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Life Journey Enhancement Tools (Life JET).

Lindsay G. Oades

University of Wollongong, loades@uow.edu.au

T. P. Crowe

University of Wollongong

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Life Journey Enhancement Tools (Life JET).

Abstract

The domain of life planning and personal development includes the important techniques of values clarification, strengths identification, goal setting and action planning. In the past two decades practices such as life coaching have grown in popularity (Green, Oades & Grant, 2006). Moreover, in mental health contexts, the recovery movement has challenged the illness and deficit focus (Andresen, Caputi, Oades, 2006; Oades et al, 2005) whilst within the discipline of psychology, the positive psychology movement has questioned the negative focus of clinical psychology (Resnick & Rosenheck, 2006). It is however easier to critique an existing area than to provide suggestions and tools to act based on the critique. By focusing on positive concepts such as visions, values, strengths (Linley & Harrington, 2000), goals (Clarke, Oades & Crowe, 2007) and actions (Kelly, Deane, Kazantzis, Crowe, Oades, 2006) the underlying philosophy of growth and development can be realised in tangible ways.

Keywords

tools, journey, life, jet, enhancement

Disciplines

Arts and Humanities | Life Sciences | Medicine and Health Sciences | Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Oades, L.G. & Crowe, T.P. (2008). Life Journey Enhancement Tools (LifeJET). Illawarra Institute for Mental Health. University of Wollongong. ISBN 978-1-74138-156-9

Introduction to LifeJET

The domain of life planning and personal development includes the important techniques of values clarification, strengths identification, goal setting and action planning. In the past two decades practices such as life coaching have grown in popularity (Green, Oades & Grant, 2006). Moreover, in mental health contexts, the recovery movement has challenged the illness and deficit focus (Andresen, Caputi, Oades, 2006; Oades et al, 2005) whilst within the discipline of psychology, the positive psychology movement has questioned the negative focus of clinical psychology (Resnick & Rosenheck, 2006). It is however easier to critique an existing area than the provide suggestions and tools to act based on the critique.

By focusing on positive concepts such as visions, values, strengths (Linley & Harrington, 2000), goals (Clarke, Oades & Crowe, 2007) and actions (Kelly, Deane, Kazantzis, Crowe, Oades, 2006) the underlying philosophy of growth and development can be realised in tangible ways.

This methodology, known as Life Journey Enhancement Tools, or LifeJET is purpose built to:

- (a) provide a state of the art assessment protocol for psychosocial rehabilitation contexts in mental health (Oades & Deane, 2006) by combining the values of the recovery movement and techniques which are evidence based;
- (b) have utility outside of mental health contexts (e.g. life coaching, personal development);
- (c) be attractive through the use of the metaphor of a life journey;
- (d) be modularized (i.e. so instruments can be used individually or fit together);
- (e) be brief and feasible to use routinely;
- (f) have acceptability to trainers, consumers and clinicians (Crowe et al, 2006)

LifeJET employs the “root metaphor” of life as a journey, and extends this metaphor by using three key instruments that assist the journey referred to as the Camera, Compass and MAP. To integrate and reflect on this journey, LifeJET also includes the concept of a Good Life Album.

The purpose of the **Camera** is to bring into focus the personal values and strengths of an individual.

The purpose of the **Compass** is to identify one’s ultimate destination (true north) in terms of a life vision and track one’s progress along value directions (i.e. goal progress).

The purpose of the **MAP** (My Action Plan) is to plan the next step, taking the terrain (barriers) and social resources (social support) into account.

The purpose of the **Good Life Album** is to bring together the outputs of the Camera, Compass and MAP (e.g. photos) to form a personal album of the journey. This may be used metaphorically, or done literally. That is, the Good Life Album is the record of values in action (strengths), valued directions, goals and achievements along the journey. The title of the Good Life Album is the ‘life vision’ or a statement about the purpose in this life.

How the journey fits together

By use of the Camera a person becomes clearer regarding her/his personal values and strengths. Using the Compass s/he is enabled to identify a future oriented life vision- a collection of personal values and strengths, recorded separately as valued directions that one uses to orient oneself. The person can set personal goals consistent with these important valued directions. Using the MAP the person can develop action plans to achieve the goals. Overtime s/he can gain feedback on his/her progress (i.e. her/his level of progress), referred to as coordinates. Upon reflection, the person may use the idea of a Good Life Album to document and integrate the past, present and future in relation to their strengths, values, goals and actions- the album containing a collection of themselves enacting their preferred identity. The name of the Good Life Album is the life vision.

