

September 2021 Issue 14

# The We Turned Out Okay Playbook

by Karen Lock Kolp, M.Ed.

Doing what works for you and your family...

Instead of treading the conventional path. Let's jump in!

## **Playful Future-Building (with time travel!)**

Welcome to Issue 14 of the *We Turned Out Okay Playbook*!

As I write, I've just finished taking myself through an exhilarating exercise, building my future by looking at it *as if it had already happened*.

Here's how I did it. I asked myself some really deep questions, and I listened carefully to my intuition for the answers.

For this month's essay I share the questions in this exercise that impacted me most profoundly. Not just the questions, I'm sharing my answers too! I'm drawn to share – even though it feels extremely vulnerable – so you know that you're not on this journey alone.

These responses are, quite literally, helping me see things I had not seen and helping me bring my chosen future into the present. I want that for you too! We'll spend this month tapping into this same energy so you can create your chosen future and bring it into the present. For now, here are some deep questions, and my responses. I hope they are helpful!

**Q: What's the biggest lesson you learned from your mom?**

K: To keep moving forward, keep creating... My mom continues to do this to this day. Music, singing, cooking, laughing, writing... She is a powerhouse of creativity.

**Q: What's the biggest lesson you learned from your dad?**

K: The importance of being in the moment, and playing... As a kid I remember skiing, sailing, hiking, playing tennis with my dad. Many of those activities he still does today – sometimes I'm lucky enough to do them with him – and he will be 80 in October! Very inspiring.

I learned other important lessons from both of my parents:

- To keep on learning
- That new and interesting stuff is always on the horizon
- That play is important, and there are so many different ways to play
- To take on challenges, get out of my comfort zone because that's where the FUN is

**Q: What important truths do very few people agree with you on?**

K: I came up with three:

1. Schools as they work now are killing kids, creativity, and society.
2. Play is missing in many lives, yet crucial to well-being.
3. Whoever you are, you must have play in your life or you're not really living.

**Q: If we were to talk three years from now and you were to say "Holy mackerel Karen, remember what we talked about in that conversation back in 2021? Remember I told you what was fulfilling for me, what I wanted my life to look like... Well, it happened!"**

### **What was it that happened?**

K: [Speaking from three years hence, September 2024] I began helping people dream really big, and then go after their dreams – make their future their present. This creative work now supports my family. Best of all it feels so right for me!

It's been a quest. I learned that in my Zone of Competence, I'm great at helping clients solve the little problems in their lives. How to have a better breakfast routine. How to handle temper tantrums... It's a great skill to have! I'm good at tactics.

But it's my Zone of Competence, and I don't want to spend my time merely where I am competent. (As a coach of mine has put it, "Do you want to be the potty training coach for your whole life?" Emphatically, no : )

I want to spend my time in my Zone of Genius.

That's where I help people believe in themselves. Get the bricks off their wings and fly. This kind of coaching transcends tactics. The folks I coach are skilled tacticians. They don't need my advice on the small things. They need me to help them realize what is possible! It's a paradigm shift. Coaching clients have likened this paradigm shift to learning to speak another language, the language of making big, wonderful dreams reality.

**Q: [Back in 2021] What a beautiful dream for the future, supporting you and your family by helping others realize their biggest and most exhilarating dreams.**

**(K: "Yup!")**

**What dangers are ahead for you, in your quest to fulfill that dream?**

K: That I derail myself by doing too much. That I get burned out mentally, that physically I experience tendon flareups and pain.

**Q: What opportunities are ahead for you in your quest?**

K: Changing the world; bringing back play; living my life how I wish; mindfully cultivating great relationships; enjoying radiant good health.

**Q: What are your unique strengths?**

K: I combine innovation and passion to be a catalyst. (My definition of “catalyst”: A person who makes things happen.) I shine, and help others shine too. I speak the language of flying, and my genius is teaching it to others.

