make a list of five stresses in your life. Make a plan to remove one of them.
- ___ (money) Write down the five biggest bills that you have each month. Think up a way to reduce one of these bills on a regular basis. If necessary, do research or talk to others to come up with ideas.
- ___ (personal relationships) Renegotiate part of a relationship, by offering an exchange: "I'll do this___, if you do that___."
- ___ (time) When appropriate, delegate one activity to someone who can handle it.
- ___ (time) Spend at least one weekday and one weekend to determine where you are wasting time. Make a record. List the three to five greatest sources of wasted time. List the reason for each (habit, demands of others, spur of the moment decision, daydreaming, a poor decision, no decision.)
- ___ (time/energy) Think of (or look up) faster, lighter recipes. Prepare larger amounts of food and freeze some servings for later in the week. Experiment with lighter foods and smaller helpings of richer foods, so you won't get drowsy.
- ___ (organization) Redo your telephone & address book if it is cluttered.
- ___ (organization) Spend one to three hours to organize one frequently used area of your life: clothes, desk, refrigerator, toiletries, bathroom cabinets.
- ___ (money) Borrow something rather than buy. Or trade something you have and don't need for what you want.
- ___ (money) Have a garage sale, or sell something through an ad.
- ___ (money) Figure out how much money that you can spend each month by totaling your income, then subtracting your fixed expenses, then subtracting the amount that you want to save. Write this number on a slip of paper and put it in your wallet

or purse (or lightly tape to your credit card) and subtract from it as you spend money.

- ___ (stress/mood) Do something for someone else. Focus on giving rather than receiving.
- ___ (stress) Build a reserve. Don't let your checking account or savings get to the minimum; keep a well-stocked "emergency shelf" of foods; don't wait until you're down to your last bus token, postage stamp, or quarter to get more; etc.
- ___ (stress) As soon as the next crisis begins, set a goal for managing either your feelings, your behavior, or the situation itself.
- ___ (mood) Do something that will improve your appearance. Looking better can help you feel better.
- ___ (attention & mood) Write your thoughts and feelings down (in a journal, or on paper to be thrown away.) This can help you sort things out and get a renewed perspective.
- ___ (knowledge) Read a book about something new.
- ___ (stress/mood) Practice not getting angry, by counting to ten, by thinking about something that made you happy, or by talking to the person who made you angry.
- ___ (personal relationships) Practice being polite, by using words like "please," "thank you," and "I'm sorry." Let others go first sometimes.
- ___ (personal relationships) Stop gossiping. This hurts relationships and it also takes time away from living your own drama. If you can't stop gossiping, cut down or find something sincerely nice to say about someone you don't like. This will get people gossiping about you!
- ___ (ethics) If you are doing something that is harming you or someone else, try to figure out what part of the activity is attracting you or rewarding you. It might be attention, a sense of power, excitement, pleasure, etc. Try to find this in some other activity that is not harmful.

Habits, Skills & Ongoing Relationships

- ___ (motivation/support) Find someone to be a telephone buddy to give you support and encouragement to work toward your goals. (See *Buddy System Basics* for tips on how to be a buddy.)
- ___ (energy) Set aside time to do some moderate exercise. Do this about three times a week for 20-30 minutes.

- ___ (time/organization/stress) Prepare for the morning the evening before. Make lunches, put out the clothes you plan to wear, set out what you're going to take with you, etc.
- ___ (assertiveness) Read an article or part of a book that explains how to be assertive. Write out or role-play an assertive response in five situations where you are not normally assertive. Review your actions at the end of each day for two weeks to determine if you are being successfully assertive.
- ___ (energy) Give up or limit a food or drink that saps your energy.
- ___ (time/stress) Weekly or daily, get into the habit of setting goals and checking off tasks. Review your past day or week before making your new list.
- ___ (time) Use the time you take to travel to and from work to be productive-listen to an educational tape, read a book, meditate, pray, etc.
- ___ (time) Have something to read or do when you must wait in line or in someone's office.
- ___ (time) Don't be afraid to ask questions. Taking a few moments to repeat back directions or what someone expects of you can save hours later.
- ___ (stress) Allow 15 extra minutes to get to appointments.
- ___ (stress) Eliminate or limit the caffeine in your diet.
- ___ (time/mood/stress) If you find yourself rushing in the morning, get up fifteen minutes earlier. Your day will start calmly, instead of stressfully.
- ___ (motivation) Join a support group, or a Goal and Growth Group.
- ___ (energy) Get enough sleep. If necessary, use an alarm clock to remind you when to go to bed.
- ___ (money) Cut out or cut down on one unnecessary expense.
- ___ (money) Consider putting the money you save above toward savings or investment plan or toward the repayment of debt.
- ___ (money) Save a little money regularly for a time when you really want something.
- ___ (attention & mood) Concentrate on doing one thing at a time. When you are with someone, be with that person and with nothing else. When you are busy with a project, concentrate on doing that project and forget about everything else you have to do.
- ___ (knowledge) Take a workshop or course in something that would really help build your capacity.