The Camera

The instrument to **focus** personal values and strengths

Date: _____ Review Date: . .
Client ID: _____ Signature: _____
Worker ID: _____

Using the Camera: Steps and Skills

STEPS	SKILLS TO USE FLEXIBLY
1. Why should I clarify my values and strengths?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Check willingness to participate in collaborative process. b) Explain that the process may take some time and be difficult at times but is very worthwhile. c) Discuss and clarify the meaning and definition of a value by giving examples. d) Discuss and clarify the meaning and definition of a strength by giving examples. e) Discuss and explain the benefits to wellbeing of having a clear sense of what one values. f) Discuss and explain the benefits of having a life where one is using their strengths. g) Describe how these things are ongoing (i.e. the values and strengths are likely to be the same for a long time- they are "dependable"). h) Explain the metaphor of the Camera- enabling them to focus their values and strengths. The camera enables them to take shots of things they value, or examples of times in the past when they demonstrated a strength i) Note: Some people may state that they don't really value anything anymore, or that they are weak and have no strengths. Do not proceed until Step 2 until this issues have been addressed, challenged etc.
2. What are my values and strengths?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Explain how values and strengths can also be different from person to person and that is okay. b) Using the metaphor of a camera, ask the person what they would take photos of if they were taking pictures of: (a) what they value in life and (b) examples of situations in the past where they have shown one of their strengths. c) Provide three examples of values (e.g. some people like to get along well with others, some people value making their own decisions, some people value being good at things) d) Provide some examples of strengths (e.g. some people are persistent). e) After discussion help the person to write at least four values or strengths on the camera (i.e. start at 1 o'clock and work clockwise around the lens).

STEPS	SKILLS TO USE FLEXIBLY
3. How well am I living in alignment with my values and strengths?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Starting with the entry on the camera lens at 1 o'clock ask the person how well they are focused on this value or strength- how satisfied are they that they have been "living it". With reference to the past four weeks (28 days), if they are very satisfied, place an X near the middle of the circle (i.e. camera is focused)- if they believe it is not been at all well aligned, place an X as far the centre as possible- or gradations in between. Ask the person to locate the X. b) Working clockwise repeat this process with all the other values and strengths. c) Reviewing the overall lens, ask the person again whether it is accurate, encouraging them to have different ratings. For example, if two values have been given the same score- ask "so you believe that you are putting this value (e.g. making choices) into action about the same as this other value (e.g. taking opportunities). d) Re-rate values/strengths on the camera lens depending on the response in 'c' above.
4. What do I notice when looking through my camera lens?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Ask the person to comment on what they notice from the camera. For example, you may say "it seems you are living in line with the value/ strength of X, but you don't seem happy about what is happening in terms of value/strength Y" b) You may reinforce the skills of Step 1 here. c) Use reflective listening and provide empathy about current life difficulties as the illness or events may have made it more difficult for the person to live in line with his or her values and strengths.
5. How can I use this to develop a life vision?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Explain to the person that now they have a clearer idea of what they value and their strengths, and how they believe they have been going in the past month, they can use this to reflect on how they would like their life to be. b) Explain that they may not feel good about things or the future right now, or even want to do this, but that it can be worthwhile and give more purpose for what one is doing. c) Explain that there are other exercises known as the "compass" and the "map"- and that successful planning takes some time and effort- and that it does not need to be done all at once. d) Thank and congratulate the person for participating, stating that it is not easy to put into words what one values. e) Offer the person a copy of their personal camera.