**Q: What’s the dark side of your strengths?**

K: It’s hard to shut my brain off. I’m not good at resting, yet I need rest and downtime.

**Q: How are you working to bring this dream for the future into your present?**

K: SUCH a great question! And a tough one too! It’s been a journey of understanding and embracing myself, seeing that I’m beautiful as well as flawed. Understanding that the flaws as well as the beauty make me who I am.

I’ve come to understand that I can take on responsibilities that are not my own. When I do that, I’m not helping people be omniscient in their lives. Instead, I’m asserting myself as the omniscient one in their lives. Not a good place to be!

To combat this negative cycle I practice a discipline called Going With The Flow. I practice simply being with the people that I love, instead of taking up precious time telling them what they should be doing. I role-model how to live a fulfilling life.

I do exhilarating and fun things that keep me in the present moment, such as hiking and camping in summer, skiing in winter. I draw; I knit; I sing; I read completely frivolous and wonderful fiction; I cook. I listen to my body and my emotions with a new understanding of how intuition speaks to me.

This very exercise, taking myself through these questions and creating my own mind map, is helping me bring my dream future into the present.

Thank you for reading... for letting me share my true self. I believe this very vulnerability gives people courage to dream big. It’s when others have shared their vulnerabilities, and hopes and dreams and challenges, that I’ve gained the courage to look within myself.

Now it’s time for you to begin building your future. (And yes, you’ll get to make your own mind map! Description/instructions are included, so don’t worry if you’ve got no idea what that is...)

Let’s dive in!

## September 2021 At-a-Glance & Calendar Expansion

Let's build your future! In this issue you will:

- Time-travel, to look at your future as something that's already happened
- See the dangers that might block you from bringing your dreams into the present, as well as the opportunities in front of you
- Understand your unique strengths, as well as the dark side of those strengths
- Create a mind map that will help you live those big dreams and fly

This is a special one. Asking these questions, doing these exercises, creating this mind map has been life-changing for me.

In our high school Class Will, my friend Daryn willed me "Courage to the lion." One of my superpowers is helping others feel courageous. (I had to start by feeling that courage myself.)

Rarely do we give ourselves the chance to stop and ask "what do I actually want?" Here is your chance. I'm with you all the way.

Happy September – Enjoy!

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
			1. Preparing for your trip to the future...  What ideas you want in your future?
5. The rules for time travel...	6. Off we go!	7.	8.
12. The rules for this week...	13. Dangers that could derail you from bringing your ideal future into the present ... Opportunities that your ideal future offers	14.	15.
19. The rules for this week...	20. Your unique strengths ... The dark side of those strengths	21.	22.
26. The rules for this week...	27. Mind Map City baby!	28.	29. Keep playing with your Mind Map

Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Ideas
2. What people you want in your future?	3. What projects do you want in your future?	4. What habits do you want in your future?	
9.	10.	11.	
16.	17.	18.	
23.	24.	25.	
30. Reflecting back and looking forward	O1	O2	

## Let's jump into September 2021!

### **September 1:** Preparing for your trip to the future...

In a little less than a week you'll travel to 2024, so exciting! Time travel can be disconcerting, if the necessary prep work hasn't been completed prior to departure. Fortunately the preparation is thoughtful and interesting! It consists of 4 questions...

1. What ideas do you want in your future? This is your opportunity to brainstorm on what you want to be thinking of and playing with in 2024. Write, doodle, or draw in this space...

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### **September 2:**

2. What sort of people do you want in your future? This can be hypothetical, people you know, or strangers – who are, after all, friends-not-yet-met.

### **September 3:**

3. What projects do you want in your future? What do you want to be doing, where do you want to be going? Share about it all on the following page...



**September 4:**

4. What habits do you want in your future? (Also what's the flipside of this, the habits that you want to drop?) Brainstorm here...

