

*Find Your*  
**HAPPY**  
**PLACE**

The word 'HAPPY PLACE' is rendered in large, bold, 3D-style letters. Each letter is filled with a different scenic photograph of a beach or coastal area. The letters are outlined in a vibrant gradient of yellow, orange, and red. The background of the entire cover is a soft-focus image of a sandy beach with a light blue sky and a white lighthouse in the distance.

THE *8 Step* GUIDE

To Boosting Your Creativity  
Through A Personal Retreat

DAVID A. BOSSERT

*Find Your*  
**HAPPY**  
**PLACE**

THE 8-STEP GUIDE

To Boosting Your Creativity  
Through A Personal Retreat

DAVID A. BOSSERT

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— Step 1 — HOW MUCH TIME AND WHEN TO TAKE IT

Quick Tips:

1. Determine the right amount of time for your personal retreat.
2. Determine when best to take that time for your personal retreat.

**Worksheet:**

***How Much Time and When to Take a Personal Retreat***

**Part 1: Assessing Your Time**

1. How much vacation time do you have available to use for a personal retreat?

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2. Are there any upcoming work or personal commitments that may interfere with taking a personal retreat?

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3. How much time can you realistically dedicate to a personal retreat without compromising your other responsibilities?

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***Part 2: Determining When to Take Your Retreat***

1. When is the best time of year for you to take a personal retreat? Consider factors such as weather, work demands, and family commitments.

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2. How much advance notice do you need to provide your employer, clients, or family members before taking a personal retreat?

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3. Are there any major events or projects coming up in your personal or professional life that may affect when you can take a personal retreat?

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### *Part 3: Planning Your Retreat Length*

1. How long do you want your personal retreat to be?

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2. Can you realistically take off that amount of time from work and other responsibilities?

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3. If you can't take off the entire length of time you want, could you take a shorter retreat instead?

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**Part 4: Making the Most of Your Retreat**

1. What specific goals or intentions do you have for your personal retreat?

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2. What activities or practices will you engage in during your retreat to support your goals and intentions?

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3. How will you follow through on your insights and intentions gained during the retreat once you return to your normal routine?

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**Part 5: Reflection**

1. After taking your personal retreat, reflect on the length of time you took and the timing of the retreat. Did it feel like enough time? Was the timing right for you?

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2. Reflect on your goals and intentions. Were they realistic? Did you achieve what you wanted to achieve during your retreat?

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3. Finally, consider whether you would take a personal retreat again, and if so, what you would do differently next time.

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Remember, taking a personal retreat is a personal decision and should be based on your individual needs and circumstances. Use this worksheet as a guide to help you determine the best length of time and timing for your personal retreat.

## — Step 2 — Where to Take Your Retreat

### Quick Tips:

1. You may already know where you want to take your personal retreat and that's great. You are one step ahead of it.
2. Make sure that your happy place is free from diversions and interruptions so that you can achieve deep thought.
3. It's okay to try different locations over several retreats. It is about finding the perfect spot for you that will allow you to maximize the benefits of your personal retreat.
4. Consider taking a class and learning a new skill, craft, or art.

### Worksheet:

#### *Where to take your Personal Retreat*

#### Part 1: Assessing Your Ideal Retreat Location

1. What type of environment do you find most conducive to relaxation, reflection, and creativity?
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2. Are you drawn to natural settings like the mountains or the beach, or would you prefer a more rural lake area or a desert location?

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3. What kind of accommodation would best suit your needs and budget, such as a hotel room, cabin, or boarding house?

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**Part 2: Identifying Possible Retreat Locations**

1. Research potential retreat locations based on your ideal environment and accommodation preferences.

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2. Consider factors such as distance, travel time, and accessibility.

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3. Read reviews and gather information on the location's amenities and services to ensure they align with your needs and goals.

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**Part 6: Reflection**

1. After your retreat, reflect on the location you chose. Did it meet your needs and expectations?

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2. Consider whether you would choose the same location again or prefer to try a different location for your next retreat.

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Remember, choosing the right retreat location is key to a successful personal retreat. Use this worksheet to help you assess your ideal environment, identify potential locations, and select the one that best meets your needs and goals.

## — Step 3 — SETTING REALISTIC GOALS AND ACHIEVING THEM

### **Quick Tips:**

1. Deciding on and setting achievable goals boils down to understanding what goals are and how they are reached.
2. Wishes are nothing more than goals not followed through on.
3. Progress toward your goals comes more quickly when you focus on one goal at a time.
4. Having a specific plan for your intention or goal, indicating where, when, and what you are going to do, will increase your chances of success.



