

## **Week Six**

# Week Six

Congratulations! You have now finished some pretty intense work, so take a moment to be proud of your achievements over the past five weeks of the Blue Binder Project! Your successes are living proof of the saying that 'opportunity comes giftwrapped in problems' - would you ever have guessed that the event that brought you to the Blue Binder Project could end up inspiring the kind of work you're doing? Even the toughest moments are something you can benefit from when you put in the hard work to grow.



As you move forward over the next weeks and months, your continued progress is critical to your long-term success. It is relatively easy, using the clarity during the thirty days following a trauma, to stay focused on change and personal growth. Stress and fear fuel your willpower and help you prioritize this work. Over time though, your clarity begins to fade, and if you aren't very intentional about moving forward, you can easily slow or stall or even backslide. That is why your work this week is so important!

This week is all about molding what you've learned so far into creating a formula for long-term success.

As always, take the time to notice what great work you've done so far and approach the next week's work with sincerity and openness. If you have any questions or need additional help from us – don't hesitate to email us at [info@bluebinderproject.com](mailto:info@bluebinderproject.com).



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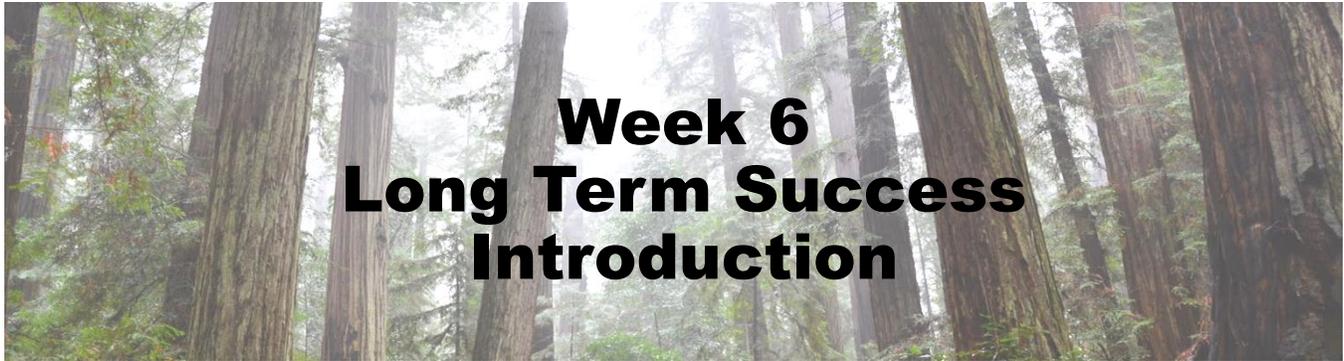
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As you continue transitioning from your time of peak clarity into everyday life, please be very aware that you have achieved a pretty impressive amount of personal growth over the past five weeks. You are at a different level of life than you were a short time ago, and now we will work on making sure that, over the long term, you don't accidentally slip back to being the person you don't want to be.

It is difficult to stay at any elevated level, especially one that is new, without being deliberate or intentional about it. Think about maintaining your new level of life like tending to a campfire. You can put an armload of wood on the fire and it burns brightly on its own for a while, but over time that wood burns down and you have to tend to the fire, or it will go out. The same thing exists here – your time of peak clarity was that armload of wood – it is burning beautifully right now, and, over time, you'll need to regularly 'tend' to your level of personal growth, or you will slide downward.

So, how do you 'tend' to your personal growth? You create a system to check in with yourself on a regular basis. The more frequent the check-ins, the smaller the changes you need to make to bring yourself back to where you want to be and the easier it is to do so. To go back to the campfire, think of it this way – once the fire is the right size, you can keep it there by putting just one more piece of wood on it from time to time. If you wait too long though, you have to put another entire armload of wood on it to get it back to where you want it to be.

