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# uPLifted Series

Official Newsletter of EmpowerM3 by Coach Cindy

## The Power of Retrospection A Tool for Building Self-Awareness with ADHD

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As defined, retrospection is the action of looking back on or reviewing past events or situations, especially those in one's life.

How often are you off to the next thing before you have had a moment to reflect or even come up for air? The to-do list is stacked, and you haven't yet made a dent in it. Whether you like it or not, you are trying to keep up with a fast-paced world. If you have ADHD or live with someone who does, then you know all too well that without proper support in place, life gets messy.

Retrospection is a way to learn and gather information. It may be one of the quickest yet most challenging ways to learn from yourself and create a better future you. By giving yourself time to think back over what happened, you can gather information and new knowledge that may be useful in your future.



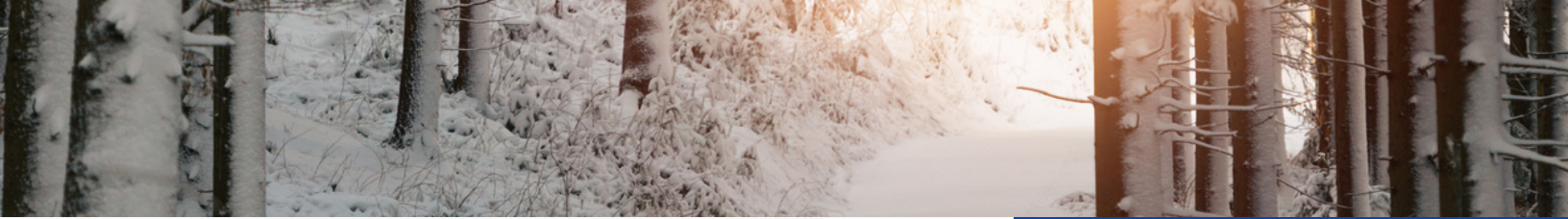
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Soren Kierkegaard, a Danish philosopher, said,

**“Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards” (BrainyQuote, 2022).**

Like me, I’m guessing you live forward most of the time. Are your previous mistakes and mishaps lessons you have learned, or do they haunt you? With social media at our fingertips, 24/7 consumable press, and the pressures of doing, it’s easy to miss the gift of reflection. We live in constant “seeking mode.” Due to this, we do not take the time to:

- celebrate our wins
- soak in the small joys
- make time for what makes us genuinely feel happy
- learn from experiences

We suffer the consequences by:

- feeling overwhelmed
- feeling stressed and exhausted
- becoming disconnected from our inner joys
- repeating our mistakes

The end of the year often prompts people to look back. What went well? What didn’t? Commonly businesses will do an end-of-the-year audit or performance review. These may even be tied to whether or not you are getting a year-end bonus. However, business is not the only place for success to be rewarded or for improvements to be made. Retrospection is helpful in relationships as well. “The Mother of Family Therapy,” Virginia Satir, is a well-known author and psychotherapist who created the Virginia Satir Change Process Model. She shared, “the “surface problem” itself is seldom the real problem rather it was how people coped with the issue that created the problem (Wikipedia Contributors, 2022).”

**“If you  
always do  
what you’ve  
always done,  
you’ll always  
be where  
you’ve always  
been.”**

- T. D. JAKES







We can take this concept further by applying it in our own reflection. You matter at the center of you.

Retrospection goes beyond your work or personal life. It's the ability to acknowledge your essence self at play.

Reflecting on your wins will grow your confidence. As an ADHDer, seeing the wins when your life is covered up by unsupported symptoms that create never-ending tension and chaos may be challenging. It takes practice to be comfortable in seeing both progress and room for growth. Retrospection requires no judgment. It is essential to acknowledge your emotions and then place them aside as you reflect on what has happened. Then, from a neutral lens, you reflect using powerful questions to help get yourself to deeper learning.