2. How realistic and achievable are your current goals?

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3. Are your current goals aligned with your values and priorities?

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**Part 2: Setting New Goals**

1. What new goals do you want to set for yourself during your personal retreat?

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2. How will these new goals help you achieve your long-term vision for your life?

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3. How can you make these new goals realistic and achievable?

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*Part 3: Defining Your Goals*

1. Define each goal using the SMART method: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound.

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3. Determine any potential challenges or obstacles to achieving each goal.

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**Part 4: Creating an Action Plan**

1. Create an action plan for achieving each goal, including a timeline for completing each step.

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2. Identify any resources or support you may need to achieve each goal.

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3. Consider any potential setbacks or roadblocks and develop strategies for overcoming them.

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**Part 5: Implementing Your Action Plan**

1. Begin implementing your action plan, starting with the first step.

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2. Track your progress toward each goal and adjust your action plan as needed.

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3. Celebrate your achievements along the way to stay motivated and inspired.

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**Part 6: Reflection**

1. After your personal retreat, reflect on the goals you set and the progress you made toward achieving them.

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2. Consider any insights or lessons you gained during your retreat that can help you continue to work toward your goals.

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3. Create a plan for maintaining momentum and continuing to work toward your goals in your daily life.

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Remember, setting and achieving realistic goals is key to personal growth and development. Use this worksheet to help you assess your current goals, set new goals, define each goal using the SMART method, create an action plan, and implement your plan during your personal retreat.

## — Step 4 — JOURNALING YOUR INTENTIONS AND GOALS

### Quick Tips:

1. If you don't already do it, then start journaling as soon as you are in the planning stages of your personal retreat.
2. Begin by writing down your intentions for the retreat and the goals that you wish to achieve.
3. Writing longhand in your journal has a cognitive effect and will pay dividends in keeping your mind sharp.
4. Longhand taps into the creative side of your brain to bring out imaginative solutions to the issues and topics you are thinking and writing about.

### Worksheet:

#### *Journaling Your Intentions and Goals on a Personal Retreat*

#### Part 1: Assessing Your Current Goals

1. What is your primary intention for this personal retreat?

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2. What specific outcomes or results do you hope to achieve during your retreat?

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2. What personal, professional, or spiritual issues do you want to explore or work on during your retreat?

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*Part 2: Defining Your Goals*

1. What specific goals do you want to achieve during your personal retreat?

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2. What steps will you need to take to achieve each goal?

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3. How will you measure your progress toward each goal?

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**Part 3: Journaling Your Intentions and Goals**

1. Set aside time each day during your retreat to journal about your intentions and goals.

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2. Begin each journal entry by restating your primary intention for the retreat and reviewing the specific goals you want to achieve.

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3. Reflect on your progress toward each goal and any insights or lessons you have gained during your retreat.

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**Part 4: Tracking Your Progress**

1. Create a tracker or “spreadsheet” to help you monitor your progress toward each goal.

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2. Update your tracker daily with any progress or achievements toward each goal.

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3. Reflect on your progress regularly and adjust your goals or action steps as needed.

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**Part 5: Reflection**

1. After your retreat, review your journal entries and tracker.

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2. Reflect on your progress toward each goal and the insights or lessons you gained during your retreat.

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3. Consider how you can integrate what you learned and achieved during your retreat into your daily life.

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Remember, journaling your intentions and goals can be a powerful tool for personal growth and development. Use this worksheet to help you set your intentions, define your goals, and track your progress toward achieving them during your personal retreat.

— Step 5 — HEALTHY MIND, HEALTHY BODY

**Quick Tips:**

1. Having a healthy mind and active imagination, along with a healthy body, means taking care of yourself with exercise and nutrition.
2. The simple act of walking is proven to be good cardio exercise. Walking lowers your stress level and gives you more energy while building stamina.
3. The act of being outside, walking, and breathing in fresh air with the visual stimulations of the landscape around you will take your mind in new directions.
4. It is well-documented that many creative people will engage in some kind of daily exercise.
5. There is no hard and fast rule as to how long you should sit in deep thought or meditation; it should be fluid and natural.

**Worksheet:**

***Healthy Mind, Healthy Body Personal Retreat***

**Part 1: Setting Goals for a Healthy Mind**

1. What specific mental health goals do you want to achieve during your personal retreat?

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2. What activities or practices, such as meditation, journaling, or walking, will support your mental health goals?