- ___ (knowledge) Study a book to learn critical thinking skills, for instance how to analyze an argument to determine if it is valid. This skill will help you with many areas of life, from your career, to your role as a citizen.

Happiness and Fulfillment

Tasks

- ___ Today, spend one hour doing what you most enjoy. Take time for singing, drawing, reading, playing or doing something that you enjoy.
- ___ Look at a newspaper for a list of upcoming events. Underline five that you might like to do. Consider going to one.
- ___ List 5-10 things you would really enjoy doing in the next three months.
- ___ If you are continually disappointed by someone or something, check to see if your expectations are too high. Adjust them if you need to.
- ___ Do something that you've never done before that might bring you enjoyment.
- ___ Write or tell a friend about something that made you happy and share your happiness with them.
- ___ Sometimes happiness is a matter of letting go of something that you shouldn't be holding on to. Master the quick "let-go" by letting go of something you need to give up on.
- ___ Keep an eye out for people who look happy, especially those you admire. Ask that person why he or she is happy.

Projects

- ___ Plan a "vacation-at-home" weekend where you will not be interrupted and can relax.
- ___ Write a mission statement. This is a statement of whatever vision, values, and relationships you intend to live for. Put it somewhere where you will see it every day.
- ___ Set aside one hour and go deep within yourself, find the most "you" part of you, and whether it is thrilling or sad, express it. You can express it through a personal journal, art, music, movement, prayer, to another person, or through whatever way is appropriate. Just put your heart and as much of "you" into it that you can.

- ___ Go to a counselor or talk to a friend and have a conversation to clarify what you want if you are unsure or have doubts.
- ___ Distinguish needs from "really-wants," and "really-wants" from preferences. We only have a few basic needs and "really wants." Everything else is a preference. Don't spend most of your life on preferences. Make a list of your physical, emotional and spiritual needs. Add to the list your "really-wants." Each day for a week, before you start on your list of things to do, compare your to-do list with your list of needs and "really-wants." At the end of the day also compare what you actually did against your list. Notice what causes you to veer from what you need and really want out of life. (See *Want Management*.)
- ___ Write a process statement. This is a statement of the regular processes, the long-range plan by which you will live out your mission.
- ___ Allow yourself some quiet time each day for privacy, relaxation and introspection.
- ___ Visit a club or group who has the same interest as you.
- ___ If such a club or group doesn't exist, start one.
- ___ Plan a week in which you do something each day that you enjoy.
- ___ Keep a brief journal of what you thought and felt for a week. Record high points and low points, what hurt and what you appreciated. If you want, make a gift of your journal to a friend or family member.

Habits, Skills & Ongoing Relationships

- ___ Join a club or group that has the same goal or vision as you have.
- ___ At the end of each day think about or write down what went well and what didn't. Think about or write down what you could do better the next time a similar situation happens.
- ___ Set aside a regular time each day or week to do the thing you love. (If you don't know what this is, set aside time to explore.)
- ___ Find a mentor who will help, coach or guide you.
- ___ Put into practice something from your religious or spiritual tradition.
- ___ Attitudes are habits of mind. If you have a negative attitude or belief about something that is not realistic or is causing you pain, write out a positive attitude that is more reasonable. Then pretend that you are in the situation that brings up the negative thinking, and practice the positive attitude. Do this pretend practice

once or twice a day until it becomes the new way you look at the situation when it really happens.

- ___ Practice living in the moment, letting go of unproductive thinking or feelings about the past or future. Review your awareness before each meal.
- ___ Get into the habit of telling someone your feelings and wishes when you don't like what they are doing. Or write them a note.
- ___ Also get into the habit of telling someone that you appreciate them and what they do, whether in person or with a note of appreciation.
- ___ If you are feeling low much of the time, you may have depression. Choose action: regular vigorous exercise, or going to a counselor or doctor.