Using the Compass: Steps and Skills

STEPS	SKILLS TO USE FLEXIBLY
1. Why should I develop a life vision and set goals?	a) Check willingness to participate in the collaborative process. b) Explain that the process may take some time and be difficult at times but is very worthwhile. c) Explain the benefits of having an overall purpose or vision of how one would like life to be. Describe how illness can “blur the vision” and that we can lose sight of what we really want because we can be “too busy with day to day worries to consider future planning”. Use empathy in terms of how this is understandable, but that you would like to assist the person also to think about larger visions. d) Use reflective listening to explore the many concerns that may arise (e.g. low confidence, illness related barriers, difficult current situation). e) Ask the person to think of someone they admire or see as successful and if they believe that that person has a vision of how they wanted their life to be.
2. Have I completed the Camera exercise?	a) Clarify with the person whether they have completed the Camera exercise ever, or recently. If not, explore whether this should be done before proceeding to the use of the compass. b) If completed, locate the Camera, and refresh/review with the person.
3. What are my three most important directions? Do I need three?	a) Explain the metaphor of a compass- that is, it helps us to know where we are going, north, south, east, west, in the same way that our values provide us with a reference point- a direction in which to keep heading- for example, continually trying to improve my relationships with others (even if I make some mistakes along the way). b) With reference to the maximum of eight strengths/values on the Camera (or values/strengths elicited in another manner) ask the person about three main values/strengths in their life that they work towards every day. Take time, go slow with the answer to this. Try to answer it for yourself before asking the person, to understand the difficulty of the question. c) Explain to the person that the three directions may be very similar to three chosen from the camera exercise, or they may be some of values/strengths joined together. Encourage the person to say what they really want, not just what they think they could do right now. Do not start planning yet. d) Use reflective listening to explore the many concerns that may arise (e.g. low confidence, illness related barriers, difficult current situation) e) Write up to three valued directions along the top of the compass. There may not be three, three is a maximum. It is okay to have one or two.



The Compass

The instrument to know where you are and where you are going

Date:	Review Date:
Client ID:	Signature:
Worker ID:	

My personal life vision is:

(eg what would you call a photo album of photos taken by your camera- ie values and strengths).

Please list in order of importance up to 3 **valued life directions** towards which you are typically trying to orient yourself in your daily life (blue areas).
 On the review date, rate the level of success you feel you've attained within this **valued direction** (orange areas).

	Valued direction A	Valued direction B	Valued direction C	
Higher level goal attainment	Write goal here 	Write goal here 	Write goal here 	Attainment Score (tick one at review) score = 2
Target goal attainment >70% confident	Write goal here Target goal importance A (A+B+C must = 10)	Write goal here Target goal importance B (A+B+C must = 10)	Write goal here Target goal importance C (A+B+C must = 10)	score = 1
Lower level goal attainment	Write goal here	Write goal here	Write goal here	score = 0
	Coordinate A	Coordinate B	Coordinate C	

Calculating Coordinates: For each Valued direction, multiply the Attainment score by the Target goal importance, to get a Coordinate.
Calculating Success Coordinates: Add Coordinates A, B and C. Multiply this number by 5. This is your Success coordinate out of 100.

Success Coordinate

4. How important are each of these directions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Explain to the person that whilst these are all important, one may be more important than the others. b) Ask the person if they had ten points (or ten dollars) to spend on each direction to show how important it was, how would s/he spend the points? Assist the person with arithmetic (i.e. it is the relative importance rating that is important, not the ability to add up) c) Record these point ratings on the compass (where it says perceived importance points).
5. Can I refine my life vision?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Once the person has stated their valued directions, it is easier to develop a life vision. Ask the person what would his/her life look like if s/he were doing well with all the valued directions? For example, someone might say they would like a relationship, a job and a home. What is the overall life vision that includes all three? They may say, "living a normal good life" or something that is meaningful to them. (Note: LifeJET also includes the metaphor of a photo album (good life album), documenting the person's "best possible life" if this has been discussed with the person, it will assist with verbalizing and recording a life vision statement to place at the top of the Compass. The personal name given to the album may be used as the life vision). b) Ask the person what others might notice if they were living their life vision? c) Decide on a phrase to summarise this life vision and write it on the top line of the compass (e.g. remind the person of the Camera- the photos they took of the things they valued, and times when they had demonstrated strength- and then ask them what they would call a photo album of their life from now on with all these things in it? Spend time on this- do not move on quickly. d) Mention to the person that some people like to draw, paint or find music that also represents the meaning to them of the life vision. Encourage the person to find whatever is motivating.

