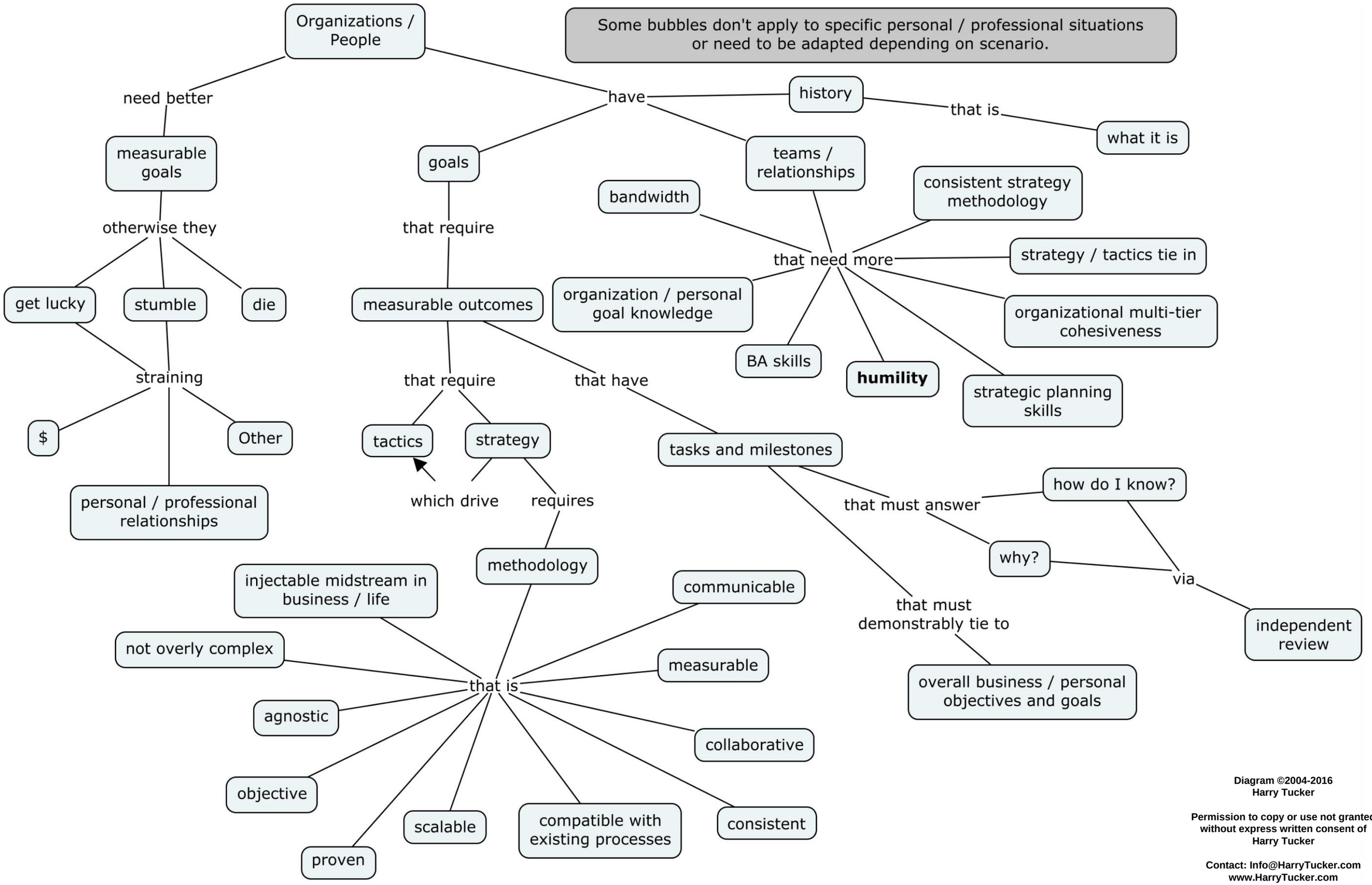
# Backcasting (Right-to-Left Forecasting)
# Why Use It – A Musing (draft)





