

Three Possible Futures

A Life Design Exercise

This simplified reflection guide is inspired by the “Odyssey Plan” exercise from *Designing Your Life* by Bill Burnett and Dave Evans at Stanford’s Life Design Lab.



Map Out Three Different Lives

Imagine three different versions of the next five years of your life.

Life 1

The Current Path

If you continue your current life, what would that look like?

Life 2

The Alternative Path

If your current path suddenly became unavailable, what would you do?

Life 3

The Unconstrained Path

What would you do if you could choose anything? If finances, approval, fear weren't an issue.

Life 1: The Current Path

If you continue your current life, what would that look like?

Sketch this life in the table above:

- A name or headline for this path
- What happens year by year, how would you spend a typical week
- What you'd have to let go of to live it, or what you'd have to gain (skills, finances, relationships, etc.)
- A word for how it feels as you imagine it

Questions that arise with this life plan

Finances / support

Few Enough

Do I want this?

No ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Yes

Can I do this?

○ ○ ○ ○ ○
Not yet Yes

Meaningfulness

No ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Yes

Life 2: The Alternative Path

If your current path suddenly became unavailable, what would you do? A bold change.

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5

Sketch this life in the table above:

- A name or headline for this path
- What happens year by year, how would you spend a typical week
- What you'd have to let go of to live it, or what you'd have to gain (skills, finances, relationships, etc.)
- A word for how it feels as you imagine it

Questions that arise with this life plan

Finances / support

○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Few Enough

Do I want this?

○ ○ ○ ○ ○

No Yes

Can I do this?

○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Not yet Yes

Meaningfulness

○ ○ ○ ○ ○

No Yes

Life 3: The Unconstrained Path

What would you do if you could choose anything? If finances, approval, fear weren't an issue.

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5

Sketch this life in the table above:

- A name or headline for this path
- What happens year by year, how would you spend a typical week
- What you'd have to let go of to live it, or what you'd have to gain (skills, finances, relationships, etc.)
- A word for how it feels as you imagine it

Questions that arise with this life plan

Finances / support

○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Few Enough

Do I want this?

○ ○ ○ ○ ○

No Yes

Can I do this?

○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Not yet Yes

Meaningfulness

○ ○ ○ ○ ○

No Yes

After You Sketch All Three

Read through the three futures slowly. Look for patterns, tension, relief, and what seems to have more life in it.

Where do you feel energy?

What repeats in all three?

What feels hard to admit?

What small next step could you test?



The aim is not to find perfect answers, but to notice what becomes visible when you stop treating your current path as the only one available.

You don't have to work through this alone

As children, we knew instinctively how to dream. As adults, we are conditioned out of it.

This exercise is one way back. If you want to talk it through and think out loud, I'd be happy to explore it together.



[Pari Namazie](#)

Choose the next step that feels useful.

Talk it through with Pari

Bring your three possible lives or even just a few notes and thoughts. We'll spend 30 minutes exploring themes, tensions and actions.

[Book a call →](#)

Keep the ideas flowing

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