

# The Desire Map

A GUIDE TO CREATING  
GOALS WITH SOUL

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# THE VISTA: PROGRAM OVERVIEW

If you begin to understand what you are without trying to change it,  
then what you are undergoes a transformation.

—Jiddu Krishnamurti

# IT ALL BEGAN ON NEW YEAR'S EVE, BY THE FIRE

About eight years ago, I decided to have a chill New Year's Eve at home. The scene: The baby was sleeping (Yay!). Favorite white trashy snackies (Ruffles chips and ranch dip, please). Groove Armada on the speakers. Fireplace blazing. The New Year was wide open and my heart was full of ambition. It was time for some visioning. Goals! Plans! Lots of plans.

I pulled out some poster board and divided it into some life sections, like Home, Love, Money, Work. My former husband and I started writing down goals in each area. We'd write a goal, have a smooch, eat some chips, talk about the next goal. *New kitchen table. Pay off credit card. Water Babies swim class. Lose ten pounds. Invest in a great piece of art. Start biking to work. Hawaii for family wedding. Get the garden happening. Down payment. Publishing deal. New Frye boots. Find a church. Find a yoga class.*

**Him:** Maybe we should go to Australia while it's easy to travel with the baby.

**Me:** *(I have no interest in going to Australia with a baby. So I deflect.)*  
Do you think Dick Clark is going to show up for the ball drop tonight, or is Ryan Seacrest doing the whole thing?

*(pause)*

I'm so done with this sofa. It's too big for this room. Let's get a new sofa!

**Him:** But I love this sofa.

**Me:** I want the new MacBook Pro! With mega ram jam.

**Him:** Yah, you deserve some new gear, babe.

**Me:** I do, don't I?

It wasn't quite a vision board, but it wasn't just a to-do list. And yet something was still missing. It felt full, but empty. Eager but not . . . *energizing*. I pulled out a different colored pen and started scrawling positive feeling words in each section.

*Freedom!*  
*Abundance.*  
*Sexy.*  
*Earth. Nature. Eco-love.*  
*Connected.*  
*Creative.*  
*Temple.*  
*True love.*

**Me:** How do you wanna feel at work?

**Him:** Courageous. Confident. Adventurous.

And things shifted. The exercise turned inside out. So we started it over.

Instead of talking about external goals, we talked about how we wanted to feel in the various parts of our lives.

The process was more engaging. And our list of wants started to morph.

*Have a dinner party once a month.*  
*Get a KitchenAid mixer—make pasta.*  
*Design a line of thank-you cards.*  
*Download Tantra CDs.*  
*Two-week canoe trip.*  
*Self-publish.*

Visually, it started to look more beautiful. Psychologically, it felt like an invitation instead of another list of things to do.

Jump-cut to a few more New Years passed. Fireplace lit. Ryan Seacrest standing in for Dick Clark. The “feelings ‘n’ goals thing,” as it came to be known, had evolved into an unofficial process that was making a difference in how we looked at the future.

We wrote out a bunch of positive feelings, and then we asked ourselves, **“So what can we do to feel that way?”**

**In that simple question lay a new way of living life, which subtly and slowly led to profound changes in the way I went about getting things done.** I officially gave up goal-setting systems, which eventually led to quitting to-do lists, which led to giving up the time-management systems that were totally stressing me out.

Revelation dawning. Focusing on desired feelings = liberated energy. I was onto something.

At the end of the year when I’d review my “vision poster thing,” as it was also known at the time, I didn’t feel so disappointed in myself when I hadn’t checked off *Paris* or *Lose ten pounds* as accomplishments on the list. I looked at things differently. I could see that my two trips to New York that year and the new yoga classes were fulfilling my longed-for states of being. I was making progress. I was feeling the way I wanted to feel more often than not.

**This way of life planning was more fluid and compassionate, and ironically, it was also more motivating.** Just as I could see how unmet goals were synchronistically replaced by other happenings—often better than the ones I had imagined—I could also see where I was out of alignment with my truest desires. I could see that I wasn’t feeling, say, very free, or as creative or connected as I wanted to feel in certain areas of my life.

**I took the exercise into the rest of the year.** I revisited my plans in May for my birthday, and in September, because I love the “let’s get cozy and get down to business” energy of autumn. As *The Happiness Project* author, Gretchen Rubin, puts it, “September is the new January.”

**I took the exercise deeper.** I began to actually meditate on the words themselves. I looked up definitions and origins of various words and started to winnow them down. Four feelings to focus on felt manageable and inspiring. And then, ladies and gentlemen, **I created . . . The Sticky Note . . . that would change everything.** Four feelings. Stuck in my Day-Timer. Referred to every day. Guiding my choices.

I started speaking about the Desired Feelings Thing, as it became known, onstage at my speaking gigs. “So when you get clear on how you actually want to feel, your life-planning process might get turned upside down,” I explained. And chicks would come up to me afterward: “So how do I do that ‘Desired Feelings thing’?” “Oh my God, you’re so right about your feelings and goals. I’ve always felt that way. Is there a worksheet I can get?” We were onto something.



I gave the theory a name: The Strategy of Desire. I wrote about it in session 3 of my book, *The Fire Starter Sessions*, and it proved to be the most meaningfully discussed chapter of the book. Feedback started rolling in. People were posting pictures of their core desired feelings in their journals and on fridges. Facebook discussions. Tweeted “feelings lists.”

In the meantime, I started working even more deeply with the process. As a meditation; as a system; as an exploration of my own relationship with desire itself; as a prayer . . . as a multimedia sermon on making more empowered choices.