6. How would I know if I had succeeded?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Describe the benefits of goal setting (e.g. motivation, sense of direction, sense of achievement. Use reflective listening regarding the objections the person may have regarding previous goal setting or failure. b) Explain to the person that achieving goals is not "all or none"- sometimes we do better than we expect, and sometimes we do not do as well. For this reason, it is useful to set some different levels of what we would consider success. c) With reference to valued direction one, pick a specific date and ask the person what they would consider success. That is, by that date (give examples of other landmarks around that time) what would you like to have done? This needs to be defined in terms of a something observable, tangible, measurable. Using a number or range of numbers may be useful (e.g. I have saved between \$100 and \$200), or a milestone category (e.g. I can fit into my black pants again). Choose only one thing at a time. d) Once you have something to work with, ask the person how confident they are out of 100 that they could achieve this by the date. If the number is 70 or above write it on the compass in the "target goal level" cell, in the valued direction column. If the number is less than 70, ask them what would make them more confident or ask them to pick something they would be more confident with. Once they reach 70% or above, write this onto the compass sheet. e) Ask the person what would signify a level below what they would see as success by that date? That is, something they might be a little disappointed with if that was all they were able to achieve. Write this in the row below. Reiterate that this section of the compass can be difficult but is worthwhile once completed. f) Ask the person what they would see as something fabulous, fantastic by this date? That is, a step beyond what they believe could be possible. Write this in the "higher level goal section" g) Repeat steps c/d/e/f for the remaining valued directions. h) Ask the person to summarise the three goals and adjust as necessary using the same steps. Feel free to use another compass sheet if necessary. It is important to have this right before the person commits to working towards it.
7. When will I review and with whom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Explain that it is important to review progress b) Agree on a date for review c) Identify who the likely person will be to conduct this review.

<p>8. How well have I done? What are my "coordinates" on my compass?</p>	<p>Returning on review date:</p> <p>a) Discuss with the person the goals and directions that they originally recorded on their compass</p> <p>b) In a collaborative manner review the level of attainment of each goal. For example, within valued direction one, the person may have achieved target level attainment, but in valued direction 2, higher level attainment. Circle 2 on the higher level attainment, 1 for target level and a 0 for lower level attainment.</p> <p>c) Celebrate success and emphasise the skill of learning goal striving, not just this one, but for the future.</p> <p>d) Within each valued direction multiply the number in b) by the perceived important point for that valued direction. For example, if valued direction 1 has target level attainment (i.e. a 1) multiple that by the perceived important points (e.g. 1 x 5 points = 5). This is coordinate 1. Record on the compass.</p> <p>e) Repeat this for the other valued directions.</p> <p>f) Sum the three functions coordinates.</p> <p>g) Multiply this number by 5 give total Success Coordinate.</p> <p>h) This number is the person's "success coordinate"- out of 100. If they got to 100 they have made outstanding progress to where they want to be in life. Explain to the person that this number is based on their personal values, goals and estimates about what is possible. It is suggested that a person should try to score between 50 and 70. If they are scoring above 70 they may wish to set more challenging goals. If they are scoring below 50 they may wish to set goals that are more attainable. The metaphor is that the person needs to keep heading in the right direction at a maintainable pace. Note: It is the scores from attempting the goals that tell them this, not someone else!</p>
<p>9. Do I need a MAP or a Camera?</p>	<p>a) Encourage the person to complete another compass</p> <p>b) Explore whether reviewing another Camera would be useful</p> <p>c) Explore whether moving onto completing another Map would be useful</p>



The MAP

My Action Plan: The instrument to plan **what to do next**

Valued Direction (from Compass)	Target goal (from Compass)		
Action name: Eg walking	Action Description: What specific action is required to achieve the target level goal? Eg Walking briskly on the oval next door three times a week in the morning		
Date Set:	How often	When	Where
Social support	Resources Who can give me practical help? With what?	Information Who can give me information when needed? What information?	Emotional Who can listen to and support me?
Monitoring actions	How will I monitor actions? (eg diary, calendar recording what you have done)		
Barriers	What are my barriers? (eg financial, time, motivation)		
Solutions	What are some solutions or backup plans?		
Confidence (circle level of confidence)	Not at all confident 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 Very confident Specific action listed above. Repeat if not over 70% confident.		
Review date: Make as soon as possible	Review outcome:		

Date:	Client ID:	Worker ID:	Review Date:	Signature
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Using the MAP: Steps and Skills

