

Backcasting (Right-to-Left Forecasting)

Why Use It – A Musing (draft)

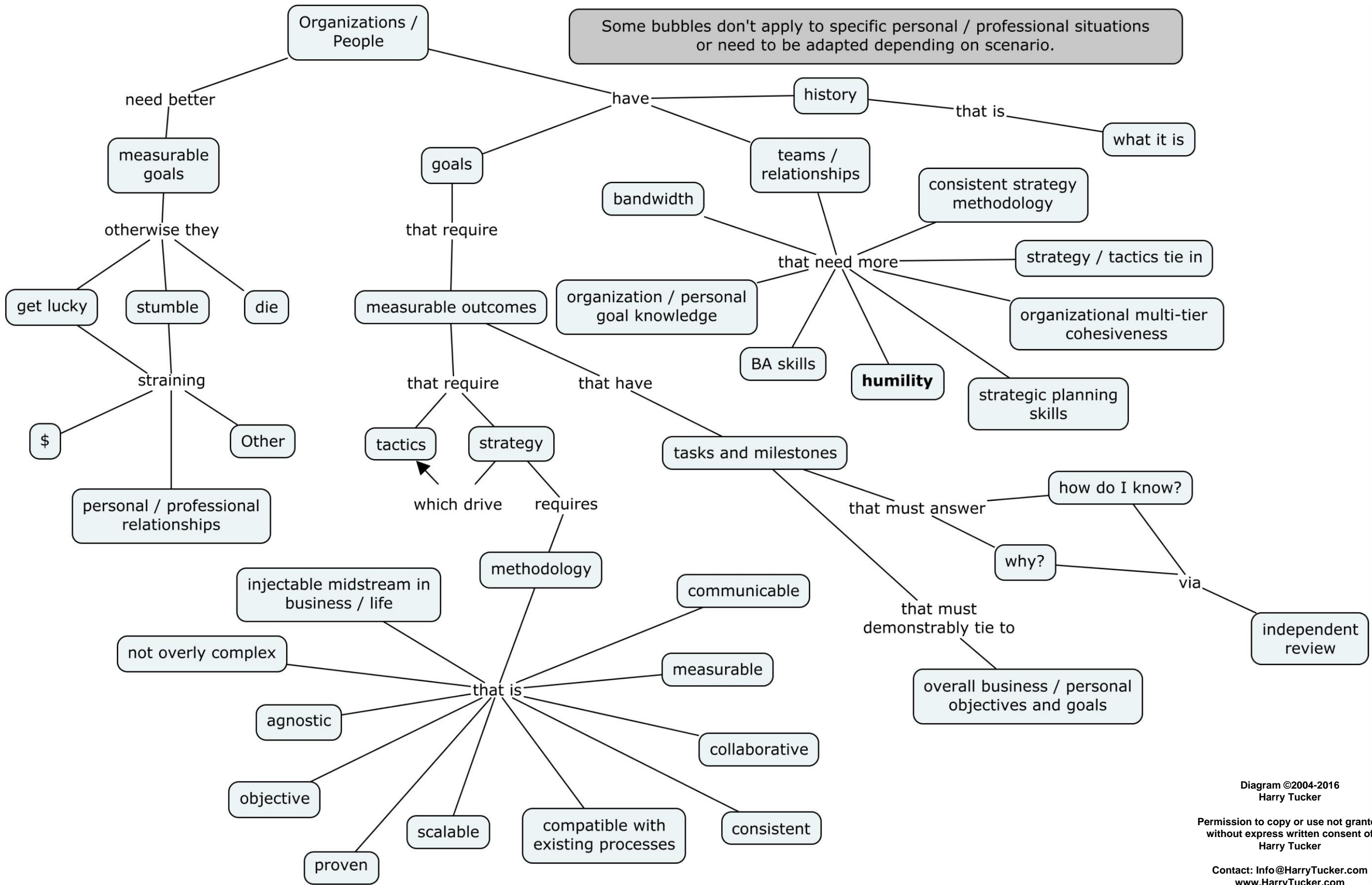
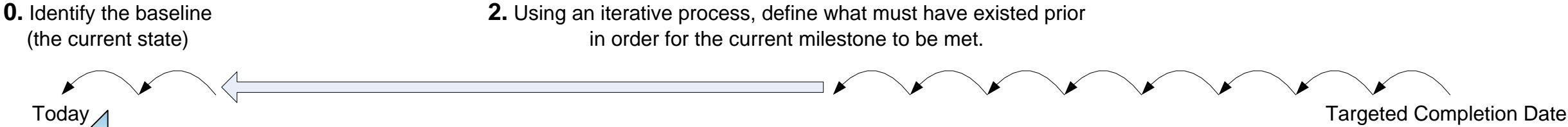


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Backcasting (Right-to-Left Forecasting)



3B – Plan is too aggressive
3A - Plan is ready
3C – Plan is not aggressive enough

- 1. Measurable Outcomes:**
- Leadership attributes
 - Prospect targets
 - Client targets
 - Staff strategy