Helping Others

When empowering others, focus on the person and not the action involved. Be sensitive to the situation, the timing and the persons involved. Don't use an encounter with someone as a means to check something off your list, but use the list to remind you to be open to different opportunities. A suggestion is to read the list frequently and then you will notice as the opportunities present themselves, and be able to act naturally. Then, at the end of the day, you can usually remember when you have stretched to do an empowerment action, and note your actions then.

Tasks

- ___ Affirm someone, by showing unconditional positive regard for who they are, just by virtue of them being a unique person. Actions: careful listening, acts of courtesy, smiling with eye contact. Words: "I like you the way you are." "I appreciate you." "I love you."
- ___ Say hello to someone who you don't know. Smile at them if you can do it without it being forced.
- ___ Once you are comfortable with this program, invite someone to join it.
- ___ Watch and listen to how others encourage, affirm, reward. Note three occurrences, if each was done well, and how you'd do it if you had the opportunity.
- ___ Do something for someone who's not important to you.
- ___ Thank someone for what they always do well.

- ___ Give someone polite feedback on what they are doing wrong or could do better.
Write an anonymous note if you don't want to tell them in person. People can be stuck for years and not change because they don't realize what they are doing, because no one takes the time to tell them.
- ___ Praise or reward someone for something that they did well or tried to do. Praise is usually conditional, based on efforts or accomplishments. You can use words such as: "Good job!" "Way to go!" "I'm impressed by your..." You can also use actions such as: take to lunch, give award, money or gift.
- ___ Encourage someone. To encourage means to give hope or inspire action. Some examples of words would be: "When you're trying something new, it's okay to feel awkward." "Just give it your best shot, and see what happens!" "There's something you can contribute that no one else can."
- ___ Listen carefully to those around you, and then go out of your way to provide information or help when it is sought.
- ___ Send someone a card or note simply to share your love and concern for them.

Projects

- ___ Volunteer for two to four hours at an agency that helps people in meaningful ways.
- ___ ...Invite someone to volunteer with you when you go to help. (This counts whether they come with you or not.)
- ___ Observe someone with whom you interact daily until you get an insight into the kind of empowerment that you can offer them. When appropriate, offer the empowerment and provide it if they are willing to accept it.
- ___ Where appropriate, give away some power, such as the authority to make decisions about how money or time will be spent, or how resources will be used. If the power is used well, give away more power.
- ___ Read the blue pages in the phone book to learn about services that are available in your area. Call up three agencies to learn what they do. In this way, you can give access to empowerment by referring people to help when they are looking for it.

Habits, Skills & Ongoing Relationships

- ___ Informally keep an eye out for someone, observing them and trying to supply whatever empowerment they need. However, if you don't seem to be helping, be ready to let go of this relationship.

- ___ Formally mentor someone in a skill such as literacy, problem-solving, assertiveness, conflict resolution, goal-setting, public-speaking, etc.
- ___ Learn a new skill with the intent to empower someone later.
- ___ If they are interested, support someone for three months to accomplish a goal that they want. Do this either through one-to-one meetings, check-in buddy telephone calls, small groups, or correspondence/e-mail.
- ___ Learn how to listen actively. This means communicating back to the person the core message of what they're saying through a brief summary of their feelings and experience. (An example: "Sounds like you're disappointed in yourself because you didn't get the promotion.")

Empowering Children and Youth

Tasks

- ___ Talk about your plans with your children. If you already do this, give your child a small way to contribute to the plan. Talk about your plans as you form them, so that the child knows how planning is done. But don't start with plans and issues that you are anxious about.
- ___ Talk about your feelings for someone else with your child, to model caring. But don't focus on your worries or fears as much as your caring and why you care.
- ___ Invite your child to consider an extra-curricular activity at school. If she or he does this already, invite her or him to get involved in a community group or organization.
- ___ Invite your child along when they can help you help someone else. Not only will they learn concern, but they will experience self-esteem from giving.
- ___ Give yourself a pat on the back for caring about your children, and for a sacrifice you made in the past.

Projects

- ___ Affirm each child by spending time with each individually.
- ___ Encourage cooperation by structuring activities that need at least two to be accomplished.

