The VESPA Model

Vision	Effort	Systems	Practice	Attitude
Having clear goals and an actionable plan on how to achieve them	Number of hours of independent study	Organising learning resources and time	Developing and practising study skills	Responding constructively to setbacks

VESPA Vision Activity: Mental Contrasting

This is a positive thinking exercise that helps you define your vision. In the book, Rethinking Positive Thinking (2014), Gabrielle Oettingen argues that too much positive visualisation can rob a person of their desire to succeed – they get happy enough just dreaming about something and never end up doing it. Any goal you set will usually have obstacles in the way of you achieving them (if they were easy everyone would be able to achieve them!).

Mental contrasting gets you to think about these obstacles and develop an 'if……then' plan to help you overcome them. The process also gets you thinking about the feasibility of your goals. If you can't formulate an 'it …then' plan, then your goal might not be possible at all.

Use the grid on the next page to record your thoughts and ideas.

Wish

Spending a minute or two thinking in detail about something you want to accomplish.
(For example, this could be the grade you want to achieve in a particular subject.)

Outcome

Vividly imagine the best thing you associate with having achieved that outcome.
(That 'best thing' might be anything related to the outcome. It might mean getting into the university of your dreams!)

Obstacle

Ask yourself what internal obstacles are most likely you get in the way.

(That weakness inside you that holds you back from higher grades or a better exam performance.)

Plan

Formulate an if...then plan for what you will do when that obstacle arises.

('If I find myself checking twitter, Facebook or going on Netflix, I'll get up immediately and turn off the Wi-Fi.)

Use the grid on the next page to record your thoughts and ideas.

1. Wish	*2. Outcome*
3. Obstacle	*4. Plan*

Final Thoughts

Creating a vision this way allows you to record and recognise the elements of your own personality that are likely to prevent you from reaching your goals.

What do you consider to be one of your most significant weaknesses?

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How might you overcome it?

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