2A Prospect Targets

- Verticals
- Technologies
- Other

2B Verticals

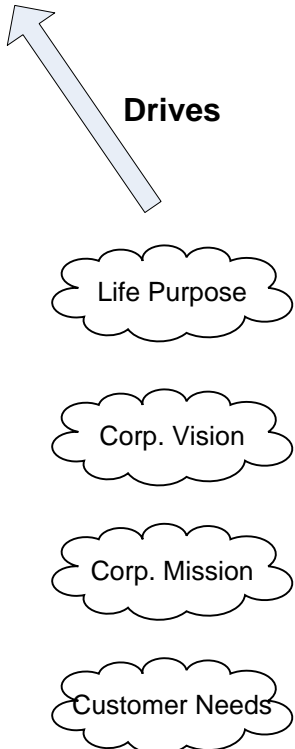
- Attribute 1
- Attribute 2
- Attribute 3

2B Technologies

- Attribute 1
- Attribute 2
- Attribute 3

2B Other

- Attribute 1
- Attribute 2
- Attribute 3



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.

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

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

Understanding backcasting (right-to-left forecasting)

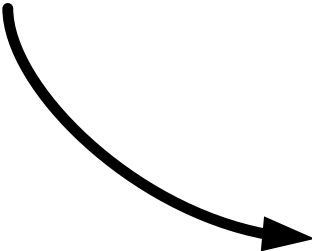
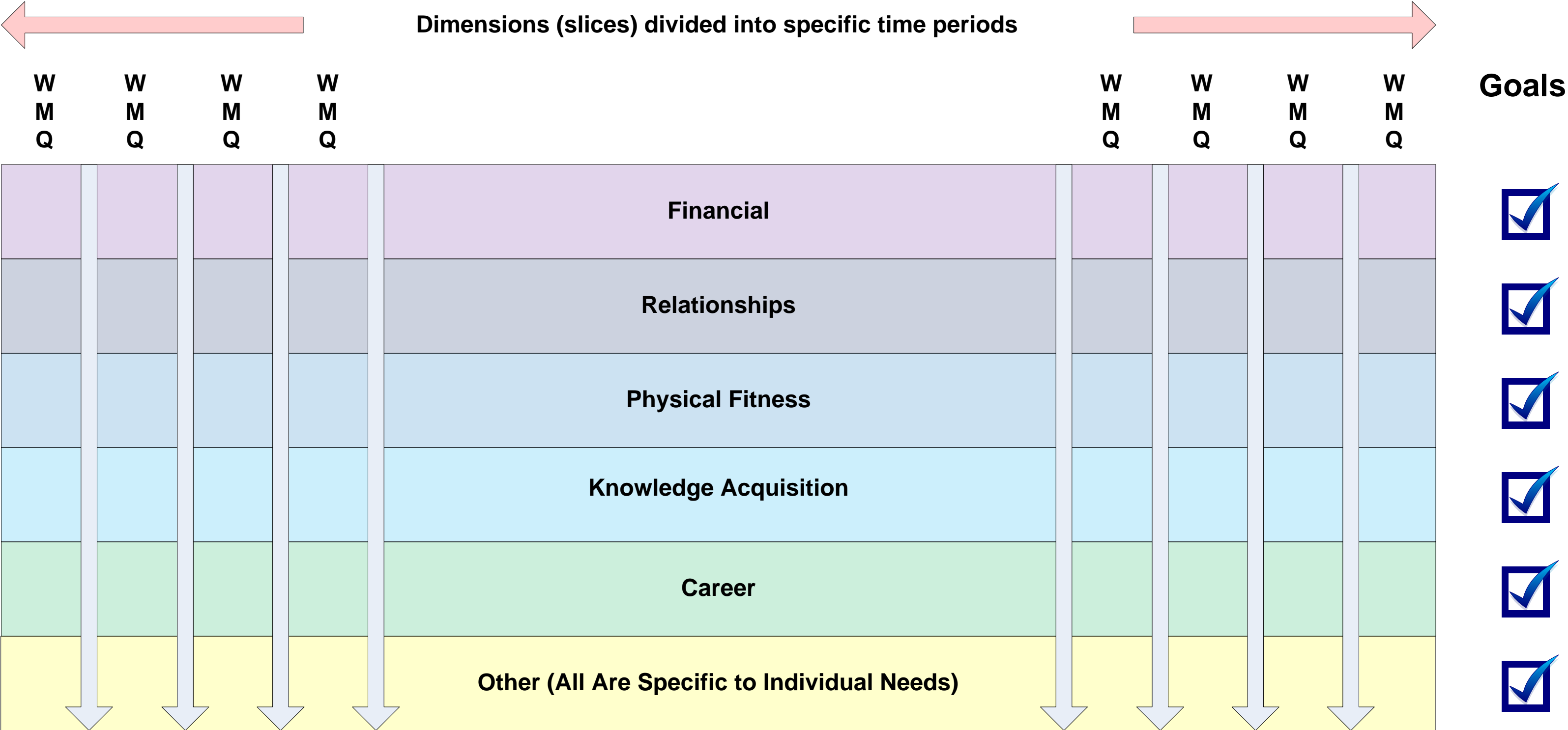
- A. Begin by identifying the current state (item 0) and the measurable outcomes (Item 1) including dates.
- B. Assuming that these outcomes occur by this date, define what milestones (item 2A) must have occurred immediately prior in order for these outcomes to have manifested.
- C. Assuming that item 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 than 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.

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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 detracting 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.