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Week 1: Traveling to September 2024

**September 5:** The rules – and guidelines – for time travel...

- Hydrate today, and eat nourishing food that you love.
- Do no harm. Time travelers understand that placing negative ideas into the future rebounds back in a horrific, karmic way.
- You get to bring 3 items to the future. What will they be? Draw or write about them here...

– You get to bring a guest, one special person, to the future with you! Who will you bring? Draw or write about them here...

**September 6:** Strap on your seatbelt... Here we go!

**If we were to talk three years from now – in September 2024 – and you were to say “holy mackerel Karen, remember what we talked about in that conversation back in 2021? Remember I told you what was fulfilling for me, what I wanted my life to look like... Well, it happened!**

**What was it that happened?**

10 Each day this week place yourself into that future. Immerse yourself in it, act as if it truly is September 2024. Bring your ideas, people, projects, and habits that you brainstormed last week, and simply be in September 2024.

Write about that future as if it had already happened. What happened there? What was your life like? Who did you spend time with, and what did you do? You'll get this whole week to be immersed in September 2024... Each day share a bit of that experience. Enjoy the sensation of one day building up on the next. Let this idea grow and blossom in your mind.

**September 7...**

**September 8...**

**September 9...**

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**September 10...**

**September 11...** (a day that feels especially important in envisioning a positive future, even as we grieve)

## Week 2: Dangers and Opportunities in Your Future

### **September 12:** The rules for this week...

- Dangers stand in your way. They could derail you from bringing your ideal future into the present. Seeing them is the best way to alleviate those dangers, so the first rule for this week, ask yourself, what are they?
- Your amazing future offers opportunities you can't yet even envision. The second rule for this week is, give yourself permission to dream really BIG.
- Spend this week dropping in each day, and sharing your thoughts on the dangers, and the opportunities. Here is space for you to do that today:

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### **September 13...**

**September 14...**

**September 15...**

**September 16...**

**September 17...**

## September 18...

### Week 3: Your Unique Strengths, and Their Dark Side

#### **September 19:** The rules for this week...

- Work to understand that you have amazing unique strengths.
- Work to also understand, these strengths have a dark side. The dark sides of our strengths can be our undoing, if we don't see them.
- Spend this week thinking a bit each day on your unique strengths, and their dark sides. Doodle, write, or draw about it all here...

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## September 20...

**September 21...**

**September 22...**

**September 23...**

**September 24...**

## September 25...

### Week 4: Create Your Mind Map

#### **September 26:** The rules for this week...

– Give yourself permission to get messy, and to understand that the creative process is messy. If you struggle with this one, as I often do, repeat to yourself: “Messy is sexy.”

– Each day this week, go to pages 20-21 and add a new element to your Mind Map.

– Starting anywhere on the page that feels right, write, draw, or doodle about your big dream. (My Mind Map features a seagull in flight, up towards the top of the page, with bricks falling away from her wings and trailing all down the page. Anything goes here : )

– Each day, come back and add an element, a quote, or an inspiration from this month’s Playbook. Some days, you’ll want to add lots of things – and some days it might be hard to even think of one. Remember, messy is sexy!

– Keep your Mind Map from becoming too linear. The creative process doesn’t think in straight lines, and as much as we wish we did, we don’t think in straight lines either.

– As you play with your Mind Map, you may find yourself circling ideas and connecting them to other ideas, far away on the Mind Map. This is awesome! It’s



the nature of creating a document like this to spark connections, and make big dreams feel real and attainable.

– Use this space over the next few days to write your thoughts on this process, and to think on how time traveling to 2024 – and to the creation of this very Mind Map – will help you realize your dreams and bring them into the present.

Okay, that’s a lot of rules! Most importantly, play with this. And keep playing with it <3

**September 27...**

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**September 28...**

**September 29...**

Keep playing with your Mind Map. When you love it and feel like it's "done," put it in a safe place where you can see it frequently and remember this future.

It's yours for you to bring into the present.

