

How to plan your Personal Development

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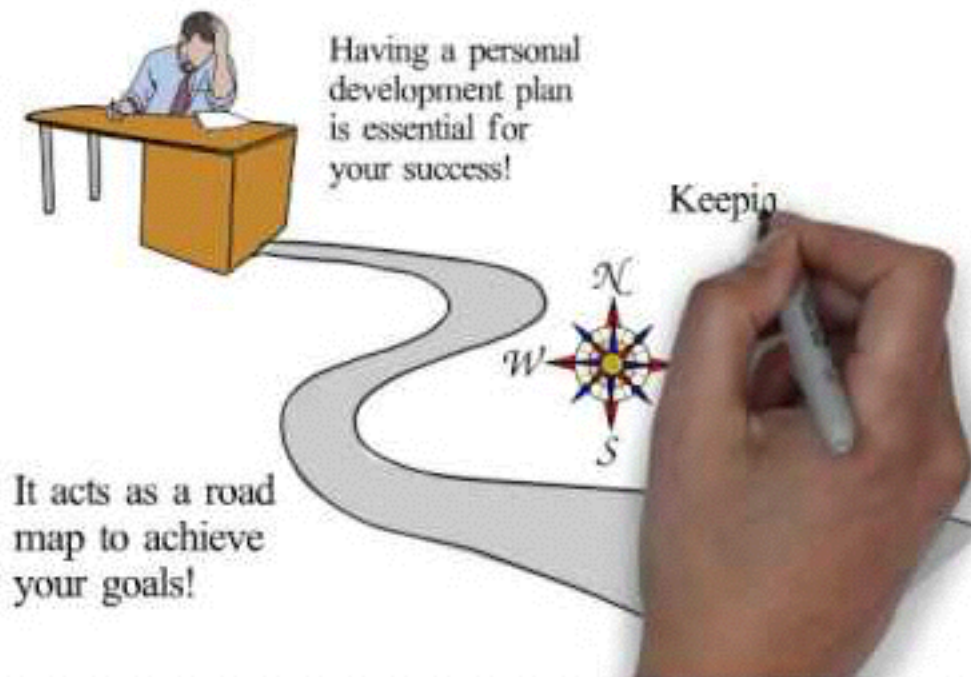
Development...

- We all need to change in order to grow and develop
- Some of this process happen spontaneously
- You have a much better chance of achieving what you want if you approach the process systematically

- As a student you might have some fairly obvious targets
- Typically: make new friends, graduate with a good degree, be offered a great job...
- What you want out of university doesn't just happen by accident! It's far more likely to happen if you consciously think about exactly what you need to do to meet your targets

Personal Development Planning

- is the process of actively planning and reviewing your personal development



Why would people want to change? Boyatzis suggests:

- to increase personal effectiveness or promotion potentials
- to become a better person
- to help others develop

Boyatzis goes on to identify 4 **discontinuities** (a break in the normal flow of activity) in the change progress, which are those periods when our consistent behaviour suddenly changes.

- Deciding who am I and what I want to be (real self and ideal self)
- The balance between preservation and adaptation (it may be better to focus upon our strengths rather than our deficiencies and decide what we want to keep and build upon)
- The decision to change (the move from contemplation to preparation, making choices and creating your own learning agenda)
- The decision to act (may include a period of experimentation and receiving feedback from other people including friends, family, tutors etc.)

Recognising your own strengths and areas for development

- 1st step in planning your personal development: develop a realistic picture of who you are!
- Identify:
 - your strengths
 - your areas for development
 - your opportunities for development
 - any threats or barriers to achievement

Personal SWOT analysis

- **Strengths** - knowledge, skills and abilities that you already have and may be able to build on
- **Weaknesses** - potentially these are the areas for development if you can work on them in order to turn them from negatives to positives
- **Opportunities** - these are your life chances and they are all there to be exploited (even an area for development can become an opportunity to develop!)
- **Threats** - these are likely to stop you achieving your targets

ACTIVITY - Who do you think you are?

Try to complete the following SWOT analysis:

- What are your strengths that you may built upon?
- What are your weaknesses or areas to develop and work on?
- What opportunities do you see to develop yourself?
- What threats do you see to your personal development or barriers that may need to overcome?

Personal development

- is about planning our personal journey through life
- Review dates allow you to re-confirm or change your objective
- Off course model (Jeffers, 1991): not always a straight forward journey but our lives often contain many twists and turns





- It's virtually important to have clear targets, to record them and review your progress towards them regularly
- Targets give us aims in life and can help to keep us on track!

What do you want to develop?

- No limit to what you can plan
- Typical areas:
 - study skills and study outcomes (i.e. progression, grades and final awards)
 - job and career aspiration (i.e. career path, salary)
 - health and fitness (i.e. improving exercise, diet)
 - personal goals (i.e. climbing a mountain, playing a sport or musical instrument)

ACTIVITY - What do you want to achieve?

1. Brainstorm ideas for things you might potentially want to achieve in life
2. Next revisit your list and decide what is really important to you
3. Put what is left into a priority order which you can use in your PDP

Making your target SMART

- To make your PDP really effective:
 - specific
 - measurable
 - achievable
 - realistic
 - timed

Example of SMART goal

- What do I want to learn?
- What will I do to achieve this?
- What resources or support will I need?
- What will my success criteria be?
- Target date for review and completion?

- If your targets are not SMART you will be less likely to achieve them
- A common reason for failing to achieve is related to making loose targets (i.e. 'I will get better results next semester', etc.)
- Make a goal which involves measuring your own performance!

ACTIVITY - Making a SMART target

- Try making a SMART target that you might include in your PDP
- Now check your target. Is it: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timed? If not, try re-working it until you are happy that it is