

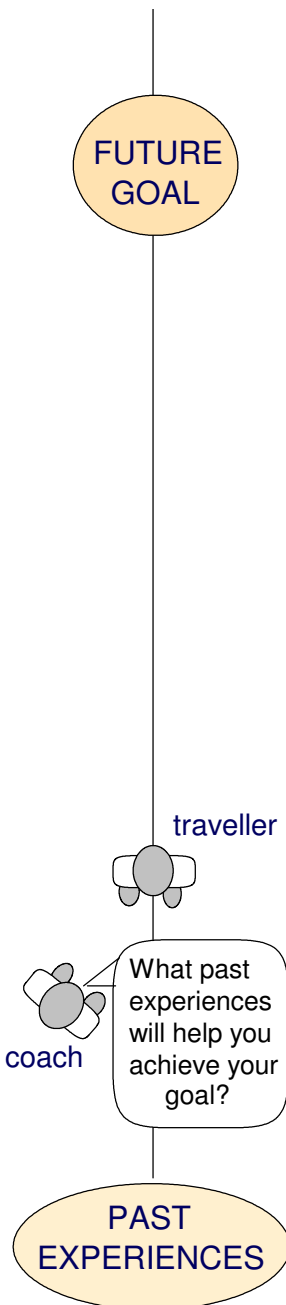
Back to the Future takes you closer to an important goal by reviewing how the past and present can help you.

Thinking about results is typically *forward* thinking. But what if *backward* thinking could help you get the results you want? In fact, it rarely happens that the journey towards your goal goes through completely unknown territory. So what do you already know and have that will help you on your journey?

Back to the Future is a paired exercise for which you need a rope or line of at least 4 metres. One person (the 'traveller') describes the goal or result they want to achieve to their partner (the 'coach'). Their goal is represented by a word or symbol near the future end of the line. The line represents the journey that the traveller will make towards their goal. As we often choose goals that we are already on the way to achieving, start the journey a few paces in (as shown).

The coach now invites the traveller to turn round and face *back* towards the beginning of their journey and asks questions such as:

- ? 'What knowledge or experience (that you already have) will help you on this journey?'
- ? 'What skills or strengths do you have that will help you on this journey?'
- ? 'What values or motivations do you have that will help you on this journey?'
- ? 'What resources or support do you have that will help you on this journey?'



- ? 'What have you (or others) already done to help you achieve this goal?'
- ? 'Where are you right now on your journey?'

If the answer to any question makes the traveller feel 'closer' to their goal, they should move backwards a suitable distance towards their goal.

Tip: Don't make this an exact science: the quality of conversation matters more than the scale or the distance travelled. The scenario helps to focus the dialogue, and movement backwards indicates the rough value of each response.

If you need more questions, ask:

- ? 'Have you ever achieved this kind of goal before? What helped you achieve that goal. Do any of those factors exist on this occasion?'
- ? 'Have you ever attempted achieving this kind of goal before? How can you use your learning from that experience to help you achieve this particular goal?'
- ? 'Have you ever thought about setting yourself this kind of

challenge before? What has changed that has made you ready and willing to commit to this goal now?'

- ? 'What do you know about your strengths as a goal achiever will help you achieve this particular goal?'
- ? 'What do you know about how you deal with your weaknesses as a goal achiever (if any) that could help you achieve this particular goal?'

Every so often, the traveller is asked to glance round at the goal and think briefly

about the journey ahead. The coach might ask:

- ? 'What are going to be the most critical or important steps?'
- ? 'What will be most challenging on the journey towards your goal?'

Such questioning readily generates 'next steps' or 'mini-goals' (which can come from *any* point on the journey ahead). Once a step or mini-goal is identified, the coach can continue with a similar line of questioning:

- ? 'What existing skills, values, support etc. will help you make this step?'

Tip: most of the questions asked about the overall goal can be asked about mini-goals.

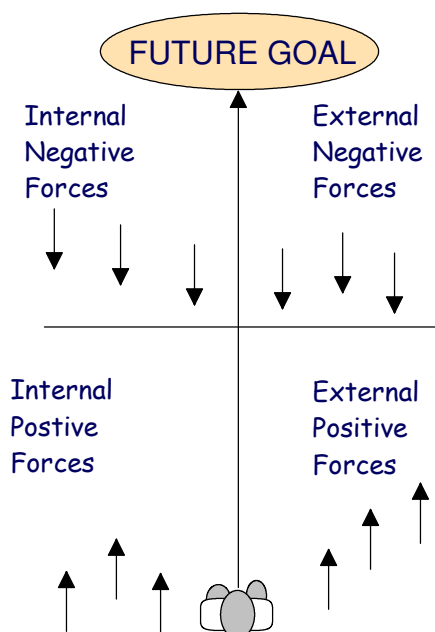
At the end of this session, the gap between the traveller and the goal will have narrowed. The traveller will have been talking about all the helpful factors that already exist. The journey ahead will look and feel shorter and more achievable. The steps taken represent what already exists. The process is a discovery and appreciation of what already exists. The exercise should leave the traveller feeling better prepared, better resourced and more confident about achieving their goal.

Back to the Future typically reveals that you are much closer to your goal than you thought. But the exercise cannot 'go wrong'. In the unlikely event that people discover that the distance is actually greater than they first thought, that is also useful learning that will help them achieve their goal.

Back to the Future does not involve walking into an imagined future; it is about recognising helpful factors in the past and present that are real and available. It includes accessing relevant experiences and drawing confidence, energy and learning from them precisely when these assets and strengths are needed. This process helps people to approach their goal more wisely and confidently - and with a greater chance of success.

Future Walking: after mapping out the internal and external forces that will help and hinder the achievement of your goal, you will experience just how helpful the helpful forces can be.

Future Walking is an empowering way of enacting Lewin's Force Field Analysis. The walker experiences walking through the 'force field' that exists between them and their goal. The walker hears voices representing their forces. The positive forces move with the walker through the force field and ensure the goal is reached. The negative forces are defeated and melt away - through force of argument rather than through physical force.



If you are the walker... each of your 12 forces is represented by a volunteer. When your journey begins you hear only positive messages. As you approach the half way point the negative forces can be heard. You listen to this 'battle' while moving towards your goal. You share control of this exercise with the facilitator. This usually involves turning down the volume of over-enthusiastic forces, and ensuring that not too many forces are speaking at once. It is reassuring for you to hear the positive forces getting the upper hand and to reach your goal. You may also discover new strategies worth trying for real.