- ___ Set a standard or rule for behavior, with a specific punishment when the rule is violated. If appropriate, invite the child to talk about his or her attitude toward the rule, and say what the punishment ought to be. Point out the natural consequences of good and bad actions, both to others and to one's self-esteem. Deliver the stated reward or punishment consistently.
- ___ Adjust a rule, if the child has outgrown it. Again, try to make it a mutual decision.
- ___ Find out how a parent can get involved at your child's school. Read the information you get.
- ___ Make yourself available to your children by spending some time at home, and by noticing if you are sending nonverbal "leave me alone messages." Send "I'm available" messages through being in the common space, and by having a relaxed posture.
- ___ Make yourself available to other people's children by showing some interest in them.
- ___ Since each child should have the opportunity to make decisions of gradually increasing responsibility as he or she matures, give each child a decision to make that is fitting to their age.
- ___ If you want your child to value something, value it yourself with your actions. For example if you want your child to show initiative or to value education, then maybe start a project or take a community college course yourself.

Habits, Skills & Ongoing Relationships

- ___ Demonstrate your love for each child through physical affection.
- ___ Work on a habit of yours that is not quite up to the standards that you set for your children.
- ___ When something your child does calls for criticism or even praise, resist the urge to use reason if it doesn't work. Also resist the urge to judge, to say "bad" or "good" when these judgments have little effect. Instead, describe what has happened and describe how you feel. Examples: "I hear you two screaming and it hurts my ears and makes me feel stressed." "I see that your bed is made and your clothes are hung up and I feel comfortable coming in here." In other words, don't focus on blame, focus on solutions. Avoid labels and use descriptions.
- ___ Turn threats into choices. For example, instead of "Don't jump on the sofa" say, "Either take your shoes off and jump on the old sofa downstairs, or go outside with all your energy and run a race to the playground."
- ___ If you tend to show your caring by asking your child about everything, give some privacy by allowing him or her to have private thoughts and feelings.

- ___ Affirm each child through positive comments several times a day.
- ___ Acknowledge your child's thoughts and feelings without minimizing them or being disapproving of them.
- ___ Make a habit of monitoring where your children are and who they are with.

Protecting Yourself and the World

Tasks

- ___ (environment) Turn down your water heater (to 121 degrees F., or to 141 degrees if you have an automatic dishwasher.)
- ___ (environment) Pack a simple lunch instead of eating out, and donate what you save, even a couple of dollars, to an organization that promotes development in the third world.
- ___ (personal relationships) Keep a promise that you made and left unfulfilled.
- ___ (community) Introduce yourself to one neighbor who you don't know.
- ___ (body/safety) Install a smoke detector if you don't have one. Change the battery if it has run down.
- ___ (political) Register to vote if you are not registered.
- ___ (body) Make an appointment for a medical exam.
- ___ (body) Make an appointment for a dental checkup.
- ___ (environment) Have your car tuned up to be energy-efficient.
- ___ (environment) Turn up your refrigerator and freezer.
- ___ (environment) Turn down thermostat in the winter, wear warmer clothes.
- ___ (environment) Turn up the thermostat in the summer, wear lighter clothes or no clothes-(just kidding.)
- ___ (psyche) Remove one cause of stress. Some examples are: loud noise, poor lighting, room clutter, or too many responsibilities.
- ___ (personal relationships) Concentrate on really listening to one person in a conversation.

- ___ (personal relationships) Do something for someone important to you.
- ___ (personal relationships) Return something that you've borrowed.
- ___ (personal relationships) Share your feelings with someone who has been on your mind.

Projects

- ___ (environment) Plant a tree, or find out about and join a tree-planting project in your area.
- ___ (environment) Start a compost pile.
- ___ (political) Write and send a letter expressing your views to an elected official.
- ___ (economy) Get a guide on socially responsible shopping. Look up ten items that you often buy and choose the most socially responsible brands. Put this list in your wallet or purse.
- ___ (body) Address a chronic health problem that you have been neglecting. Get the treatment or surgery now to take care of it before it becomes unmanageable.
- ___ (psyche) Learn a problem-solving approach for personal problems.
- ___ (community) Confront an unethical or dehumanizing situation, but do this 1) only in the way that is safest for you, (usually with support and help from others), and 2) only when you are not going to confront or label the person but confront the person's behavior.
- ___ (body) Check your home, car and workplace for safety problems and preparedness (against fire, electrical, chemical and mechanical hazards, crime, inclement weather, earthquake, etc.)
- ___ (body) Learn first aid or CPR.
- ___ (environment) Insulate your home, especially your attic and around windows.
- ___ (environment) Insulate your water heater.
- ___ (environment) Close off parts of your home that don't need heating or air-conditioning.
- ___ (environment) Switch to low-wattage or fluorescent bulbs.
- ___ (environment) Switch to biodegradable cleaners.

