

## Visioning Plan To a Happy Stepfamily

Ever wonder how some stepfamilies seem to have it all together? That their lives seems so easy going? Drama free? Fun to be in?



It doesn't happen by magic or by wishful thinking. Their success comes from taking action, focusing on what they want and doing it. It's not rocket science. Although it might seem easy, it's not. What it is - is simple. Simple doesn't mean easy. In fact, simple can be the hardest thing for you to do. The rewards though are enormous.

What would it feel like if you could actually live in a stepfamily where you enjoy being a part of that relationship? What would that mean to you? How would you feel? I'm thinking you'd feel amazing, right? You'd feel successful, complete, calm, connected.

Here's what I'm guessing you might be thinking too – that's not possible for us. The ex is (fill in the blank.) I'm stepkids are so (fill in the blank here too.) My partner won't (Yep, you fill in the blank.)

There are a lot of reasons why you can't get to where you want to be. They may all be true. If that's what you keep focusing on.

What I'd like for you to do instead is to focus on what one day could look like that would make you feel happy, content, included, successful. I'm not asking you to focus on a lifetime. That's impossible. No one ever has 100% happiness, contentment, joy, fulfillment every second of every day. It's not real for anyone.

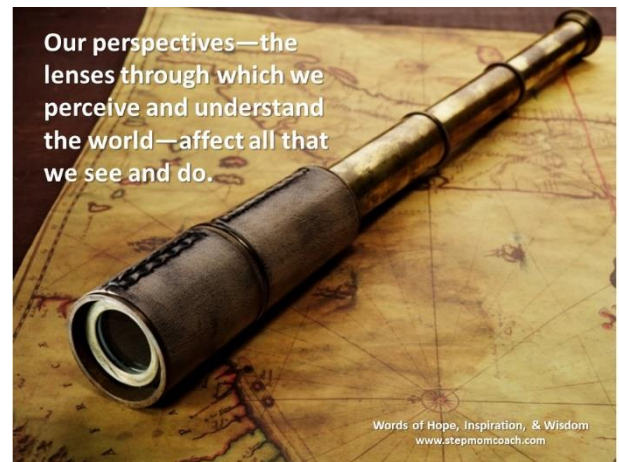
What we do have are moments in time, where we capture those memorable moments and focus on those.

What is even more important is that you can achieve even higher levels of happiness and joy than you ever imagined.

But Claudette, I have no idea where to start? What do I do first? When will I know I've arrive? How can I make others behave in a way that will make me happy?

OK, let's start with that last statement.

You can't make anyone do anything they are not will, ready and see a good reason to do. Period. People do and change because they want to and see a benefit to themselves. That is why people change – because they see they will a benefit to themselves.



For example, someone who exercises does it because it will make them fit, healthier, happier, energetic – not to make you happy (although they might initially do it to get you off their case.) In the end, the reason anyone does anything is because it serves a purpose, there is a personal benefit to them and they get to reap the benefits with other people they love or care about.

So how do you get started? By asking yourself what do you really want?  
Simple question, often hard to answer.

So let's do some role playing here, OK? We'll start with

- "I want to be happy."
  - OK, so what does that look like?
- "I don't want to be stressed out."
  - Fine, what does that look like?
- "I want to be able to feel OK in my home."
  - Great, tell me more.
- "I want to know that when I'm in my house, my stepkids can look at me and say hi without feeling like I'm in the way."
  - Ok, what else?
- "I want to be able to have a meal together and not feel like we're in some library where no one talks to each other."
  - Go on.
- "I want to have conversations with one another about our day, to be asked about my day as well, to have people have some interest in what I do."
  - Good, what else?
- "I want to feel that I matter, that I make a difference, that I'm part of this family and that they care about me."
  - And would that make you feel happy?
- "Yes, that would."
  - What else would that make you feel, other than being happy?
- "I would feel like I matter, that I have a place in this family. It would be great to sit together at dinner time and laugh and share stories."



We could go even deeper here, but I think you get my drift. Just saying you want to be happy isn't enough. You need to get to the root of it.

But Claudette, what happens if this doesn't happen? Here's the thing, life is about ups and downs. You can't have one without the other. I'm sorry to burst your bubble if you thought that you could coast through life without any challenges or hardship. That's not reality. Even on "Reality" TV

shows, it's all about knowing how to deal with the challenges your dealt with.



