

Future Focus

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Many of us have pasts that were full of pain and negative circumstances. We feel we've had many failures or have been through challenging experiences. When we define ourselves and our future abilities by these past attempts, we become discouraged and filled with regret.

What's fun is to take an alternative approach and look at your past as if it were perfect. It happened exactly as it was supposed to, and there were no mistakes—just lessons and preparation. There's no reason to argue with the past or wish it were different. It's a waste of emotional energy. Instead, take that energy and focus on your future—something you can affect.

The truth is, you can't go back. The past is over. For some of us, this is a blessing. The good news, however, is that the future is yours for the taking. Many times, when I ask a past focused person what their plans are for the future, they have no idea where they're going. They're being defined by who they used to be without taking control of who they want to be.

I can tell when I'm working with someone who is past focused because they'll say things like "That's just how I have always done it." "That doesn't work for me; I have tried it." "I've had this issue my entire life." "This is just how I am." "I am not the kind of person who can do that."

Do Not Define Yourself By Your Past

While it is important to learn from our pasts and grow from the mistakes we have made, it's never a good idea to define ourselves by what we haven't accomplished yet.

It's time to turn your head and start focusing on the road ahead. The past is over and gone—you can't go back there and change it or be younger again.

Your past has set you up to who you are today.

Love it for how it has shaped you and say goodbye. It's time to get excited about your future.

You have a lot of time left.

If you're planning on living until you're a hundred years old (which isn't unrealistic, when you consider the scientific advances that will occur over the next twenty years), how many years do you have left to live?

For some of you, you have more life to live than you have already lived. Further, consider that for the first eighteen years of your life, you were living according to the demands of school and the wishes of your parents. You have a much more self-defined life to live in your future than you might have already experienced.

Become Future Focused

When we're young, we're typically very future focused—this makes our lives exciting and compelling. We look forward to high school, college, jobs, marriage, children, and then what—maybe retirement?

It's at this point that many of us become past focused. We start looking at where we have been instead of where we are going. Now you have the tools to really make something happen. You have developed some important wisdom in your past, so you can now use it in your life. Don't just look forward to retiring.

Step up. Now is the time to plan and make some great outcomes. It's never too late.

Where are you going?

Where will you be in five years if you keep living this way? Where will you be in ten, twenty, or thirty years? What exactly is it that you want to have many years down the road? Are you on the path you need to be on? What can you change to put yourself on the path to achieving what you most want in your life?

Imagine a rudder on a boat. If you move it just slightly today, you will end up in a completely different location five years from now compared to where you'd be if you'd just left it alone. It's not as if we must make a massive change in our current lives to create the future we desire.

Moving Forward

If you are on your way to where you want to go, congratulations and hold steady. But if you want to be somewhere different in ten years, the time to change is now.

How much money do you want to have? Where do you want to be living? What kind of work do you want to be doing? How fit do you want to be?

Lay your foundation. Go and get what you want. Even if we ran at full, focused speed our entire lives, courageously seeking and fulfilling our dreams, we couldn't come close to fulfilling our potential. With belief in this truth, we can always be growing or becoming. No matter how old or how busy we are, we have potential to tap and dreams to consider. At the end of our lives, we still won't have fulfilled our full potential, but it would be nice to know we died trying.

Allow other people to go after their dreams because they watched you having fun going after yours.

What are you an example of?

Wouldn't it be amazing if someone looked at you and was inspired? Not impressed by what you do, but inspired by who you are? Maybe someday someone will look at you and say, "If she can do it, maybe I can too." This is more than just a choice—it's a responsibility we have to represent our Creator. If someone were to use your life to illustrate a point, why would they use you as an example?