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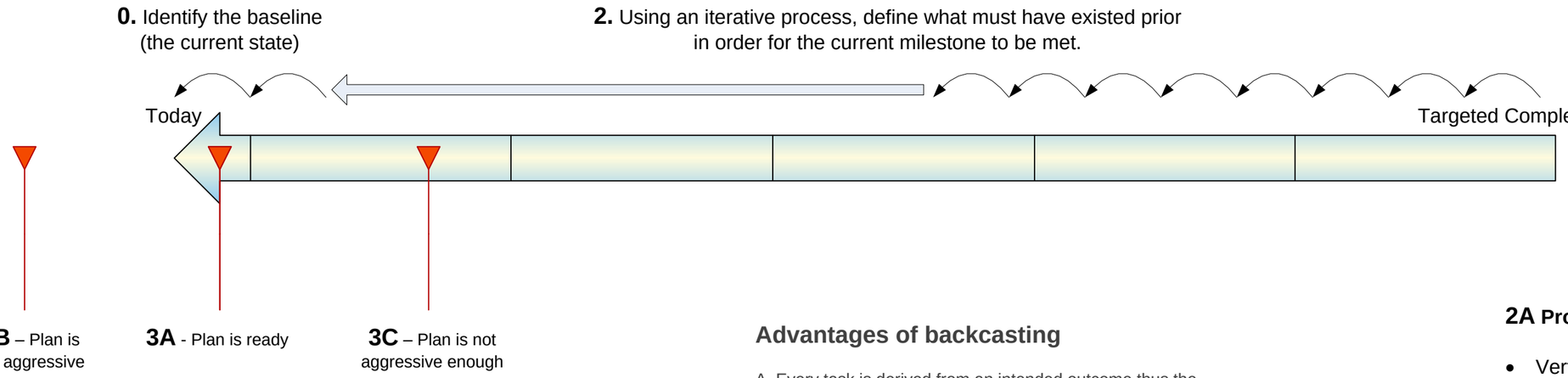
# Backcasting (Right-to-Left Forecasting)




## Understanding backcasting (right-to-left forecasting)

A. Begin by identifying the current state (item 0) and the measurable outcomes (Item 1) including dates.

B. Assuming that these outcomes occur by this date, define what milestones (item 2A) must have occurred immediately prior in order for these outcomes to have manifested.

C. Assuming that item 2A has occurred, define what milestones (item 2B) must have occurred immediately prior in order for 2A to have occurred.

D. Assuming that item 2B has occurred, define what milestones (item 2C) must have occurred immediately prior in order for 2B to have occurred.

E. Repeat process until all milestones and tactical requirements have been defined. You will now have a project start date and a plan with milestones.

F. Review plan for opportunities and risks.

G. If the start date is close to today's date (item 3A), then one has a plan to execute by flipping the timeline in reverse, running it forward towards the measurable outcomes.

H. If the start date is significantly prior to today's date (item 3B), then the outcomes are too aggressive and require more time to implement then the defined outcome date permits. In this case, either push the date back or make the outcomes less aggressive, reducing the size or number of them.

I. If the start date is significantly in the future (item 3C), then the outcomes are not aggressive enough. In this case, either pull the date closer to today's date, add additional outcomes or expand upon existing measurable outcomes.

## Advantages of backcasting

A. Every task is derived from an intended outcome thus the contribution that each task makes to the final outcome is known. There are no wasted tasks.

B. Gaps in knowledge and resources are identified up front before the plan is executed. There are no surprises later, providing for strong risk mitigation.