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3. How will you measure your progress toward achieving your mental health goals?

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Part 2: Setting Goals for a Healthy Body

1. What specific physical health goals do you want to achieve during your personal retreat?

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2. What activities or practices, such as yoga, hiking, or healthy eating, will support your physical health goals?

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3. How will you measure your progress toward achieving your physical health goals?

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*Part 3: Creating a Schedule*

1. Create a schedule that incorporates activities that support your mental and physical health goals.

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2. Determine the best times of day for each activity based on your energy levels and other commitments.

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3. Build in time for rest and relaxation, such as napping or taking a bath.

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*Part 4: Preparing Your Space*

1. Create a clean, uncluttered space for your personal retreat.

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2. Incorporate elements that support your mental and physical health, such as plants, natural lighting, or outdoors in nature.

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*Part 5: Nurturing Your Mind and Body*

1. Engage in activities that support your mental and physical health goals, such as meditation or hiking.

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2. Practice mindfulness throughout the day, such as eating mindfully or taking a break to stretch.

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3. Make healthy food choices that support your physical health goals.

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Part 6: Reflection

1. After your personal retreat, reflect on your mental and physical health goals.

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2. Review your progress toward achieving each goal and any insights or lessons you gained during your retreat.

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3. Consider how you can continue to nurture your mental and physical health in your daily life after your personal retreat.

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Remember, a healthy mind and body are essential for personal growth and development. Use this worksheet to help you set goals and create a schedule that supports your mental and physical health during your personal retreat.

## — Step 6 — YOUR ACTUAL RETREAT AND GETTING THE MOST OUT OF IT

### Quick Tips:

1. Experiencing a restful night's sleep each evening for a week will make you realize how poorly you have been sleeping.
2. One of the benefits of being in a rural place and unplugging from all the gadgets and media distractions is that you can get healthier sleep just from being exposed to natural light patterns.
3. Stillness is not about being completely motionless but being in the moment alone in a place with little or no distractions.
4. There is nothing to be terrified of by being alone for a period of time.

5. Loneliness is a condition that is associated with weakened immune systems, heart disease, and depression. If you are experiencing loneliness and depression, you should seek out professional medical help immediately.
6. Being alone is for the specific motivation of self-reflection and self-improvement. It is about scheduling alone time or *me-time* for yourself.

**Worksheet:**

***Getting the Most Out of Your Retreat***

**Part 1: Creating Your Retreat Space**

1. Set up your retreat space to create a relaxing and conducive environment for you to be undistracted and have the ability to think deeply.

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2. Remove any distractions or items that may interfere with the focus and concentration necessary for deep sleep and positive dreaming.

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3. Spend time in a location that will allow you to practice stillness and meditation.

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*Part 2: Engaging in Activities*

1. Engage in journaling during waking hours, and write down your dreams when you wake from a restful sleep.

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2. Create a schedule or routine to help you stay on track with your activities.

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3. Take breaks as needed to rest and recharge.

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### *Part 3: Reflecting on Your Experience*

1. Take time each day to reflect on your experiences and progress toward your goals.

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2. Journal or record your thoughts, dreams, and insights to help you process your experience.

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3. Use your reflections to adjust your activities and goals as needed.

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**Part 4: Following Through on Your Intentions**

1. Create an action plan for following through on your insights, dreams, and intentions gained during the retreat.

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2. Identify any support or resources you may need to implement your plan.

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3. Set a timeline for completing each action step and hold yourself accountable.

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**Part 5: Reflection**

1. After your retreat, reflect on your overall experience and progress toward your goals.

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2. Consider any insights or lessons you gained during your retreat that can help you continue to grow and develop.

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3. Use your reflections to create a plan for integrating your insights and intentions into your daily life.

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Remember, a personal retreat can be a transformative experience that can help you recharge, reflect, and reconnect with yourself. Use this worksheet to help you prepare for your retreat, create your retreat space, engage in activities that align with your goals, reflect on your experiences, and follow through on your intentions.

— Step 7 — CREATIVE THINKING

**Quick Tips:**

1. Research has shown that some of the most creative thinkers in history also spent a lot of quality time working at their craft or profession alone.
2. Have a definite idea of what you want.
3. Sitting in stillness and focusing on your breathing to get into a meditative state only requires a place where you can be undisturbed for a specific amount of time that you determine.

