

Your Future You

I share two truths about this frightening, confusing, unprecedented time in which we find ourselves:

- It will take longer to pass than any of us want
- It will not take as long as we fear

However long it does take, we will emerge from it changed and altered; not only as a society but as individuals. Worded another way, our future selves will be very different from our present selves.

A few years back, Christopher Nolan released a sharp sci-fi flick entitled *Interstellar*. I appreciate his style because he respects the audience's intelligence. While so many movies are recycled sequels or targeted to drunken partiers, it's refreshing to find a filmmaker who thinks more of his viewers, rather than less. To summarize the film in the space I'm allotted here would be nearly as improbable as some of the concepts out-lined in the story. Yet the main gist involves Mat-

We exist in three times at once: Past Self, Present Self, and Future Self. All we can control is Present Self.

thew McConaughey and crew seeking out a new planet for humanity to call home via multi-dimensional, time-shifting space travel.

Anyhoo, I bring this to the conversation because the story reminded me that — although not as extremely as are the characters in the film — we're all moving through uncharted time

and space. For us however, it's limited to one direction and we are not given the ability to jump dimensions and re-chart former decisions we now regret, nor to be able to eradicate the virus once it was first discovered so we would not now all be "sheltering in place" and social distancing.

Before going further, it's important to realize that — even without the assistance of a black hole or state-of-the-art special effects — we exist simultaneously in three times:

- Our Past Self (memories)
- Our Present Self
- Our Future Self

Obviously, we can do nothing about our Past Self. Our Future Self is not yet here. The only Self we control is our Present Self,

and it is that present self that is facing this crisis, providing only to him or her the controls to adjust what we will be.

Assuming we all emerge from this horror in which we find ourselves (albeit battle-scarred and tired), we need to imagine what our "future self" will look like. After all, "If you don't know where you're going, how will you know you've arrived?"

Should we want Future Self to be whatever we term as "happy and successful," we have to start directing Present Self to become that person now, today; despite external circumstances.



One method to accomplish that is to ask of yourself some questions.

- Why is Future Self happier or more successful? (i.e. is s/he thin-ner, more relaxed, more active, more self confident, etc.)
- What does Future Self do that Present Self does not yet do?
- How would Future Self handle problems and setbacks differently from Present Self?
- If Future Self could warn us about a mistake we're currently making that's holding us back, what would s/he say?

To that end, NOW is the time to start by asking yourself, "Suppose I had already become the Me I want to be, what would my life look like?" As an example, my Future Me will read more, be more active, volunteer more often, and engage in more creative endeavors. Your Future You might or might not look similar, but it's essential to picture him or her in as much detail as possible — and to do it often. Then, regularly pause "Present Self" and ask of yourself: "If Future Me were here right now, what would he or she be doing in these circumstances?" Next, ask yourself, "Am I doing that?"

Should the answer be negative, adjust the present-day moment to match the future version of you. Ta-da! Simple! What's cooler is, if you repeat this activity several times a day, eventually your answer becomes "Yes," more times than "No."

Future self is coming no matter what we do.

The big question is who will he or she be?

That's up to you.

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