This will not be an exact science because personal growth doesn't usually happen only in a single big leap. Instead, you take some great steps forward, then your forward progress slows and you catch yourself starting to slide back a little. You then refocus on stepping forward again and you move past where you stalled last time.

There are lots of clues to tell you if you're on track or not, when you take the time to look for them. In this section you'll work on recognizing when you're going in the right direction in the right ways and recognizing when you aren't and what you should do about it. We recommend you check in with yourself weekly at first. Over time, when you're really in a good groove, you might check in every two weeks, and then maybe check in with yourself every month. It's also helpful to check back in any time you're feeling particularly stuck or stressed or frustrated with life. In those moments, it's helpful to notice if you've forgotten an important strategy or if you need to take additional positive actions to balance out the stressful situation you're facing.

One last thought about checking in with yourself: check-ins are designed to simply establish a set of facts – how you are doing at a given time – so you can assess what you need to do for yourself. Please don't use these check-ins to judge yourself. In fact, let's just get something out of the way - spoiler alert – you won't be perfect. Also, use your check-ins as reminders about what you're practicing and learning. This is about noticing how easy or hard it is to stick with certain practices and beliefs and deciding what other support or reminders you might want to add or change. Make adjustments and be flexible with your plan as you gain new information and insight into how things work for you. Making these adjustments, or course corrections, are signs you're paying attention to what works, signs that you are continuing to learn, grow, and improve who you are.



## Checking Back In

In Week 5, you outlined the growth practices, mindset, and principles that work best for you. Now, how do you know you're actually doing what you want to be doing in the next weeks, months, and years? Being aware of your mistakes and slips is as important as recognizing your successes and changes. Sometimes that backwards slide happens in small, incremental steps. You hardly notice you've gotten off track until something big (and usually negative) gets your attention. And chances are, at some point, you will backslide. At some point you will make a mistake. You'll backslide into old patterns that you know full well don't work. The idea is to catch that backslide early and make adjustments. This journey is not about getting everything right the first time! It's about doing and learning as you go.

On the next page is a chart to help you check in with how you're doing. First, as you have been doing in your journal, rate yourself on the scale of 1-10 for how you are doing mentally and physically. Mentally means how you feel, your attitude and outlook on life. Physically means how healthy you feel, your energy level.

Next, consider how you are doing in the following three areas:

1. Behaviors: What are you doing that shows you're on track or not? (your growth practices, being social, drinking or not, exercising, eating more junk food, isolating)
2. Thoughts: What are you thinking? (Life is good, I like my job, things are going to work out, nothing is working out, life is hard, it's their fault)
3. Core Principles: How well are you living by your principles? What is helping you do so? What is getting in your way?

You will again be scoring yourself in these areas using a scale 1-10. A score of "1" indicates this area is not working well for you and that it's time to regroup and make some adjustments. Use your Week 5 homework "What Works Best for Me" to remind yourself of the things you've learned help you be your best. A score of "10" indicates this area feels fantastic! You don't need a "10" every time to know you're on track though. Most often you will likely fall somewhere in the middle range.

Remember, you will be using this form to check in with yourself every week to see how you're doing and what adjustments you want to make for the next week.

# Checking Back In

How do I feel today?

Mentally: -1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10+    Physically: -1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10+