**Worksheet:**

*Creative Thinking Incorporating the Eight Types of Imagination  
on a Personal Retreat*

**Part 1: Identifying Your Creative Goal**

1. Identify the specific goal or challenge you want to focus your imagination on during your personal retreat.

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2. Determine how each of the eight types of imagination can support your creative goal.

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3. Choose one or more types of imagination to focus on during your retreat.

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***Part 2: Engaging in Activities that Stimulate Creative Thinking***

1. Engage in activities that stimulate your imagination, such as drawing, painting, or writing, and imagine what success looks like.

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2. Incorporate activities that encourage divergent thinking, such as brainstorming or mind mapping.

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3. Take breaks to rest and recharge, and engage in activities that bring you joy and inspiration.

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**Part 3: Reflecting on Your Creative Thinking**

1. Reflect on your creative thinking process and the insights or ideas you have generated using your imagination.

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2. Use your reflections to refine your ideas, identify any potential roadblocks or challenges, and imagine what success looks like.

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3. Determine any action steps needed to implement your ideas and achieve your creative goal.

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*Part 4: Expanding Your Creative Thinking*

1. Challenge yourself to engage with all eight types of imagination to generate new insights and perspectives.

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2. Engage in activities that stimulate each type of imagination, such as visiting art galleries or exploring new environments.

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3. Practice visualization exercises to help you generate new ideas and perspectives.

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*Part 5: Implementing Your Creative Ideas*

1. Create an action plan for implementing your creative ideas.

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2. Identify any support or resources you may need to achieve your creative goal.

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3. Set a timeline for completing each action step and hold yourself accountable.

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**Part 6: Reflection**

1. After your personal retreat, reflect on your overall experience and the ideas you generated using your imagination.

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2. Consider any insights or lessons you gained during your retreat that can help you continue using your imagination to think creatively in your daily life.

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3. Use your reflections to create a plan for implementing your creative ideas and continuing to expand your thinking using all eight types of imagination.

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Remember, creativity is a powerful tool for personal growth and development, and incorporating all eight types of imagination can help you generate new insights and perspectives. Use this worksheet to help you identify your creative goal, engage in activities that stimulate your chosen type(s) of imagination, reflect on your creative thinking, expand your thinking using your imagination, implement your creative ideas, and reflect on your overall experience.

## — Step 8 — VISUALIZATION

### **Quick Tips:**

1. Think about your goal and visualize it in absolute detail.
2. When you start to visualize the actual outcome of what you want in life, it is important not only to visualize but also to “feel” exactly what it will be like to achieve your desire or goal.
3. Spend time daily taking actions to achieve your goal.
4. Never give up. One of the most important aspects of visualization is following through with the repetitive visualizing of your goals. You must continuously visualize your goal until it becomes engrained in your psyche.

**Worksheet:**

***Using Visualization on a Personal Retreat***

**Part 1: Setting the Stage**

1. Identify the specific goal or challenge you want to focus on during your personal retreat.

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2. Determine how visualization can support your goal or challenge.

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3. Create an environment that supports visualization, such as a quiet space with minimal distractions.

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*Part 2: Practicing Visualization Exercises*

1. Engage in visualization exercises that support your goal or challenge, such as guided imagery or mental rehearsal.

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2. Use all of your senses to make your visualization experience as vivid and realistic as possible.

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3. Practice visualization exercises regularly throughout your retreat.

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*Part 3: Reflecting on Your Visualization*

1. Reflect on your visualization experience and the insights or ideas you have generated.

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2. Use your reflections to refine your visualizations and identify any potential roadblocks or challenges.

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3. Determine any action steps needed to implement your ideas and achieve your goal.

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**Part 4: Expanding Your Visualization**

1. Challenge yourself to visualize beyond your current patterns and assumptions.

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2. Engage in activities that stimulate your imagination and creativity, such as reading or exploring new environments.

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3. Practice visualization exercises in different settings or environments to expand your visualizations.

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**Part 5: Implementing Your Visualizations**

1. Create an action plan for implementing your visualizations.

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2. Identify any support or resources you may need, such as a vision board to aid in your visualizations.

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3. Set a timeline for completing the visualization of each action step and hold yourself accountable.

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Part 6: Reflection

1. After your personal retreat, reflect on your overall experience and the insights or ideas you generated through visualization.

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2. Consider any insights or lessons you gained during your retreat that can help you continue to use visualization in your daily life.