STEPS	SKILLS TO USE FLEXIBLY
1. What are the benefits of planning?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Check willingness to participate in collaborative process b) Explain that the process may take some time and be difficult at times but is very worthwhile. c) Explain the benefits of planning actions- that is people like to know “what to do next”- or they can talk about things without action. Breaking things into smaller steps makes it easier and is more motivating. d) Use the metaphor of a map, that is a zoom lens can help focus where one is going and photograph what is valuable, a compass helps align with the right direction, but a map can give more detail about exactly where to go next.
2. Have I used the compass?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Ask the person whether they have used the compass- or if they have some larger goals which they have stated. If not, use the compass. b) If yes, locate and refresh the details on the compass.
3. What actions do I need to do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Starting with the target level of valued action 1, ask the person what actions need to be taken to achieve the goal. b) Elicit the main action required, and consider when, where and how often such actions need to be taken. Record on the Map
4. What are some barriers and possible solutions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Ask the person what barriers may get in the way of this action. The barriers may be financial, social, physical or psychological. b) Once the barrier has been identified- brainstorm some solutions to overcome this barrier- or a back up plan should the barrier arise. For example, if a persona is planning outdoor exercise, what will they do if it rains. c) Record some barriers and solutions on the Map.
5. Who can help me?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Explain to the person the benefits of building a support or success team. That is, who can help them achieve their action plan. Who can help with practical support? Who can help with some emotional support? Who can help with any information needed? b) Listen reflectively to issues people may have regarding isolation or needs to “be independent” and then reiterate how successful people build support teams- which is part of their success. c) Record some support people on the Map.
6. What date will I start?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Explain the importance of setting a start date- ie helps with motivation and there may some real reasons why today or tomorrow is not as sensible as next week. b) Record a start date on the Map./

7. How confident am I?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Referring to the action recorded, in a specific context, ask the person how confident (out of 100) they are that they will perform the action by a specified end date. b) If they are less than 70% confident, explore what would make them more confident. c) Explore solutions and or change the action until the person is 70% confident towards a committed action
8. How will I monitor my behaviours?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Explain to the person the benefits of being able to see their own progress, via monitoring their own behaviour. b) Ask them how they can monitor what they are doing towards their goal. Try to find something that involves the day-to-day environment in which the person lives. c) Record how the person will monitor their behaviour on the Map. It may be as simple as a tick on a calendar signifying the walk each day. It is whatever they find motivating.
9. When do I review this plan with someone?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Set a date to review the action with the person. b) Ask the person if there is also someone else who will help them stay “accountable”.
10. Should I keep repeating this process?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Explain that the Map is one part of a larger process. Setting, doing and reviewing action plans is an ongoing process- which will be repeated many times. b) Encourage the person to continue to build their skills in planning- via clarifying values, setting goals, breaking them into actions, exploring barriers and solutions, identifying who can help, setting a start date and monitoring progress.



Good Life Album

The **reflective exercise** to document your **vision of a good life**

The purpose of the Good Life Album is to bring together the outputs of the Camera, Compass and MAP (e.g. photos) to form a personal album of the journey. This may be used as a metaphor, or done literally. That is, the personal album is the record of values in action (strengths), valued directions, goals and achievements along the journey. The title of the personal album is the 'life vision' or a statement about the purpose in this life.

The Good Life Album is meant to include past examples of when a person used his/her strengths, lived by their values, worked towards and achieved some goals. However, perhaps more importantly it can serve as a symbol for how the person chooses to live- with examples of themselves living out their preferred identity (i.e. how they would like to see themselves and how they would like others to see them).

The Good Life Album is not just a "book of dreams" as it includes the values, goals and actions- and possible barriers. It is a life with pleasure, an engaged life, a meaningful life and a life with some achievements (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

The verbal articulation of the name of such an album can be used as a shorthand verbal tag for a life vision.

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Glossary

Life Vision

A verbally stated description of one's envisioned life that contains identified values and strengths. This is likely to take time to develop.

Preferred Identity

How you would like others to see you, and how you would like to see yourself.

Value

A present focused, stable non time framed preference relating to self, others or the world.

Strength

A value that has been dependably demonstrated or a talent that has been developed.

Valued direction

Life directions towards which you are typically trying to orient yourself in your daily life, not specific, not time framed, ongoing (alignment) (e.g. to improve my relationships with others).

Goal

A future oriented, specific, measurable, desired endpoint, with a timeframe. Within the compass these make reference to self (i.e. self at the desired destination).

Action

A tangible behaviour in a specific context.

Action Plan

A plan of actions to take to reach the target level of goal attainment on the compass

Success Coordinates

The 'success coordinate', provides a person with a numerical score which weights their progress (vertical) across the three goals (horizontal), in line with the valued directions.