C. Areas of concern (or impossible expectations) are identified early, enabling a resetting of expectations if required.

**1. Measurable Outcomes:**

- Leadership attributes
- Prospect targets
- Client targets
- Staff strategy

**Drives**

- Life Purpose
- Corp. Vision
- Corp. Mission
- Customer Needs

**2A Prospect Targets**

- Verticals
- Technologies
- Other

**2B Verticals**

- Attribute 1
- Attribute 2
- Attribute 3

**2B Technologies**

- Attribute 1
- Attribute 2
- Attribute 3

**2C Technologies Attribute 1**

- Prospect 1
- Prospect 2
- Prospect 3
- Prospect 4

**2D Prospect 1**

- Project 1
- Project 2
- Project 3
- Project 4
- Project 5
- Project 6

**2B Other**

- Attribute 1
- Attribute 2
- Attribute 3

**(items omitted for clarity purposes – subset shown as example)**

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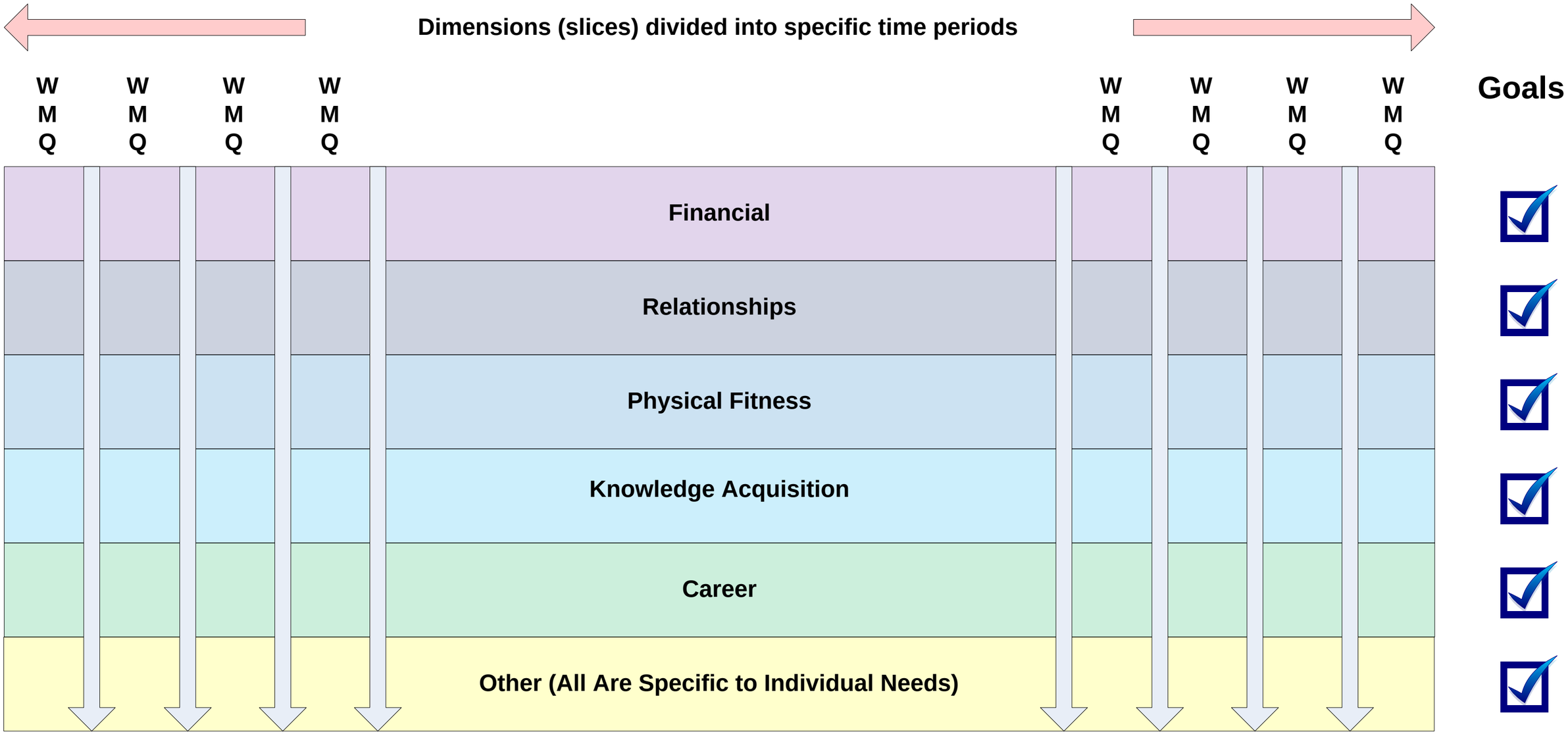
# Life Has Many Dimensions That Must be Factored In




Each dimension / slice is backcast separately but with awareness of other dimensions / slices including resource needs, complementary or detraction opportunities, etc. For example, acquiring knowledge may require expending finances, spending time away from relationships, etc.

For every week / month / quarter (or other level of granularity), make sure that the sum of the effort across all dimensions for that time period can be accomplished within the timeframe, otherwise the goals for some slices will need to be adjusted. It is not enough to defer effort within a dimension / slice to another time period because it means that that time period will likely be overloaded in regards to effort.

