

**Transforming Your Years After 50:  
Using Vision Boards  
and Mind Maps  
to Achieve Your Dreams**



By

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## INTRODUCTION

In this report I am giving overviews of two important and useful tools that can enhance your life in multiple ways. Both are visual tools – they use images, drawings, colors and other components other than strictly text or words. The world is more and more focused on images beginning on a mass scale when television became the medium through which we got our information and entertainment. Then the internet multiplied the focus and now there are graphical methods of transmitting information like infographics.

Through this transition, visual-based tools like vision boards and mind mapping have been developed, improved and become more and more popular. Research has been done on the value of these approaches to tap into more of our mental and emotional capacities in a variety of ways.

There is much information and many variations of uses and tools available. I have personally used a couple of kinds of vision board strategies, and used mind mapping for note taking, agendas, strategizing and planning. They have been effective and helpful. My hope is that you will be intrigued enough to try these techniques and see how they can enhance your planning, problem-solving, research and many other areas of life.

# PART I: VISION BOARDS

## Introducing Vision Boards to Achieve Your Dreams

As you are deciding how to transform your years after 50 into a joyful and fulfilling time, you need tools to help you focus on your goals and dreams. Too often we think of goal setting and creating big changes in your life as requiring lists, planning documents and deadlines – the kind of things we have been doing for years in structured jobs and careers.

We look at that list of dates and to-dos and we're instantly overwhelmed with the enormity of it all, so we file it away for "later." And often "later" will be never. So looking for other tools is a great idea. We have dreams of how our 3<sup>rd</sup> Act can be, and that's what vision boards are all about: *dreaming*. In fact they are sometimes called dream boards.

Rather than a bland calendar or spreadsheet with dates and impressive sounding goals on them, vision boards give you the creativity to let your dreams grow. It is a visual tool that helps you **feel** the achievement of your goals and dreams. **That's the real power of a vision board.**

### What Exactly is a Vision Board?

It's a collection of images, quotes and symbols that have meaning to you and which represent your life as you would like it to be. Vision boards come in many different formats, both digital and physical. We'll talk more about that later, but for now, let's take a look at the components of vision boards.

**Images.** By far the most common item on vision boards are images: photos, drawings, mind maps, sketches or anything else that has some meaning for you. For example, if world travel is one of your goals, you might include photos of historic landmarks you want to visit, or airplanes, trains or ships on which you wish to reach these places.

**Motivational messages.** Your vision board might include messages you see posted on social media, phrases you read and jot down in your journal, or even testimonials from your clients or nice things others have said about you. Anything that's motivational to YOU.

**Inspiring quotes.** Inspiration is different for everyone, and the sources are endless. You probably already have favorite quotes; expand those by doing Google searches by topic or by person.

**Everything else.** What else inspires or motivates you? The blue ribbon your grandmother's quilt won at the state fair? A small vial of sand from that secluded beach you'll retire to someday? Vision boards can include these treasures as well. You just might have to be a little creative when it comes to attaching them.

## The Power of Vision Boards

In the process of transforming your years after 50, vision boards can help you be and do the things you desire. How? You have probably heard of the law of attraction, which some years ago became widely known through the movie and book, *The Secret*. Simply stated, when we focus on something, we attract more of it, whether positive or negative.

If you spend all your time worrying about money, it seems to slip right through your fingers. If you obsess over your weight, the pounds stubbornly hold on. And if you daydream about relaxing in the Caribbean sun, you're a lot more likely to find yourself on a beach chair in the near future.

This isn't some airy-fairy make-believe, either. We've known for decades that daydreams have power, and that purposeful visualization is the key to greater success in every area of life.

Top athletes practice endlessly, not only on the field, but in their minds. They actually see that perfect shot, winning race, or stunning back flip. They concentrate on the minute movements that make it possible, how their muscles will react every second, and how they will feel at the end of a stellar performance. This type of visualization creates neural pathways in our brains that are virtually indistinguishable from those caused by completing the act itself. The result? Nearly the same as with actual, physical practice.

