

Life planning and personal development. Noa Maxwell of Noa& answers the question, 'Can we plan our life?'

"If we look back on momentous life events – careers, homes, relationships – it's clear that plans and coincidences are interwoven," says Noa.

"Life doesn't always obey predetermined goals. Fortune and luck play a part. That doesn't mean there isn't a need to plan. There is. What it means is that there has to be interplay between planning and what actually happens along the way".

"Having a clear vision of what you want is a great way to make that vision become reality, because having that goal, enables you to break the objective into smaller chunks. That makes the whole process manageable and, ultimately, achievable."

"However, we have to be careful that in following the route we don't lose sight of all the possibilities and openings that will be occurring along the way."

What is personal development?

"At one end, personal development could be joining an ashram and the promise of enlightenment. At the other might be a block of sessions with a coach to achieve a specific objective. And in between, anything from going on a pilgrimage, joining a writing retreat or learning to juggle."

"Carl Yung talks about various aspects of self; our ego, the part that faces and interacts with the world around us, and our unconscious, the part of us we often don't acknowledge."



"Personal Development is simply a way to develop our personality by recognising our habits, asking questions of ourselves and raising awareness."

"Any activity that encourages the pursuit of joy, meaning, satisfaction and connectedness can be called 'Personal Development'. Or, as the great teacher Al Pesse put it, 'The endless act of becoming yourself'."

What should you beware of?

"A measure of scepticism is healthy. After all you will likely be working towards developing big areas in your life and this must be handled with care. People can and do abuse their position."

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MIDDLETON

A D V I C E

G

GOAL: What do you want as an outcome?

R

REALITY: What is the current state?

O

OPTIONS: What are the opportunities and possibilities?

W

WINS: What do you commit to do?

which stands for Goal, Reality, Options, Wins. Something like this can be a great way to get the ball rolling and should you need it, you can back it up by continuing to work with a coach.”

“All the best mentors, coaches and workshops I have found come from suggestions by people I trust. If you are choosing a coach, put the word out there and you might be surprised how many people have one. Then you can do some due diligence by checking that they are a member of a certified coaching body, for example, and thereby adhere to a code of ethics.”

Does it work?

“Yes and yes. Many goals are fairly easy to measure and it will be obvious when that goal has been met. Other goals can be harder to define and that’s also ok.”

“It’s all too easy to be absorbed in a career, in our families, in the busyness of life, meaning that we push everything else to the side. The idea of life planning and personal development is to make space in your life to reflect and develop.”

“However, once we achieve those goals, new ones will appear, so personal development is an ongoing process. The more we do, the more it opens up.”

Thanks. Noa Maxwell, Founder, Noa&. For more information, head to their website here.

“It’s easy for an expert, coach or guru to say that they have the answer and by definition you are doing it all wrong. That’s a good sell.”

“Conversely, beware that your own scepticism doesn’t overshadow the possibilities of what you can achieve. Being critical is easy, being open can be harder.”

What are the practicalities?

“There are so many resources available. One-to-one coaching online and in person, stacks of self-help books and small group workshops.”

“If you are starting on your own there are some great coaching models that are simple and effective. For instance, the GROW model –