## Behaviors (growth practices & actions)

**Off Track** 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10 **On Track**

What are you doing that is keeping you on track? \_\_\_\_\_

What are you doing that is taking you off track? \_\_\_\_\_

## Thoughts (mindset & beliefs)

**Off Track** 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10 **On Track**

What are you thinking that is keeping you on track? \_\_\_\_\_

What are you thinking that is taking you off track? \_\_\_\_\_

## Core Principles

**Off Track** 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7.....8.....9.....10 **On Track**

Which principles are you in alignment with? \_\_\_\_\_

Which principles are you not in alignment with? \_\_\_\_\_

## Action Plan

What did I learn this week? \_\_\_\_\_

What will I do differently next week? \_\_\_\_\_



# Long Term Success

## Your First Aid Kit

When you notice you've take a step or two backwards, don't give up! You are not starting back at square one, even as it may feel like you are. You now have a whole new set of skills and information to make getting back on track easier and more effective. This is the time to check your compass, check your map, and get back on the path you want to be on. It doesn't matter if you got off track for one day, 10 days, or 10 months. What matters is that you've noticed it and can do something about it now. Complete this page, referring to the "What Works Best for Me" section in Week 5 for ideas. Keep your First Aid Kit somewhere close by where you can easily see it and use it both as a reminder not to backslide and as a first aid kit for when you do.

### Your First Aid Plan:

1. STOP what you're doing. Don't continue negative behaviors while you figure out better ones.
2. ASSESS where you are. What choices or thoughts are working against you right now?
3. FOCUS on what you know works better. Use your answers below to remind yourself of what actions and thoughts serve you best.
4. TAKE ACTION! Don't just think about all of this, DO IT!

### **3 Things I Can Do (Growth Practices)**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### **3 Thoughts That Motivate Me (Mindset)**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### **3 People I Can Rely On (Team)**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### **Core Principles Reminder**

I am happiest with myself when I am \_\_\_\_\_

My best relationships demonstrate \_\_\_\_\_

I am most successful when I \_\_\_\_\_



## Week 6

# One Month Goal Matrix Introduction

Now it's time to really get specific about what you can do as your first steps toward accomplishing your 10 year goals. You are already practicing the growth practices and mindset that help you focus on growth and change. Now it's time to apply these practices and this mindset toward making real progress toward your goals. You will now put your Blue Binder Project energy into making goal steps a part of your daily life, just like brushing your teeth in the morning.

Your One Month Goal Matrix outlines the action steps you're going to start right now. Look at your One Year Goal Matrix from last week and what you've written in the 3 month block (shaded area). Take these steps and outline which parts of these you will do in the next month. Check out the examples below for ideas. Don't try to squeeze it all in here! This is a marathon, not a sprint. Write what seems reasonable to accomplish yet still feels like a stretch. If we stay too "reasonable", we end up doing such tiny steps that we hardly notice our progress. If we stretch too much, we end up burning out and quitting because we're exhausted. Try to find that sweet spot between too easy and too much — just a bit of a stretch.

Is it perfect? No. It doesn't need to be. But you can use this outline as a starting point to get you moving. As you approach a year from now (or a month, six months, nine months, whatever you choose), take your One Year Goal Matrix back out and look at it – see where you are compared with where you expected to be. Then make a new goal matrix, and refine it, rework it, or throw it out and start a new one with more or less detail. The idea going forward is to modify today's goal matrix in the future to be sure it remains relevant for you over time.

You're ready to do this! Can you start to see how being conscious of your goals now and down the road can work together? While you will most likely adjust those 10 Year Goals from time to time, they are your big-picture compass pointing you in the right direction. The smaller One Year and One Month Goals are the map that will help you make good choices now so you end up where you want to be. This is how change happens!

Remember to put those steps in your calendar, set reminders on your phone, put yellow sticky notes all over your house if you have to — whatever will help you remember to do what you've outlined above. At the end of each month, do a new One Month Goal Matrix, referring back to your One Year Matrix for ideas. Keep those steps moving! Talk to your coach about more ideas to help you stay on track or if you have questions.

