



Live Not by Default,
but by Design!



Setting the Stage for your Next Act

Setting the stage for the next act of any play requires deconstruction of the prior set. To design the next stage of your life it is critical to clear away the props that no longer serve you and open space to accommodate the scene you are about to write.

5 Ways to Sweep Away Mental Clutter

1. **Meditate.** Meditation is specifically designed to sweep away mental clutter and release resistance. According to an article by Mayo Clinic Staff (<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/meditation/HQ01070>), meditation “clear[s] away the information overload that builds up every day and contributes to your stress.”

Emotional benefits of meditation include increased self-awareness, reduced negative emotions, greater mental clarity, easier management of stress, and general peace of mind. Research suggests that meditation may help such physical conditions as allergies, asthma, anxiety disorders, depression, fatigue, heart disease, high blood pressure and sleep problems.

If you don't currently have a practice for quieting the mind, explore the variety of techniques available, find one that is easy and enjoyable for you, and *practice it daily.*

2. **Transition breathing.** Whether you're shifting from a corporate conference to a talk with your teenager, or from sweeping the floor to answering the phone, breathing space clears the mind. Before you rush from one task to the next, take three deep breaths, inhaling to a count of three and exhaling to a count of five. As you breathe out, consciously let go of tension from the previous activity. As you breathe in, invite ease and clear focus for what you are about to do. For more profound results, practice transition breathing in a sitting position with eyes closed.
3. **Open arms wide.** Feeling tense, worried or overwhelmed causes the body to clench in ways you might not be aware of - tight jaw, furrowed brow, acid stomach, fluttering heart. When you're feeling worried or stressed stand up,

sweep your arms up and wide open, and slightly arch your back to look upward. Notice the natural expansion of your lungs and the increase of circulation. Enjoy the dissipation of physical and mental tension.

4. **Laugh.** According to studies by Dr. Lee Berk and Dr. Stanley Tan of Loma Linda University in California, laughing lowers blood pressure, reduces stress hormones, increases muscle flexion, and boosts immune function by raising levels of infection-fighting T-cells, disease-fighting proteins called Gamma-interferon, and B-cells, which produce disease-destroying antibodies. Laughter also triggers the release of endorphins (the body's natural painkillers) and produces a general sense of well-being.

Laughter is beneficial whether it's spontaneous or intentional. If you can't find something to laugh about, pretend you're on stage and the director instructs you to belt out a belly laugh. Do your best to be convincing, and notice the effect it has on your physical and psychological well-being.

The great thing about laughing is you can do it anywhere, and whatever the situation is improves. Laugh out loud in your car, in your living room, behind your closed office door or in the midst of a team meeting. I dare you to spontaneously laugh in a crowded elevator - others can't help but join in. Not only will you feel better, you will have given others something to feel good about too. Laughter is contagious. Spread the virus!

5. **Unsubscribe.** Nothing promotes mental clarity like a reduction of incoming stuff. A constant barrage of unsolicited mail and email clutters mental and physical space, demands attention and drains energy.

If letting go isn't your strong suit, start light. Every time you think "not them again," unsubscribe. When you are tempted to save it ("I don't want to miss anything" or "I might want that later"), ask out loud, "Really?" When you hold onto something simply because it might come in handy down the line, it not only takes space on your hard drive or cabinet top, it also crowds mental and emotional space and space on your calendar. It nags to be dealt with. Initially it's a tiny monkey on your back whispering "play with me." Before long it's a 500-pound gorilla beating you up with a big stick of guilt, accusing you of disorderliness and neglect.

Nancy Reagan had the right idea - *just say no!* If it doesn't make you say "Oh boy!", show it the door.

5 Inquiries to Set the Stage For Your Next Act

To get the most from this exercise, write down your answers. When you've finished each answer, read it and ask *how can I make it more magnificent?* Then write some more.

1. What is your deepest passion - the one you almost dare not say aloud?
2. Imagine that neither money nor time nor circumstance is a factor. Write the script for your fantasy day from beginning to end. (Hint: Where will you wake up? What will you see on waking? How will you feel? Who will you converse with? How will that conversation feel? What activities will you engage in? How will your body feel? What is your sense of time? How prosperous are you? What connections do you make? What gives you joy?)
3. How would living that day affect your spiritual well-being?
4. What would it be worth to you to have that experience?
5. What baby step will you take *right now* to get a taste of that feeling?

True or False Quiz Are you ready to coach with Nina?

- T___ F___ You frequently feel overcommitted, overworked or overwhelmed.
- T___ F___ You spend more time in reaction mode than in creation mode.
- T___ F___ Your dominant emotion is more often worry, disappointment or frustration than enthusiasm, passion or joy.
- T___ F___ You crave deeper meaning and purpose in your life.
- T___ F___ You are ready to stop living by default and start living by design.

SCORE:

1-2 True answers: Coaching with Nina will be **helpful** for you.

3-5 True answers: Coaching with Nina will be **life changing** for you.

To enjoy a **Free Strategy Session** with Nina, go to www.LifeSculpt.net.