

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN - INPUT

INTRODUCTION

A personal development plan is a structured process that consists in defining into an action plan what is important to us and what we want to achieve. It builds on the strengths and gifts we have and includes skills, attitudes and behaviours that we wish to develop and undertake to reach the goals and objectives we have set.

Given that shifting priorities and learning is a lifelong process, this exercise is a continuous work of reflection, goal setting and planning to help us adapt and grow our capacity to meet new challenges and opportunities.

MAIN IDEAS

A personal development plan starts with a self-assessment of our **current situation** (and to the extent possible of our past). This includes taking the time to start from our own reality and reflect on the learning experience by examining:

- The gifts and strengths that this experience helped us uncover
- The limitations and resistances that we have experienced along the way,
- The support that we may need in the future
- The roadblocks that we might encounter.

Because development and growth happen in different ways, **determining how we learn** (and which is our preferred learning method) is relevant. This exercise will allow also us to build our growth plan around what resonates the most with us (Peter Drucker, *Managing Oneself*). What is your preferred way of learning?

- Some people learn best from their interactions with others (remember that next time you're in a meeting): How can you capture the learning that is arising from your daily interactions?
- Other people thrive in complex and challenging environments. What stretching experiences can you think of? How can you make explicit the learning that they are making possible?
- Some learn visually and could easily incorporate reading and research in their development plans, while others prefer listening to audiobooks or watching videos online. What books, podcasts or videos can you include in your learning plan?

A personal development plan also help us **define a vision of our future**, grounded in our values, key drivers, gifts and capabilities and energized by your desires and aspirations. Setting specific and measurable goals (with their related milestones) is the focus of this step. Since we are trying to address changes in behaviours as well as development of capacities (both horizontal and vertical learning) it is better to focus on depth rather than breadth (focusing on one or two areas to grow in rather than diluting our efforts and energy in many directions).

A personal development plan is **not a one-time thing and is subject to periodic reflection**. Being aware of the quality of our holding environment¹ and the nature of our fallbacks can help us adapt our development plan as we go in order to re-center and ground ourselves. In this context, the Examen can be a very helpful resource to help us monitor our progress and adapt our development plan accordingly.

The nature of supports that we invest in to help us grow can change depending on our needs and contexts (it could involve surrounding ourselves with supporting people (friends,...), resourcing in nature, cultivating prayer/meditation/silence times, investing in our physical wellbeing, being involved in arts and culture, or simply having fun. Monitoring our challenges is also important and might involve adapting our development plan to take account of the various stretches that we are subject to (this depends on the challenges we are facing: people/interpersonal conflict, workload, interior struggles with self, health / wellbeing stressors, environmental stressors...).

IGNATIAN NOTE

When reflecting on our development plan, it is crucial to keep in mind that there is nothing we could do tomorrow to make God love us any more tomorrow than God already loves us today. All of our learning and growth are a response to God's love, freely given to us as a gift.

FINAL THOUGHT

The Art of Living

"Often we want to be able to see into the future. We say, "How will next year be for me? Where will I be five or ten years from now?" There are no answers to these questions. Mostly we have just enough light to see the next step: what we have to do in the coming hour or the following day. The art of living is to enjoy what we can see and not complain about what remains in the dark. When we are able to take the next step with the trust that we will have enough light for the step that follows, we can walk through life with joy and be surprised at how far we go. Let's rejoice in the little light we carry and not ask for the great beam that would take all shadows away." - Henri Nouwen

Comment: What will your next step be? How can you grow in confidence that with God you have enough light for the way?

EXPECTED LEARNINGS AND OUTCOMES

1. Defining what is the most important aspects of our learning experience
2. Initiating a personal reflection on what we desire to achieve following this module
3. Setting a realistic strategy to build on the learning and integrate it in the workplace

"What is it you want?" he asked"

Matthew 20:21

[1] " A holding environment is a psychological space that is both safe and uncomfortable" (Cormode, Fuller Theological Seminary, 2015)