One thing is for sure though, if you have no idea of what you want, of what it's going to look like, you are definitely not going to get it.

Will you have moments of disappointment? Absolutely. I can assure you. Because this is life. Sorry if that's not what you expected to hear from me. I just want to be upfront with you. What I can help you thought is to navigate through these disappointments in a faster, shorter period of time.

And how you do this? Is by knowing what you want, having a vision and a direction of where to go. And like all things in life, there are many ways to travel towards what we want. There are rarely any shortcuts. The journey can be exhilarating or arduous. You get to decide on what you will see it as.

Another thing you need in order to feel successful is to be committed to your goal or vision. How important is it to you? How much do you believe in what you want?

Personally, when I met Bernard, I wanted this relationship to work. He was a good hard-working man, a father who loved his daughters, good family values, and fun to be with. Ironically, those same qualities I loved him for, were also those that, at some point made me question myself if I had made a mistake.

Why did I question myself? Because I had to ask myself if I was really committed to those values and beliefs or if they were just nice to have.

I knew with 100% certainty that I didn't want to start over. I was determined to give it my all, to try every possible avenue to make this relationship work. And that wasn't to try and change Bernard. I needed to change my outlook as to what happiness and success meant to me.

I would look for things that made me happy. What was my vision of a family? I had to quickly through out the notion of trying to be a nuclear family. There was no way for us to be that, because Bernard and his daughters had a history before I can into the picture. Just like I had a very long history before I met him.

Parts of my history are what made me who I am today. I wasn't about to give up on part of who I am in order to fit into a mold that wasn't me. I am who I am because of what I experienced in the past – the good and the bad. I learned what worked and what didn't, and I still am learning, until my last breath.

I wanted to learn to be a better parent to my son, so I looked for models that felt aligned with my values. That is what I was in Bernard. Those values that I wanted to instill in my son.

Once you get clear on your vision of what you want, make it aligned with your values and beliefs, and have made a commitment to make it happen, next are the steps, the milepost, the markers to get you closer to your vision. And I say closer, because as you get older, as you progress through your relationships, life, your vision may change. It will most probably change. Nothing stays the same. And that's OK.

That's why I like to review and revise my vision on an annual basis, just to check to see if it's still aligned with who I am today. And I encourage you to do the same.

And if you're wondering who you can even imagine your situation getting better? It starts by imagining that it's possible. Think of athletes who perform what seems like impossible feats. They do this by first imagining it in their heads, creating a vision of how to do each move, twist and turns. They practice in their heads creating the kind of results and success they want. Do they get it right 100% of the time. NO! And they learn from the mistakes, the wrong turns, moves they made.

That's what happened to me, to us, when I ended leaving Bernard and staying in a women's shelter for 3 months. I reflected on what I did wrong, of what I could have done differently, better. What was I responsible for how I ended up in this situation? What were the impacts of my behavior on my son, my stepdaughters, my partner?

And I do say my responsibility and my behavior because that is the only thing I have control over – no one else. Where there other people involve in this? Like my husband's ex and his mother? Yes! And the way I reacted and behaved was of my own doing. No one else's. And that's a hard truth to swallow at times.

As you create the vision for your stepfamily, your relationship with your partner and for yourself, ask yourself what is most important to you? Why is it important? What would it mean to you if you got your vision? If you were able to live the life you envisioned? How would you feel? What does that look like on a typical day? Where would you be? Who else is with you?

What feelings are coming up for you? Write those down.  
What images are you seeing at this moment? Write those down too.

Remember that what you focus on, you create. That's why rumination is destructive. The more you keep reliving, reviewing those negative thoughts, you are feeling it and eventually creating those negative moments. You are creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. Let's try to create a positive one instead of a negative one.

## ***What Next?***

OK, so you got started in visualizing some probabilities as to what you'd like your family and life to look like. That's a great start.

I'd love for us to sit together and talk about what your next steps to make this a reality would look like.

Here's my calendar like for you to set up a time to chat with me about next steps.

[www.stepmomcoach.com/Calendar01](http://www.stepmomcoach.com/Calendar01) There's no charge. We talk about your vision, your goals and what you can do to get the results you're looking for.

And you can let me know what you came up in this exercise.

Until next time, keep dreaming and take one action today.

Warmly,

Claudette Chenevert

The Stepmom Coach

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