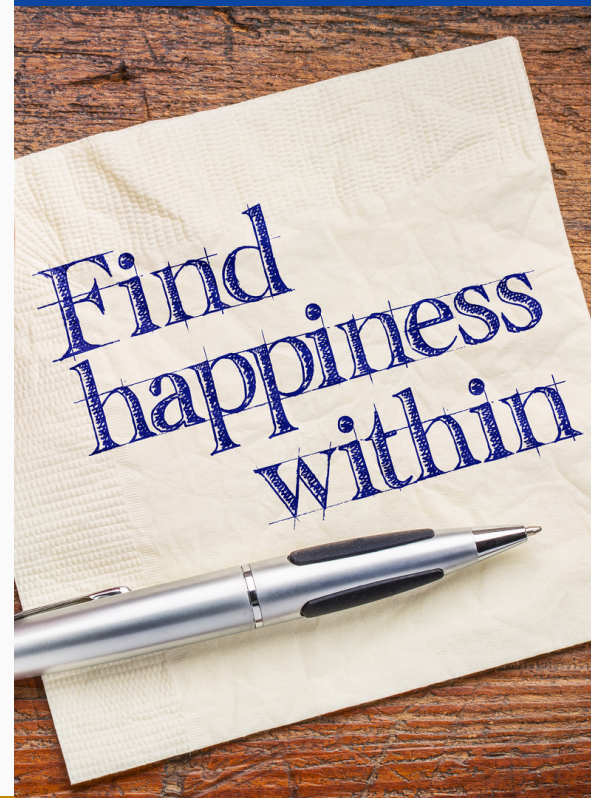
How can we genuinely live forward, as Kierkegaard suggests?

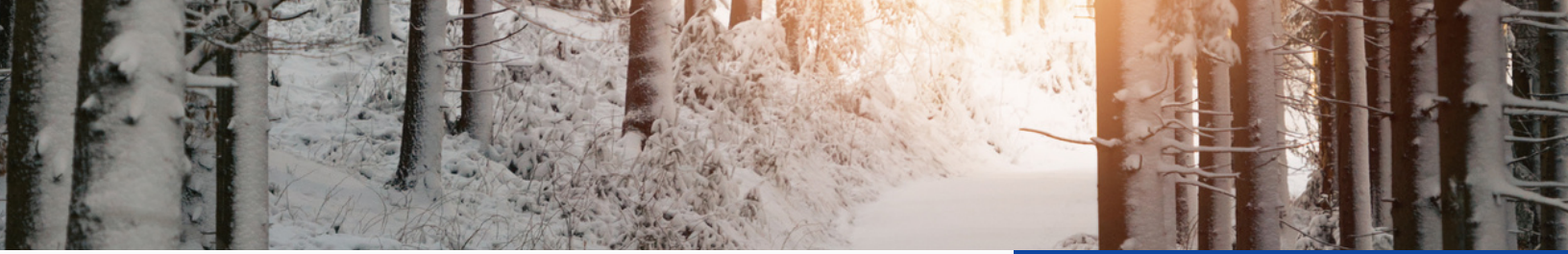


Living forward requires us to learn from our experiences. We are to take what we have learned both in success and failure and point ourselves forward for a better tomorrow. The key is "for the better." It is important to note that you are not using retrospection as a fancy form of self-judgment but to build awareness and foster curiosity. You are looking past the surface. It is to be with yourself in knowing, not judging. Be mindful of who is saying what you are thinking. Too often, we become our worst enemy and live not forward but in harsh judgment of all the wrongs of our past. We forget the successes and aim for the next big thing. Our win becomes shadowed by the next goal or to-do list item.

**“We must not allow other people’s limited perceptions to define us.”**

VIRGINIA SATIR





Now is the perfect time to exercise your curiosity and explore capabilities by giving yourself 10 minutes before bed to write your thoughts retrospectively. Looking back, what do you know now? This question does not need to be reserved for the day we experience something tragic that prompts reflection on what is truly important. Instead, let today be as vital to you so each day will be packed with a better you. You can do it, and here is how.

### Tips for Adding Retrospection into Your Day

Yep, I'm going to throw it out there. Start a daily [journal](#). Journaling is an excellent way to get your thoughts out, but for this purpose, your journal is a way to reflect with a purpose. Here is how:

Start Out Simple:

Every day, write down **three things** in your journal:

1. Record at least one positive thing that happened to or around you today;
2. Ask yourself a question to reflect on tomorrow. (You can use one of the questions on the next page but don't answer it until tomorrow. Or write your own question to prompt reflection.)
3. Answer the question from the day before using retrospection of your day today.

Follow these steps, you will write only the first two components on the first day but three components every day after that (Ackerman, 2017).