## Examples (You're getting to be a pro at this, but just one more example to keep you going...)

If my Three Month Goal is: <b>Choose possible school(s) to attend and create budget for costs, then apply to chosen school(s)</b> , then my One Month Matrix steps might look like this:		If my Three Month Goal is: <b>Arrange to come in earlier and leave earlier to avoid rush hour traffic and be home earlier</b> , then my One Month Matrix steps might look like this:	
	<b>Job</b>		<b>People/Relationships</b>
Week 4	Create budget for school expenses	Week 4	Begin new schedule.
Week 3	Continue to research schools to attend, choose top 5 to focus on	Week 3	Have meeting with boss, come prepared with how later hours will be covered by team.
Week 2	Begin researching schools, check out at least 5 schools this week	Week 2	Talk with team about coverage during later hours if I leave early. Options?
Week 1	Create list of criteria for schools, cost, good rating, program I need, location, etc.	Week 1	Set up meeting with boss to talk about schedule change to earlier hours, research best times to come in given traffic.
Where you are now	One year college, working as admin assistant at CPA firm	Where you are now	No time for family, never make it to kids' events.

## Helpful Hints

### Here are some other tips for making a great 1 month goal matrix:

- Make your goal steps very specific. For example, "I will call Habitat for Humanity to find out how their volunteer program works." Or "I will take Sharon to lunch to talk about what it's like to be a project manager."
- Schedule when you will do these steps and put them on your calendar; they are as important as a meeting with your boss.
- Remember that sometimes a step toward a goal can be as simple as researching new information or talking to a colleague about a new job opportunity. Is there more to learn about your goal before you take the next step?
- Let some steps be experiments – try something (anything!) that will help you learn more. The goal isn't getting it right, the goal is getting more information. Whether your experiment works or not, you will learn more about what you want and about what else you might need to do to reach your goal.
- Sometimes it's just about starting. Take that first step. Sign up for that class. Run or walk that first mile. It doesn't matter if you love it. It doesn't matter if you're great at it. You're moving! And one of the basic laws of physics applies here. Objects in motion tend to stay in motion, while objects at rest tend to stay at rest. BE IN MOTION!

# 1 Month Goal Matrix

	Toward Goal 1:	Toward Goal 2:
<b>Week 4</b>		
<b>Week 3</b>		
<b>Week 2</b>		
<b>Week 1</b>		
<b>Where You Are Now</b>		



## Dealing With the Unexpected

Week 6 is about beginning to take those first steps toward accomplishing your goals and staying on track with what you know works best for you. As you really settle in to your new way of doing life and working on your goals, be aware of the things that can distract you or derail your progress. Life has a way of sometimes surprising us with the unexpected. Just because you didn't plan for something doesn't mean it has to stop your progress. So what can you do when life throws you a curveball?

Imagine you're working on your goal of buying a new car. You've changed your spending habits, paid down some debt, and saved up a good chunk of change to keep your new car payments low. Then life happens – you get an unexpected bill in the mail, and all of a sudden that chunk of change looks pretty small. It would be way too easy at this point to get discouraged, to throw up your hands in disgust, and to quit doing the things that have been helping you move forward in life – things like changing your spending habits in this example. Don't let that happen to you; don't let yourself get derailed from making your life what you want.

Setbacks will happen - they happen to all of us. The important thing is to know how to regroup after a setback and keep moving forward. First, don't take the setback personally – going down a path of self-pity doesn't change the reality – you now have a new set of facts to deal with, so figure it out! Don't let a change in your plan make you throw the plan out altogether. Look at your new set of facts and be flexible - adjust your goal a bit if you need to. In this example, maybe you buy a slightly less expensive car because you need it ASAP. Or maybe you adjust your timeline and you'll get the car you want, just a little while later. Either way, in the end, you get something better in your life!

Being flexible while still moving towards your goals is a skill to develop. Practice by being OK with how and when things work out. When you set a timeline to achieve a goal, do it in pencil so you can adjust when the unexpected comes around. Also, be clear about what your actual goal is – for example, your goal of a new car could be to have a specific make and model car or your goal could actually be to have reliable transportation that seats 4 people. If your true goal is to get a specific make and model car, then you need to save more money, and if your real goal is to get reliable transportation, perhaps you look at a less expensive car. Regardless, having flexibility in exactly how and when a goal happens can allow you to take advantage of a variety of opportunities that come along that meet your needs, and you don't limit yourself to only a single way to achieve success.