It works the same way for you. When you visualize your ideal retirement years, your happy home life, your dream vacation, and even your income goals, you're primed to achieve them. And you'll meet those goals much faster and with fewer stumbles than if you simply list your goals (and deadlines) on a calendar.

Like anything though, effective visualization takes practice. As kids, we spend much of our time daydreaming and playacting, but those are skills we lose as we age. A vision board can help kick start those creative visualization skills again.

Here's another benefit of creating a vision board: It will boost your spirits when you face life's inevitable struggles. Having a bad day? Spend some time working on your vision board, and you'll feel noticeably lighter at heart.

Feeling overwhelmed? Take a look at your vision board for an instant reminder of why you're working hard now, and what you stand to gain from it.

Struggling to reach a client? Read through some of the beautiful things other clients have shared about their journey with you. You'll be immediately reminded about how valuable you are, and why you do what you do.

Vision boards can be effective in many areas of life – health, family and friends, leisure, finances, learning, etc. In each of these areas, vision boards can help you focus on those things that will give you joy and fulfillment.

## Vision Boards Work in Many Areas of Life

Vision boards can affect various aspects of your life as you are moving into this next phase of life. When you create your vision board, regardless of which of life's aspects you're focusing on, be sure to look for images and words that make you *feel* the way you imagine you'll feel when you achieve your goal. *It's not about what you want to have. It's about how you want to feel.*

Any area of your life can benefit from a vision board. Here are some key areas with some tips.

### Self-Care

How's your health? For many people over 50 years old, it could be better.

How can a vision board help? By making it clear how much better you will feel (there's that word again) when you do eat healthy, exercise, and are hydrated.

A vision board filled with images of fun activities in relaxing locations is just the thing to remind you—the next time you reach for another slice of pizza—that you're working toward an achievable goal.

### Family & Friends

We don't often think of vision boards as being helpful with building relationships, but give it a try. First think about...

- What kind of relationships do you want to have?
- What's most important to you as a spouse? Parent? Son or daughter? Friend?
- How do you want your spouse to feel when he sees you?
- How do you want your grandchildren to feel when they spend time with you?

Fill your vision board with items that represent the best relationships you can imagine, and soon enough, you'll begin creating those bonds in your own life.

### Recreation and Adventure

This might be the easiest area. Include both things that you could easily do and the big dream trips or adventures. Focus on how you will feel when you are doing these things.

With your vision board populated with meaningful images, thoughtful and motivating quotes, inspirational messages, and plenty of creativity, even these big scary goals suddenly feel much more attainable.



## Finances

A creative vision board can help with your financial goals, too. Start by asking yourself...

- What does financial freedom mean to me?
- How can I change the world if I earn more money?
- What charities will I support when I start earning \$xxx?

Then find the images that represent the feeling of fulfillment and joy you'll have as you're able to achieve these goals and more. Maybe that's a photo of needy children your church group helps support, or an animal rescue organization you love. Or maybe it's just a big pile of money so you can retire young and live on a yacht. It's your dream, and it can be anything you want it to be.

These areas and others are all part of transforming your 3<sup>rd</sup> act into a time of joy and fulfillment. Vision boards are a tool to help you do that.

## Creating Vision Boards

Now that we know what a vision board is and how powerful it can be in helping in transforming the years ahead, it's time to create a vision board.

### Tools and Materials

Creating a vision board can be as simple as cutting photos out of a magazine and tacking them up on your office bulletin board, or it can be as complex as a hand-made frame with personal photos and trinkets. There are at least 3 basic ways you can proceed:

- Digital: Created with software designed for the task, or with Photoshop or some other image-editing tool. Ease of use is the obvious benefit with this kind of vision board, because you can quickly add and edit your board.
- Physical: Paper, bulletin boards, whiteboards, or even a wall in your home with hanging pictures. Your creative options are endless here, but your vision board will obviously be less portable.
- Mobile: Created on an app made for tablets and phones. The advantage here is that you'll have your vision board with you everywhere you go.

