

Turns out that true manifestation doesn't come from a clear vision, a deep desire, blind faith, and a refusal to go to the dark side. It's not about seeing and wanting and willfully pushing away negative thoughts. In fact, research shows that those negatives have value. They just might be the missing pieces in the manifestation puzzle.

Enter Gabriele Oettingen, a professor of psychology at New York University and the University of Hamburg. She studies motivation and goal achievement, among other things, diving into how we maddeningly irrational humans think about and create our futures. In other words, she researches manifesting to figure out what actually works and what's total bunk. Oettingen is also the author of *Rethinking Positive Thinking: Inside the New Science of Motivation*, where she shares an interesting take on wishful delusion versus practical goal attainment.

In her lab, she found something pretty interesting. People who only *fantasized* about finding a new partner, getting a new job, recovering from surgery, or acing an exam fared much worse than those who fantasized and then took a few extra steps. The big winners were people who moved beyond fantasizing, acknowledged the major obstacles that were likely to appear, and planned how they'd handle them if and when they did appear.

Turns out acknowledging the very real likelihood of bad stuff happening along the way doesn't make you more likely to fail. It doesn't "repel" your dream outcome. Nor does supplementing your brain's GPS by actively pursuing solutions instead of waiting for them to be given from beyond. In fact, these things do the exact opposite. They make you acknowledge, quantify, and then choose whether you are willing to own what it will truthfully take to make your dream a reality. The potential suffering, the sacrifice, the stumbles and failures, and the judgment. They force you to examine the cost of the quest and then decide three things: What are the biggest potential obstacles? Do I still want it enough to endure those associated costs? And if so, how will I prepare in advance to deal with the challenges and costs if and when they come?