Ignoring or not defining a dimension will ultimately cause defined dimensions to fail, since the undefined or ignored dimensions will still require attention and effort, detracting from the effort noted for defined dimensions. Reality doesn't care what you hope or think or what you choose to ignore.

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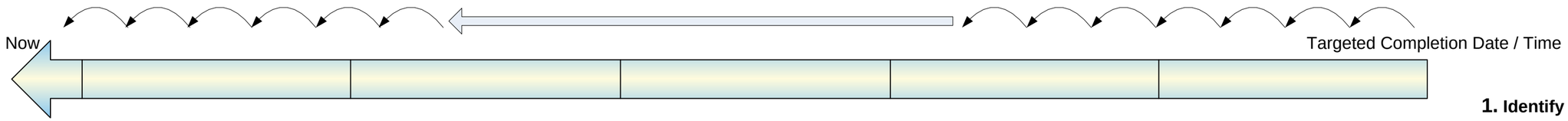
# Chili Backcasting (Right-to-Left Forecasting)

**0.** Identify the baseline (who are we feeding?)

**2.** Using an iterative process, define what must have existed prior to current step in order for step to be performed.




**1. Identify Measurable Outcome:**

- Slow cooker with sweet and spicy chili by 6pm
- Feeds 4-8 people

## Advantages of chili backcasting

- Measurable outcome (chili and number of people served) is known before project is started so we know if project is adequate for needs
- Time required to accomplish each step and overall project is identified
- Task sequence is identified
- Task resource requirements (in this case, ingredients, cooking techniques, equipment and possibly “chef”) have been identified
- Missing resources can be resolved before the step / project is actually started.

**We actually backcast in our minds naturally. It looks unnatural when how our brain works is visually described.**

**2e. Prepare Meat**

- 2 lbs ground beef
- 1.5 teaspoons Accent seasoning (optional)

**2d. Add Dry Ingredients**

- 1 cup sweet onion - chopped
- 1 garlic clove - chopped
- 0.5 cups green pepper - chopped

**2c. Move to Slow Cooker**

- Drain meat mixture

**2b. Add Wet Ingredients**

- 1.5 jalapeno peppers - diced
- 2 15 oz cans pinto beans
- 1 15 oz can petite diced tomatoes
- 1 Knorr Homestyle Beef Bouillon pod dissolved in 1 cup of water

**2a. Mix in Seasoning**

- 1.5 teaspoons chili powder
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon thyme
- 0.5 teaspoons salt
- 0.5 teaspoons cinnamon
- 0.5 cups honey

**Cook**

- Brown in pan
- 5 minutes

**Cook**

- Until onions translucent
- 2 minutes

**Pour**

- Pour into slow cooker
- 1 minute

**Stir**

- 1 minute

**Simmer**

- High setting
- 4-6 hours

**Resource Need**

- Frying pan

**Resource Need**

- Slow cooker

**Resource Need**

- Serving plates et al

**Figured out this way**

**Executed this way**

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# Chili Recipe (in plain English)

## Ingredients

- 2 lbs ground beef
- 1 cup chopped sweet onion (Vidalia)
- 1 chopped garlic clove
- 1⁄2 cup chopped green bell pepper
- 1 1⁄2 diced jalapeno peppers
- 2 (15 ounce) cans pinto beans
- 1 (14 1/2 ounce) can of petite diced tomatoes
- 1 1⁄2 teaspoons chili powder
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon thyme
- 1⁄2 teaspoon salt
- 1 1⁄2 teaspoons Accent seasoning, flavor enhancer
- 1⁄2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1⁄3-1⁄2 cup honey
- 1 Knorr Homestyle Beef Bouillon pod (dissolved in 1 cup of water)

## Directions

- Crumble ground beef in large pan; add accent flavor enhancer (optional).
- Brown ground beef.
- Add onion, green pepper, and garlic.
- Cook until onion is translucent/brown; drain oil.
- Pour contents into slow cooker
- Add tomatoes, jalapeño peppers, pinto beans and Knorr beef pod – stir
- Add chili powder, cumin, thyme, salt, cinnamon, honey - stir again.
- Let cook 4-6 hours on high