- ___ (environment) Plant shade trees near windows and house to insulate. Think about location of sun in summer and winter.
- ___ (environment) Buy some recycled products.
- ___ (environment) Start your own garden. Learn about organic methods.
- ___ (environment) Let family, friends and neighbors know that you're willing to loan certain things.
- ___ (psyche) Challenge one negative thought that keeps repeating in your mind. Replace it with a positive one that is equally true.
- ___ (personal relationships) Learn a communication skill such as active listening or assertiveness.
- ___ (political) Request information on a political issue that you would be willing to write letters about.
- ___ (political) Write a letter expressing your views to the editor of your newspaper.
- ___ (political) Vote intelligently by learning enough about the candidates and issues the week before election day.
- ___ (economy) Convert your savings and investments to socially responsible funds. (Thus, your money will not be loaned to groups that will use it to harm others.)

Habits, Skills & Ongoing Relationships

- ___ (environment) Minimize use of car, by using alternatives (bike, bus, walk, car pool) and by combining many errands into one trip. (Saves time too!)
- ___ (environment) Borrow things before buying them. (Offer to loan things too!)
- ___ (body/environment) Eat a diet lower in meat and animal fats.
- ___ (psyche) Eliminate destructive self-talk: "I'm too old to..." "I'm too fat to..." "I'm too dumb to..." etc.
- ___ (personal relationships) Set aside time each week to spend with an important person in your life.
- ___ (political) Join a political interest group that shares your viewpoint and that promotes the long range good of all.
- ___ (body) Wear a seatbelt and start asking others to do so.

- ___ (body) Make one change in your diet to eat better; add a nutritious food, or stop/reduce eating an unhealthy one.
- ___ (body) Do aerobic exercise three times a week for at least twenty minutes each time. Examples include swimming, jogging, and fast walking.
- ___ (body) Practice good oral hygiene including brushing, flossing and regular checkups.
- ___ (environment) Begin composting vegetable scraps and grass clippings.
- ___ (environment) Turn off lights and appliances before you leave a room.
- ___ (environment) Turn off lights, radio, TVs and other appliances when not in use.
- ___ (environment) Wash clothes in big loads/ in cold water/ with biodegradable detergent-but not too much!
- ___ (environment) Air-dry laundry whenever possible.
- ___ (environment) Bring your own cloth bags to the grocery store.
- ___ (environment) Reuse, repair, rent, or borrow rather than buy. (And when you purchase new products, select durable ones.)
- ___ (psyche) Participate in a personal relationship or small group program where you can openly talk about any problem or growth issue in your life.
- ___ (personal relationships) Eliminate exaggerated accusations such as "You always...." or "You never..."
- ___ (political) Help the political campaign of a candidate who shares your views.

Passing It On

Tasks

- ___ Send the lovelyplan.org web address to a friend. Personalize the message by noting what you appreciated and what you think they'll find useful on the site...
- ___ ...Make a note on your calendar to follow up with another e-mail later. Include a little report of what *action* you've taken as part of the chain reaction.
- ___ With a certain person in mind, print out one or two resources from this site that you think they'd most appreciate. Send it to them with the web address.

Projects

- ___ Do CLEAR for a week, using the "Plan and Do" method.
- ___ Do CLEAR for a week. Try the "Path Management" method.
- ___ Do CLEAR for a week. Try the "Awake and Respond" method.
- ___ Do CLEAR for a month total, and make a report at the end of each week. Your report boosts the strength of the Action Signal.
- ___ Using your personal address book, make a list of people you know personally. Estimate their circles of active concern. Consider who would be the best people to invite to participate in Lovely Plans. Using a Goal & Dream Sheet, make a plan to contact one person....
- ___ ... Then make a written plan to contact another person, considering what they would get out of the program, and the best way to introduce them to the ideas and resources.

Habits, Skills & Ongoing Relationships

- ___ Do CLEAR on a regular basis so that you will be able to "witness" to its impact on your life.
- ___ Make it a habit to send in your weekly report. Trust arithmetic: your actions will add up!
- ___ Offer to sponsor or lead a CLEAR group or Goal & Growth Group for members of a group or organization you belong to, donate to, or volunteer for (congregation, corporation, nonprofit or school.)

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This resource is best used with some kind of ongoing personal support.