**September 30:** Reflecting back, looking forward. What has resonated with you this month, whether in relation to the *Playbook* or in other areas of your life? What didn't resonate?

Is there anything you'll return to in this *Playbook*, and revisit after the end of September?

As you look forward into the future, what's been most helpful in this issue?

Share about it all in this space:

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And get ready for October's *Playbook*! It's going to be a great month!

## Playsheets

If you know me, you'll know I'm not a fan of worksheets. But I really wanted you to have a place to collect your thoughts in a worksheet kind of way, so I developed these Playsheets instead!

**Playsheet 1: High/Low/Hero/Funny...** In each issue of the *Playbook* we play this family game, where everyone shares about the best thing that happened to them that day, the toughest thing about that day, and who was a kindness hero for them that day – and/or, what entertaining or funny thing happened?

We play this game each and every month so you can enjoy looking back on your child's highs, lows, heroes and funnies over your *Playbook* subscription! This gives you a record over time so you can see how they change and grow.

Family Member	High	Low	Hero	Funny

## **Playsheet 2... Your Mind Mapping Space!**

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## Hello from The Dream HQ

The column where each month we visit a wonderful place for mindfulness and relaxation: Karen's Dream Headquarters.

We step into the glade of the Dream HQ, and we take in the view:

It's a cool, beautiful starry evening, with the moon just setting in the West. We stand in the meadow in front of the Big House, and our intuition draws us toward that moon...

In the woods ahead is a hiking trail, lit up with tiny lanterns and inviting us to give it a try.

We look at our feet and discover them encased in the most supple, well-broken-in, and sturdy hiking boots we can imagine.

Exhilaration wells up in our heart, as it seems foretold that we would be here tonight, ready for a hike. We begin climbing...

All around us the night sounds are delightful. We hear crickets, an owl's hoot, water burbling from a stream nearby.

The trail is just challenging enough to test our endurance, but that stream nearby sounds like it's getting closer. Might there be a swimming hole somewhere ahead?

We keep climbing, and sure enough we do find not just any old swimming hole. This is a lovely pool, icy cold and refreshing after our exertions, with a waterfall at the other end!

We jump in. The feeling is exquisite.

We begin to float in a lazy current, that carries us closer to the waterfall. It's beautiful, with lights behind the falls that draw our attention. As we get closer we realize, it's not just lights behind, there's an entire cave behind that waterfall.

We can't resist. Stone steps lead up out of the water and into a cave like no other. There's a crackling fire with the perfect cozy chair in front.

Our favorite beverage is at our elbow as we sit down, having stopped only to put on a flannel-and-terrycloth robe (emblazoned with the silhouettes of year-round Dream HQ residents, Joy and her faithful companion, Honey the winged horse, of course).

We sit back and enjoy the warmth after the cool of the pool, the rest after our exhilarating hike.

As we gaze at the fire we notice that it's a special fire, just as this is a special cave.

We start to see figures and scenes in the fire... Intuitively we know that these are scenes from our future. Our amazing future, that we dreamed of – that we created – when we time traveled to 2024 and when we made our Mind Map.

It's lovely to see our dreams unfold before our very eyes.

Sitting here in comfort and relaxation we know that those dreams are on their way. We've got the courage to bring them into the present, and anytime we need a refresher, now we know where to go to get that.

All we need to do is close our eyes and step into the Dream HQ.

## What's coming up in the October *Playbook*?

Throughout my life, the outdoors – the woods, the fields, the ocean and the mountains – have comforted me and sustained me.

Whenever something was wrong, I use to head out into the woods behind my house. Whenever something was right, celebrations and fun took place in the great outdoors.

But even if nature has never played a part in your world, it's a delightful storehouse of comfort and support. We'll explore nature in issue 15 of the *Playbook*, and I've already got goosebumps just thinking about it!

Coming soon, right into your mailbox...

Have a great September and we will see you next month!

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