And then I decided to make this really real in the world and released *The Desire Map* program to my readers. And then it was really undeniable: people are craving a new way to make things happens in their lives. Less driving and more inspiration. Deeper meaning but without compromising prosperity. More love and way less judgment.

And the stories . . . the stories slayed me. Quitting jobs or doing work very very differently. Getting closer to significant others and getting closer to major personal truth. Whether someone writes me about what they were stopping or beginning, or the paradigm that they’d cracked open for themselves, one thing is gloriously clear: when you lean into your desires, you liberate your power—and your joy.

Welcome to *The Desire Map*.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Danielle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right from the bottom of the name.

## THE GUIDING PREMISE

**We have the procedures of achievement upside down.** Typically we come up with our to-do lists, our bucket lists, and our strategic plans—all the stuff we want to have, get, accomplish, and experience outside of ourselves. All of those aspirations are being driven by an innate desire to feel a certain way.

So what if, first, we got clear on how we actually wanted to feel within ourselves, and then we designed our to-do lists, set our goals, and wrote out our bucket lists?

How do you want to feel when you look at your schedule for the week? When you get dressed in the morning? When you walk through the door of your studio or your office? When you pick up the phone? When you cash the check, accept the award, finish your masterpiece, make the sale, or fall in love?

### **How do you want to feel?**

Knowing how you actually want to feel is the most potent form of clarity that you can have. Generating those feelings is the most powerfully creative thing you can do with your life.

—from “Session 3: The Strategy of Desire,” *The Fire Starter Sessions*

# IDEAS. INTROSPECTION. CLARITY. ACTION.

This is two books in one. One part is the theory: the root of desire, the power of feelings, the perils and promise of intentions and goals. And one part is the methodology: an actual workbook that helps you clarify **how you want to feel** in your life, and **what you want to do, have, and experience** in alignment with those feelings.

**You could call it holistic life planning. The inner meets the outer. The spirit drives the material.**

**The purpose of *The Desire Map* is:**

- › Ultimately, to help you **remember your light**, your true nature, your source—the life source that connects us all
- › To show you your heart’s longing—**your core desired feelings**
- › To guide you in using **your preferred feelings as a guidance system for making choices** and for being more present and alive
- › To help you use your desired feelings as a way to **access comfort and clarity during painful times**
- › To show you how to use your desired feelings as **creative fuel** to make great things happen in your life that will radiate out into the world
- › To help you **accentuate the positive** aspects of your life, while still honoring, and not invalidating, the negative parts that you want to change
- › To help you realize that you are much bigger than your feelings, and also, perhaps paradoxically, to help you regard your **feelings as road signs to your Soul**

MAKE

MORE

CHOICES

***The Desire Map* is designed to help you make more empowered choices.**

Which is to say both to **make more choices in your life** and to **make choices that are more empowered**.

You have a say in your life. There is so much that we can intentionally select in creating our reality. What comes into our cupboards and closets, what goes into our bodies, the people with whom we spend our free time, the gifts we give, how we worship, the thoughts we focus on. Clutter is a choice. Anger is a choice. Resentment is a choice. So are spaciousness, flexibility, laughter, compassion, tenderness, and resilience.

**Empowered choices are “whole choices” that take your mind, body, and Soul into consideration.** These decisions include our personal ecology—how much time we have, how it feels to give that time, where our wounds and sensitivities reside, where our strengths meet the needs of the world. When we are choosing from a whole place, we’re aware of how our decisions bring us closer to or further from ourselves, each other, and society.

**If you put *The Desire Map* to practical use:**

when you’re coming up with your yearly goals, planning your week, building your career, making holiday plans . . . *you’ll have your core desired feelings in mind;*

when you’re choosing whom to invite in, how to react, what to give, where to go, how to move, how and what you’ll worship . . . *you’ll have your core desired feelings in mind;*

when you want things to be different, when you’re in pain, when you’ve got a great idea to act on, when you want to make stuff . . . *you’ll have your core desired feelings in mind;*

when you’re composing the email, asking for what you want, choosing presents, shopping for shoes . . . *you’ll have your core desired feelings in mind;*

when you go to sleep at night, and you wake up in the morning . . . *you’ll have your core desired feelings in mind.*

And what you have in mind is how you create your reality.

**This has got to be practical.** I can give you poetic theories and motivational pump-up, but if you can't use this on a day-to-day basis to feel better, then we've missed the mark. I, for one, am very results-oriented—the greatest result being that I feel connected to my energy source more often than I feel separate from it. And that requires daily awareness and openness—in the kitchen, in emails, in conversation, at the grocery store.

## PLANNING YOUR DAY TURNS INTO LIVING YOUR LIFE

Most life-planning tools focus on external attainment and results—on accomplishments. Which is incredibly valuable. Aiming for results is what moves your life forward. Except that most goal-setting systems fail to harness the most powerful driver behind any pursuit: your most desired feelings.

You're not chasing the goal  
itself—you're chasing the  
feelings that you hope attaining  
those goals will give you.

You may not even be conscious of this. Many of us are on achievement autopilot. I walked into the lobby of a major corporation and the staff had their five-year goals posted everywhere. *Married with 2 kids by 34. I am living on the ocean and loving the view! Get my MBA! I finish top of my age group in the marathon. I will be traveling the world and earning a living teaching. In 5 years I will launch my own clothing line.*

Cool. All those things are awesome to have. Most of us live in a veritable paradise of privileges—even if our resources are few, the vast majority of us have access to amazing opportunities and social nourishment. Go for whatever you want—just know why you're going after it. Because if you're going to business school so that your dad will pat you on the back at graduation and you'll feel respectable and strong, or you're planning to buy a house with hardwood floors because it's going to make you feel a sense of peace, you may be looking for love in all the wrong, well, goals.