



An Interview with Your Past and Future Self

Directions: For this activity, you will need to use your imagination to go backward and forward in time. First, you will answer some interview questions as your past self, followed by answering some more questions as “you” in the future (your future self). This may be challenging for some but try to do the best you can as this exercise can help with building insight and motivation for making positive lifestyle changes.

Part 1 – An Interview with my *Past Self*

Choose a time in your life when you were younger and less experienced. If you are attending this group for help with a substance use or mental health issues (or both) you may choose to think about a time when you were in the earlier stages of those conditions.

Prior to answering the questions for this part, tell the rest of the group what age you chose for your past self. You can give a (very brief) description of your self at that time. Consider an example:

- *My Past Self: “I am choosing me when I was 18, when I was fresh out of high school, and I was first starting to get more involved with harder drugs. This was a year before my father died”*

Now answer the following interview questions (to the best of your ability, using your memory and imagination) but give the answer as your past self:

My Past Self:

How does it feel to be you?

How did get to this point in your life?

What are you focused on right now in your life? (Values and priorities)

What are you struggling with?

What are you doing well?

What else is going on that is important and relevant in your life right now?

How will things turn out for you? (*How would you answer this THEN, not knowing what you know now*)



Part 2 – An Interview with my *Future Self*

Now answer these as your future self. Pick a time in the future when you think that things will be better. Tell the group what time in your life you choose for these questions as your future self and use your imagination to answer the following interview questions:

My Future Self:

How do you feel at this point in life?

What did you need to change to get where you are?

What are some specific things that you needed to do to get where you are?

What helped you along your path?

What is going right in your life right now?

What are your values and priorities in life right now?

In summary, how did you get here? (What did it take for you to succeed?)

Part 3 – Closing Discussion: *The Present*

Closing group discussion: What are 2 or 3 things that you can draw from this exercise that can help you to move forward in life in a positive direction to successfully achieve your goals?

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Optional Follow Up Exercise: Draw Your Past and Future Self

If time allows everyone in the group should make two drawings: One titled “My Past Self” and the other entitled “My Future Self”. Let your mind run free when drawing and do not worry about your art skill as this is not an art contest but rather this is about releasing some inner feelings through expressive art. Abstract drawing is fine especially for people who feel they lack art skill. When complete, display and discuss drawings as a group and be sure to share your thoughts and feelings about your artwork