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Remember, visualization is a powerful tool for personal growth and development. Use this worksheet to help you set the stage for visualization, practice visualization exercises, reflect on your experience, expand your visualization practice, implement your visualizations, and reflect on your overall experience.

## — About the Author —

**David A. Bossert** is an accomplished artist, filmmaker, and author with 40+ years of experience in the animation industry. He spent more than thirty-two years at Walt Disney Animation Studios, where he contributed his talents to films such as *The Black Cauldron* (1985) *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (1988), *The Little Mermaid* (1989), *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), *Aladdin* (1992), *Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas* (1993), *The Lion King* (1994), *Fantasia/2000* (1999), and *Destino* (2003) among many others. Throughout his career, Bossert has been recognized for his creative and innovative contributions to the field, including earning several United States patents for his work on digital imaging.

Bossert is a member of the CalArts Board of Trustees, Visual Effects Society (VES), Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) and has been a visiting scholar at Carnegie Mellon University's Entertainment Technology Center (ETC) in Pittsburgh. He has presented and lectured at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Salvador Dali Museum, School of Visual Arts, NYU Film School, Bowers Museum, Newport Beach Film Festival, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí (Figueres, Spain), Oscar Pomillio-Blumm Forum (Pescara, Italy), and at other venues and festivals. Bossert, a historian, is widely regarded as an expert in the realm of Disney animation art, process, and history.

In addition to his achievements in animation, Bossert has also established himself as a prolific award-winning writer, boasting numerous published articles and more than a dozen books to his name. His literary works encompass a variety of subjects, including animation and theme park history, design, and the creative process. Bossert attributes much of his success to his annual retreats spanning more than thirty years, which serve as the foundation for his book, *Find Your Happy Place: The 8-Step Guide to Boosting Your Creativity through a Personal Retreat.* Further information can be found at [www.davidbossert.com](http://www.davidbossert.com).

# — *Other Books* —

BY DAVID A. BOSSERT

**Remembering Roy E. Disney:** *Memories and Photos of a Storied Life*

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**Dali and Disney: Destino—**

*The Story, Artwork, and Friendship Behind the Legendary Film*

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**An Animator's Gallery:** *Eric Goldberg Draws the Disney Characters*

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**Oswald The Lucky Rabbit:** *The Search for The Lost Disney Cartoons*

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**Kem Weber:** *Mid-Century Furniture Designs for the Disney Studios*

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**3D Disneyland:** *Like You've Never Seen It Before*

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**Claude Coats:** *Walt Disney's Imagineer, The Making of Disneyland*

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**3D National Parks:** *Like You've Never Seen Them Before*

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**Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas Visual Companion**

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**The House of the Future:**

*Walt Disney, MIT, and Monsanto's Vision of Tomorrow*



Imagine discovering your own personal retreat where you can reconnect with yourself and unleash your creativity. It's a place where you can explore your innermost thoughts, set goals that ignite your passion, and find the stillness and clarity you need to make those goals a reality.

This is exactly what you'll experience with *Find Your Happy Place: The 8-Step Guide to Boosting Your Creativity Through a Personal Retreat*. Acclaimed author David A. Bossert lays out each step— from seclusion to mindfulness, imagination, and expanding your creativity to being in the moment— as a powerful tool that will guide you toward self-discovery and self-improvement.

So, don't wait any longer; embark on your own personal retreat today! You'll reap the life-changing benefits that the author has experienced over more than thirty years. It's time to start living your best life— and it all starts with *Find Your Happy Place*.



*“Bossert has thoughtfully invited his readers into the genesis of his personal retreat process. He has given us a look behind the curtain, as he navigated through both a significant personal and professional change. The eight steps shared provide a step-by-step guide to jump-starting one's own retreat practice in a refreshingly straightforward and practical way.”*

—Richard Ramsey, Vice President of Human Resources  
Walt Disney Company (Retired)

*“Finding Your Happy Place is highly beneficial to their person, their family, and their work. It is first of all— brain health. And I would say to anyone considering purchasing the book, your family, your work, and you yourself will greatly benefit when you find the roadmap to your happy place.”*

—Keith Williams, CEO (retired), UL Solutions

*“Dave Bossert is a true mentor. He exhibits the kind of immense creative generosity I found in the best of the Disney Artists. This book is an external playbook for an internal breakthrough. If you're on the edge of what's next in your life (and who isn't?) then this is your guide for getting to the other side.”*

—Dave Zaboski, Former Disney Animator, co-founder and  
Chief Creative Officer of Laetro.com