Regardless of which type you choose, remember this before you begin to work on your vision board:

*"So, what's the big secret to creating a vision board that works? It's simple: Your vision board **should focus on how you want to feel**, not just on things that you want. Don't get me wrong, it's great to include the material stuff, too. However, the more your board focuses on how you want to feel, the more it will come to life." – Elizabeth Rider, "The Reason Vision Boards Work and How to Make Them", The Huffington Post Blog, 01/12/2015*

Another thing Elizabeth Rider says in the above post is that "There is only one major rule to creating a vision board that works, and it's that there aren't any rules. You aren't going to mess it up, you can create your vision board on your own terms."

### Creating Physical Vision Boards

Remember when you were a kid in art class? Your vision board materials can be just as much fun—especially if you're creating a physical board to hang on your wall.

Start by gathering up a selection of materials to work with:

- Swatches of fabric and ribbon
- A stack of old magazines (hit up your local library for their outdated copies)
- Colored pencils and markers
- Construction paper
- Poster board
- Crayons
- Glue and tape
- Scissors
- Stamps & ink pads

Flip through the magazines. Resist the urge to get sucked into the articles, and instead, concentrate on how you feel as you see the photos. Do they make you happy? Do you smile at a particular shot? Does it bring to mind a particular goal or dream? Cut out the images that speak to you in some way.

Don't worry about organizing them or categorizing them at this point. For now, just make a stack of images that have meaning for you.

Next, take your board—and it can be a single piece of paper, a full-size poster board, or even the bulletin board in your office—and begin arranging your images, quotes and other materials.

You can have a single board with areas devoted to each aspect of your life, or a different board for each. Your board can be a hodgepodge of random images, or a carefully laid out plan that progresses naturally from one to the next. It can be color coordinated or not. Ultimately, it has to please only you, so let your creativity flow.

Don't be afraid to use your pencils and markers to decorate your board, draw attention to certain images, or divide it into distinct quadrants. You can add dates and dollar figures if you like, or the names of people you want to think of as you work with it. Most importantly, just have fun.

### **Creating Digital Boards**

Digital boards have the advantage of being portable, so you can enjoy and be inspired by them anywhere. Plus, they're easy to recreate and re-imagine as your goals, dreams and values change.

There are several web-based apps that will help you create your boards that you can consider. One favorite is [DreamItAlive.com](http://DreamItAlive.com), which not only provides the tools to create your “dreamboard” (as they call it) but also a community of like-minded dreamers to support and encourage you. Best of all, Dream It Alive is free to join.

## **Activating Your Vision Board**

Your unique vision boards can bring your dreams and goals to life as you are transforming your years after 50 into a beautiful time of life. There is a final step after your creative process to help that happen – activating your vision boards.

There are alternate ideas about how to “activate” the power of vision boards. Most proponents advocate placing them where you can see them daily, preferably multiple times daily. This repeated exposure develops strong neural pathways in your brain to what you have included.

Some practitioners talk of specific placement, i.e., being at your eye level in fairly specific places in your home or work. There are also stories of vision boards that were created and packed away for a few years before being re-discovered--and significant parts of the vision board were reality without the frequent viewing.

[Brandi Russell](#) in her blog post about vision boards suggests posting your board in the bathroom where you can look at it while you brush your teeth in the morning and at night. That’s pretty practical. She also makes the important point that we still have to take action. We have to take advantage of the resources and opportunities that present themselves as we are focusing on what we want our life to be. If you are focused and are open to the “nudges”, the ideas that pop into your mind, you will have things to do. As you take the action, believe that the answer is “yes” and that what you desire is already on its way.

Katy on her [Midlife Rambler](#) blog identified 5 reasons that vision boards may not have the results you desire. These may be helpful as you look back at what you have created and are ready to try this strategy:

First, you may be focusing on goals rather than feelings. You always want images that elicit the feelings you seek. Second, is not being clear about what will make you happy. Also, rushing the process too much, keeping a vision board that doesn’t resonate any more, and forgetting to look at the board. Vision boards can be helpful in any major transition of life. Give it a try and let me know how it goes!