“I want you to get excited about who you are, what you are, what you have, and what can still be for you. I want to inspire you to see that you can go far beyond where you are right now.”

– VIRGINIA SATIR







# Journaling

As you build your journaling skills, you can expand your retrospective ability using these 4 questions to prompt a deeper awareness:

1. "What went well?" Highlight the positive to set the tone of your thinking mind.
2. What didn't go so well?
3. What have I learned?
4. What still puzzles me?



To dig in, even more, try these questions out:

## Questions for a deeper, "What went well?"

- What went better than I expected today?
- What strategy, technique, or resource worked today?
- What worked from a previous reflection today?
- What superpowers (strengths) did I lean into today?
- What am I proud of that I have not shared with anyone today?

## Questions for a deeper, "What didn't go so well?"

- What was I not prepared for today?
- How did I cope with what didn't go well?
- What caused the most significant stress in my day today?
- What responsibility did I have in \_\_xyz thing\_\_ not going well?
- How did what didn't go well impact my work/relationships/mood?

One day, in retrospect, the years of struggle will strike you as the most beautiful.

— SIGMUND FREUD





### Questions for a deeper, “What have I learned?”

- If I were to repeat today, what would I do again?
- If I were to repeat today, what would I do differently?  
How?
- What did I learn from this experience?
- What support do I need to create success around what didn't go well?
- How will I use this knowledge in the future?

### Questions for a deeper, “What still puzzles me?”

- From what I discovered from “what went well,” “I want to know \_\_\_\_?”
- From what I discovered from “what didn't go well,” I want to know \_\_\_?
- What do I need more clarification on that would help me have greater success next time?
- If I knew more \_\_\_\_\_, I could \_\_\_\_\_.
- What am I missing?



There is power in learning the art of reflecting. You can help yourself access your true essence self by building a pause and noting what is happening without judgment. ADHD is a brain difference requiring different avenues to access your strengths. Looking back and learning from your mistakes is a gift in growing your better self tomorrow. Looking back and embracing your successes catapults you forward with greater self-confidence and self-esteem. Moving away from negative thinking habits and embracing your true self just as you are today moves you towards who you aspire to be tomorrow. Let your journal be your friend. In time you will see yourself taking off.

“Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself.”

– LEO TOLSTOY



What made you spark today?





## Hello

Thank you for joining me. My name is Cynthia North, but people know me as Cindy. I am ACC Certified Life Coach with the ICF as a Certified ADHD Life Coach (CALC) and a trained PQ Coach™ member with Positive Intelligence® devoted to partnering with clients to create self-success within ADHD and living life. I work with all ages having a special interest in how the brain affects the outcome. I help ADHDers and stuck people move from crippled in doubt to capable with clarity. I have expanded to offer personalized Mental Fitness Coaching through Shirzad Chamine's Positive Intelligence® Program. New possibilities bloom with deeper self-awareness and through the strength in your mental fitness. I have an innate desire to empower others no matter what difficulties they face with or without ADHD. I believe everyone is worthy of stepping forward out of stuck.

ADHD has touched me personally and professionally.

I know first-hand how ADHD symptoms and behavior can wreak havoc on family dynamics, school, and work success. I chose to become a Certified ADHD Life Coach as well as a member of Positive Intelligence® as a PQ Coach™ because I want others to discover their greatness within ADHD strengths while working with their executive functioning challenges through a positive mindset. I am where I am today because of my two dynamic ADHD children. They both teach me and open my mind to more each day. Their needs were beyond a hug, discipline, structure, or praise. So I sought professional help, ultimately finding a trained ADHD Life Coach. And here I am serving people who want different and deserve ease and flow.

Life experiences have made way for opportunity. I am on a journey to slay stigmas surrounding brain differences. Finding a Life Coach to empower my child led me to become a Certified ADHD Life Coach myself to serve others past their stuck ways and ADHD stigmas. Choosing to strengthen your inner self is where Empower M3 starts. The work is an inside job where your "M3" begins. Connecting your heart and brain with a Coach creates empowerment opportunities. EmpowerM3 - is where the 3 connect to take flight.



There is a more extraordinary tomorrow when your discovery starts today.

**“Living with a full heart is connecting the brain to the mind by exercising empathy and curiosity.**

**— CINDY NORTH,  
LIFE COACH AND AUTHOR**





## Resources

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## Quotes

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## Disclaimer:

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