

Using a timeline for decision making

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Once we make a decision, we soon find out if we have overlooked any aspects of the impact it will have – unfortunately, this may be too late! One method for avoiding such a problem is to put yourself into the future. This does require you to be imaginative!

It uses the notion of a *timeline* – an imaginary line that represents the passing of time. We all have such a line although we are generally unaware of it. Test for yours and allow your intuition to guide you:

- think about the future – where is it located? It may be in front of you, to the side, somewhere inside your head or a long way away from your body.
- think about the past – where is this? Again, it may be located in a number of places – but it is unlikely to be in the same spot as the future.
- now think about the present – where is this located? It may be inside you, so that you are in the present now – but it may just as well be outside you – many people sense that they are slightly separate from the present, so that they have a feeling of observing what is happening to them as it happens. Both are quite normal!
- finally, imagine the line that joins these three points. Is it straight or curved? Does it pass through you or is it suspended separately? Again, all are normal.

Having established that you have a timeline, you can now use it to view the future! This may sound weird but we urge you to try it – it works because we have much untapped potential within our minds. Once we relax enough to allow our intuition to come fully into effect, we realise that we are far more aware of the future than we thought.

The process for this is:

- Imagine that you have taken your timeline and put it on the floor in front of you. You might like to straighten it at this point if it is curved; this may make it easier for what follows.
- Now step onto it at the present point, facing towards the future.
- Thinking of the decision you have just made, walk into the future until you come to a point that is just beyond the time when the decision will have taken effect.

- Relax and allow your intuition to make you aware of what has happened.
- Ask yourself some questions at this point:
 - has the decision turned out as you expected?
 - who has been affected, and how?
 - have there been any unanticipated effects?
 - with the benefit of hindsight, would you change the decision?
- Now move to a point further in the future – make this far enough ahead to ensure that the total impact of your decision will have been felt – this can be several years if necessary.
- Staying at this point, turn around and look back along the timeline to the point where the decision had just taken effect.
- Repeat the questions you asked yourself at that point – do you get the same answers?
- Finally, return to the present and step off your timeline. Don't forget to put it away (mentally) – you'd find life difficult without it as you wouldn't know where to store your memories and your anticipations!

Having completed the timeline process, you now have the options of:

- implementing your decision unchanged;
 - changing it and walking the timeline again to check you've taken care of any problems;
 - gathering more information or involving more people before you make the final decision.
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