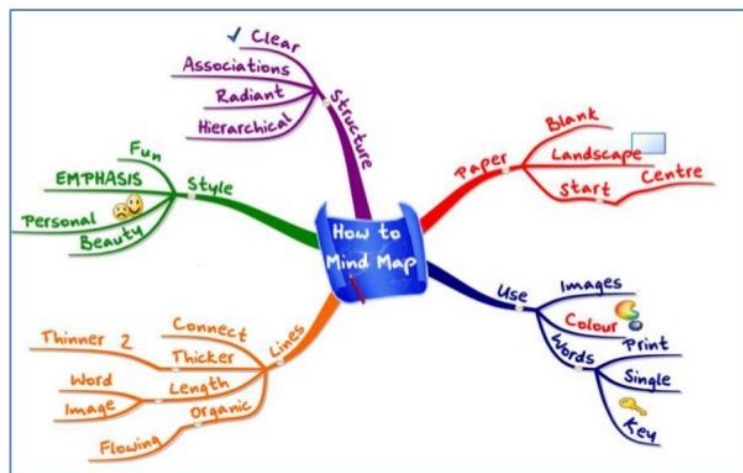
## PART II: MINDMAPPING

*"The human brain has left and right brain symmetry with its own nature and can process information which initially appears to have no pattern or order. However, the brain has the ability to process visual information much more efficiently." -- Tony Buzan*

### Introducing Mind Mapping, a Multi-Purpose Tool

**Mind Mapping** is a great multi-purpose tool that can help with various aspects of transforming your retirement. I first became familiar with it when Tony Buzan, the creator of modern mind mapping, published *Use Both Sides of Your Brain* in 1976. I have used it sporadically ever since then.

Perhaps you are not familiar with mind mapping. Tony Buzan describes it as a two-dimensional technique that uses imagery, drawings and color to gather information and associations around a specific topic. Here is an example:



Source: <http://www.mind-mapping.co.uk>

Mind mapping allows us to visualize tasks or ideas that relate to one another and to organize them. The technique taps into both the left and right sides of our brains, which makes it very powerful.

Mind mapping can be used for endless purposes, by people of all ages – including children. For example, mind mapping is very effective for: taking notes,

brainstorming, goal setting, planning, problem solving, organizing, setting agendas for meetings, and more.

Here are a couple of examples. If you have a project that needs immediate attention, you can simply write down your goals using lines, short words, drawings, and graphics. In no time at all, you can already see the solution to achieve your project. Also, a mind map agenda is a great way to set out the topics of a meeting without putting them in a rigid order. The meeting can flow more organically from one topic to another.

The power of combining words and images is immeasurable and taps into the potential of the human brain like few other tools. Perhaps you are somewhat skeptical of the claims of effectiveness. Numerous studies have confirmed the how effective the tool is for various tasks, which are easily located online. Here is one comprehensive review of the research: [Mindmapping: Research and Scientific Studies](#)

## Mind Mapping Enhances Your Innovative Thinking

Transforming your 3<sup>rd</sup> act is clearly a creative project requiring innovative thinking. We are seeking to create a custom-designed joyful life that contributes to others and is deeply fulfilling. For possibly decades, we have had limited ability to step back and CREATE what we want in our lives because of commitments, responsibilities and obligations.

Innovative thinking can benefit greatly from mind mapping because it is able to consume all the common skills found in imagination, creativity, flexibility, and organization of ideas. There are some fundamental elements, identified in psychological research, that can improve your creative thinking. They include using shapes, colors, unusual elements, and dimensions. According to further studies, mind maps are the best tools in nurturing creative thinking. If you try to apply mind mapping in any of your activities, you will be able to create lots of innovative ideas than what you've expected.

### 5 Stages of Creative Thinking Using Mind Mapping

Very few people are innately gifted with innovative thinking. But we can use techniques and approaches to promote creative thinking, and mind mapping is a very effective tool to that end.

