



Dream girl: coach
Jessica McGregor
Johnson can show
you how to get the
life you really want

living the dream yet?

LIFE COACH JESSICA MCGREGOR JOHNSON OUTLINES 10 SIMPLE STEPS TOWARDS LIVING THE LIFE YOU'VE ALWAYS DREAMT OF

It's all too easy to feel overwhelmed by even the thought of changing your life. You may have an idea of what you'd like your life to look like – your dream life – but you just don't know where to begin to create it.

How about making 2013 the year you actually make the change? Here are 10 things that you can do that will help you along the way.

1. Give yourself permission to change

Now, this may seem like an odd thing to say but many women I have worked with have had great ideas about what they want their

life to look and feel like, but have not allowed themselves to go for it.

It's ok to want a different life. It's ok to want to go for your dreams. Les Brown said: "Shoot for the moon because even if you miss you will land amongst the stars!" To shoot for the moon, you need to feel like you deserve to. So get a notebook and head the first page, My New Life. Now write out all the reasons why you deserve to change your life for the better. Write out everyone who would benefit by you living your dream. Write out your reasons why this will be a great thing to do.

2. Time to get selfish

When you want to live your dreams, you need to get selfish.

When I tell my clients this they protest at first, but it is very important that, just for a while, you put yourself first. Whilst you are exploring what your new life will look like, you need to drop any of the thoughts that get in the way.

The key here is to focus only on what you want to be living. Ask yourself: "If there were no obstacles, what would I want to be doing, having or being?" If you focus on

your concerns about what others will think, or whether you are being selfish, then you will not allow your true answers to come through. In the beginning, all you are concerned with is “what” you want. “How” is a later consideration.

It is this that often trips people up – they think about what they want and immediately try to work out how. And because they can't see how, they give up. Ignore how for now, just stay selfish and stick to writing down “what” you want in your life. Write a picture of your dream life. Take all areas into consideration: your career, your home, your relationship, family, fun and social life, finances, personal growth and contribution to the world. Write this picture so that when you read it you can feel just how good it is.

3. Know your values

Most of the time, when we are unhappy in our lives it is because we are not living our values.

Values are an inherent part of us but rarely do we put words to them. When we feel frustrated it is because either we or someone else is not honouring our values.

To discover your values, think of a time you felt frustrated. Replay the scenario through your mind and ask yourself what was so wrong with this scenario? Once you have written that down, take a look at it and ask yourself – what value was not being honoured? For example, you may remember a time at work when no one was listening to what you had to say. Your mind was shouting: “Listen to me!” That might translate into a value of respect, communication or integrity.

Once you have all your values from that moment then you can think about a moment that was perfect, nothing had to change. What values were being honoured in that situation? Once you see your values you have an important piece of the puzzle. Whatever you decide has to honour these values.

4. Build on your experience

As you decide on your new life, remember that nothing you have experienced goes to waste. Take a look at all that you have lived and pick out the good bits, the bits that made you feel happy and fulfilled.

It is tempting, when you want to change your life big-time, to throw the baby out with the bathwater. Resist the temptation. Instead look at every area of your life and write down what you want to continue to have in your life. In that way begin to see the elements of what your new life will contain.

5. Listen to your Heart

Your mind is very good at doubting and

finding reasons why change is not possible. However, you can put your mind aside for a while and start to listen to your heart.

The life of your dreams will be led by your passions. When I do The Passion Test™ with clients, we start by completing the sentence: “When my life is ideal I am...” Once we have that list we do a powerful choosing process to discover the top five, but for now just write down 10 things in response to that sentence. Be vigilant as you create this list – ask yourself – is that a should or a heartfelt desire? Often the response is not what you think it will be. I had a client who thought her business was her life until she did this exercise – and it was nowhere in sight!

Your passions, along with your picture of your dream life and your values will begin to point in a direction.

6. Exploring options

Often what happens when you go through this process is you start to get ideas. Regularly, I get emails from my clients starting with the words “you’ll never guess what happened...” At this stage, if you get what I call “an inspired idea”, some idea that seemingly just drops into your mind – go on and explore it. There's nothing lost in exploring an idea. Speak to people who have lived what you want. If it is a new career then find someone who does it and take them out to lunch (we all have to eat and most people love talking about themselves). If it is a lifestyle shift, then again, find someone who is living what you want. Go visit the area or look for online communities. There is always information out there – explore.

7. Planning

Once you have made a decision, it can all seem rather overwhelming. The key at this point is to remember that you have a pathway to walk towards what you want – you do not have to jump there in one step. So plan it out.

The best way is backwards – go to where you want to be in your mind and then ask yourself, what had to happen just before I took that last step? And before that? And before that? All the way back down to where you stand now. This is so much easier than standing at the bottom of the mountain looking up. Once you have your plan, all you need to do is take the first step. And then the second, and then the third, and so on.

8. Don't tell the critics

There are always people in our lives that play the role of the critic. They will point out any impracticality in what you are trying to do. They will undermine your confidence and motivation. What's more, you will not be able

to persuade them otherwise. Don't try.

If you want to follow your dreams, never tell anyone what you are up to unless you are absolutely sure that they will be your cheerleader. The only ones to tell are the ones who will wave the pom-poms as you forge forward and remind you why you want this when you falter. For the rest, keep quiet!

9. Stay focused

Along with your plan, create some mini-milestones along the way – things that will help you stay focused and that will tell you that you are making progress. And each and every time you reach a milestone, go out and celebrate with your cheerleaders. Acknowledging how far you have come is vital to your success.

10. Know that changing your life is a process

So many times I have seen women start the process of changing their lives, only to give up really quickly. Because it doesn't all happen overnight, they assume that what they want is not possible. Don't make this mistake.

Enter this great time of change with the attitude of “whatever it takes”. Know that although there may be challenges along the way, all you need to do is keep going. There is a great saying: “There is no such thing as failure until you give up – up to that moment you are simply refining the dream.” In other words, as you meet the challenges that are inherent in change, know that all that the challenge is asking you is to get clearer. The dream is not clear enough and so you are not doing quite the right thing to make it happen. Challenges are there to help you home in on what it is you really want. It is like someone saying to you – are you sure?

The answer is, “Yes” and “This is exactly what I want”. So keep on going and land amongst the stars.

By putting these 10 steps into practice, you can create the life you really want; the one you dream of but perhaps never aimed for – until now. **D**

Jessica McGregor Johnson is author of The Right T-Shirt. Jessica has worked internationally as a coach for nine years, empowering women to go out and live the life they choose. Jessica has been there, done that and got the wrong t-shirt, so has walked the path she now writes about. In 1997 she left the corporate world and went to live in an ashram. Her purpose was to discover what was really valuable to her in her life. On leaving, she went to live in southern Spain and trained as a coach and NLP practitioner.
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