Mind mapping can aid in completing the thinking process. With some practice of techniques, we all can create lots of innovative ideas – perhaps even more than a group brainstorming session can generate.

- **Mind mapping burst (Quick-Fire)** – choose an interesting topic and draw a central image to represent it. You can use a blank paper or any other material that you can write on. (Refer to the image above as you begin.) The ideas that radiate from your mind should be indicated on the page. Try to generate ideas for twenty minutes. Even if some ideas seem absurd, jot them down because sometimes these ideas can be the key to breaking bad habits and coming up with new perspectives.

- **1st Reconstruction and Revision** – don't over exercise your brain. You can take a break and then try to integrate the ideas you've generated. Create another mind map – but this time, try to categorize the preliminary ideas. You can build hierarchies – add more subtopics to the branches – and note but don't remove identical ideas in different branches.

- **Incubation** – when you're at rest, running, or sleeping, there are times when you experience sudden realizations. In this stage, the thinking process can create probable breakthroughs.
- **2nd Reconstruction and Revision** – do another mind map burst because at this stage, you have a fresher perception. Integrate all the ideas and information found in the initial mind maps and try to create a comprehensive mind map.
- **Final** – after you've created a comprehensive map, you can now look for the realizations, decisions, and solutions for the topic or issue you chose. Examine your mind map again and look for breakthroughs or new insights. Soon you will realize that all the ideas are connected with each other and you will be able to see more of how to innovatively create and transform your years after 50.

These are the five stages in the creative thinking. Hopefully, you have seen how mind mapping can be an extremely helpful tool in creative thinking. Give these steps a try on other areas of life, issues, etc. You will surely be surprised with the explosion of innovative and creative ideas. Let mind mapping help you in uncovering your creative thinking so that you can use it often.



## CONCLUSION AND RESOURCES

Both Vision Boards and Mind Mapping are helpful tools. I encourage you to learn more about both of them and become comfortable using the tools to enhance your life.

To learn more about Vision Boards, I recommend this book by John Assaraf: **The Complete Vision Board Kit: Using the Power of Intention and Visualization to Achieve Your Dreams**. John is an expert at this and will guide you through the process. You can purchase it here through my affiliate link: [Vision Board Kit](#)

To learn more about Mind Mapping, I recommend two books:  
Use Both Sides of Your Brain: New Mind Mapping Techniques by Tony Buzan :  
[Both Sides](#)

The Mind Map Book: How to Use Radiant Thinking to Maximize Your Brain's Untapped Potential by Tony and Barry Buzan: [The Mind Map Book](#)



### **About the Author, Carol Brusegar:**

I am a leading edge Baby Boomer, born in 1946. As I look back at my life, I see a pattern of collecting and immersing myself in diverse experiences and ideas. I see myself as one who curates or collects. As I look forward, I will continue to do this as I am transforming retirement to be a joyous, productive and contributory part of life.

My work experiences have ranged from playing various roles in multiple non-profit organizations and churches, to managing a crime prevention program in the police department of a major city, to providing small business support services. I have gained appreciation for non-profit, government, and business sectors in the process.

I have been involved as a volunteer in a variety of faith-based efforts for social justice and social change, including most recently Timothy's Gift, a prison outreach ministry to inmates in Florida, Ohio and beyond.

Since leaving full-time employment about ten years ago, I have made two major relocations, and will do it again in 2018. I have moved from Minneapolis, Minnesota to Foothill Ranch, California to Nashville, Tennessee and am planning to go to the Long Beach, California area soon. I made the moves to be close to my only daughter, son-in-law and two grandchildren. I had never anticipated leaving Minneapolis, but the differences in weather, terrain and cultural have provided great opportunities for learning and growth and I have gained precious relationships in the process.

I am building a platform and a community around *transforming retirement* based on my experiences and those of others, as well as gathering great ideas from a variety of other sources.

**I would appreciate hearing your feedback and comments about your experiences. You can share those on my Facebook page:**  
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