

# A Pattern Language for Nurturing an Exciting Life: Focusing on Patterns for Facing Your Future Life

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In this paper, we present *A Pattern Language for Nurturing an Exciting Life*, which aims to support individuals in finding their own creative way of living and living an exciting and authentic life. This pattern language is composed of three main categories. In this paper, we focus on the first nine patterns that constitute the first category, FACING YOUR FUTURE LIFE. A distinctive feature of our research approach is the combination of mining interviews, which extract implicit rules of thumb, and life story interviews, which provide detailed personal histories. This approach allowed us to link the extracted good practices with concrete real-life examples. This research aims to provide new insights for those interested in career design, life planning, and personal development by attempting to capture life in its entirety over a medium- to long-term time frame.

**CCS CONCEPTS** • Human-centered computing → Interaction design → Interaction design process and methods → User centered design

**Additional Key Words and Phrases:** Pattern Language, Career Design, Life Planning, Exciting Life, Personal Development

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The movement to make life better, such as life shifts, career design, and well-being, is growing worldwide. While the social background behind the growing demand for these insights is largely common, the approaches to addressing this challenge are remarkably diverse. This diversity is evident in the distinct perspectives offered by each work:

Gratton's *The 100-YEAR LIFE* emphasizes the need for continuous learning and adaptation in an era of increased longevity, proposing a restructuring of traditional life stages to accommodate longer lifespans [1]. The Stanford Life Design Lab, in “Designing Your Life,” applies design thinking principles to career and life planning, offering a practical framework for individuals to craft fulfilling lives [2]. Waldinger’s research in *THE GOOD LIFE* emphasizes the crucial role of strong relationships and social connections in promoting long-term happiness and well-being [3]. This research is the longest longitudinal study on human life, which began in 1938 and continues to evolve and expand. It demonstrates that relationships have a greater impact on happiness than material success.

These diverse approaches underscore the multifaceted nature of improving life quality and well-being in contemporary society. Each perspective contributes unique insights to the broader discourse on life enhancement, demonstrating the complexity and richness of this field of study.

In this paper, we focus on a way of living driven by curiosity welling up from within and living with hope for the future as one of the forms of a good life. We named this way of being and living an “Exciting Life,” and using the pattern language methodology, we have mined and articulated 27 patterns from implicit experiential knowledge to grasp how living an exciting life can be achieved through good practices.

From these patterns, this paper specifically focuses on the first step, “FACING YOUR FUTURE LIFE.” While many people tend to start thinking about their career and life path by considering “what kind of job to do,” this category encourages individuals to confront their entire future life—the life that will likely continue for many years to come. These patterns prompt a comprehensive consideration of one's whole life story, encompassing both present and future, rather than just focusing on immediate career choices.

The structure of this paper is as follows. In the second section, we present the crafting process of *A Pattern Language for Nurturing an Exciting Life*, focusing on the extraction and systematization of patterns through interviews. The third section provides an overview of the pattern language and introduces the nine patterns from

the category FACING YOUR FUTURE LIFE, illustrating how they guide individuals in life planning and career design. The fourth section presents narratives tied to some of these patterns, drawn from life story interviews with individuals who embody these practices. Finally, the conclusion explores the broader implications of these patterns for personal development and career design, offering insights into future research directions and applications.

## 2. CRAFTING PROCESS OF THE PATTERN LANGUAGE

This research has been working on crafting *A Pattern Language for Nurturing an Exciting Life* since the beginning of 2020 [4]. The overall framework is based on the crafting process devised by Takashi Iba's laboratory and others with additional processes added as deemed necessary for this research (Fig. 1) [5-9]. This section describes the creation process in five major stages.

Chronologically, Pattern Mining was first conducted to extract hundreds of “Pattern Materials” that could potentially become patterns. Second, in the clustering process, the extracted Pattern Materials were sorted and narrowed down into groups of 20-30 similar items, and the resulting elements were used to weave together a system [8]. Third, life story interviews were conducted to collect concrete examples of how the extracted patterns are practiced in real life, using an approach that reverses the pattern mining process [5][6]. Fourth, based on these findings, the system was reorganized. Finally, additional life story interviews were conducted, along with Pattern Writing that included Pattern Symbolizing [7]. The following sections describe each process in detail.

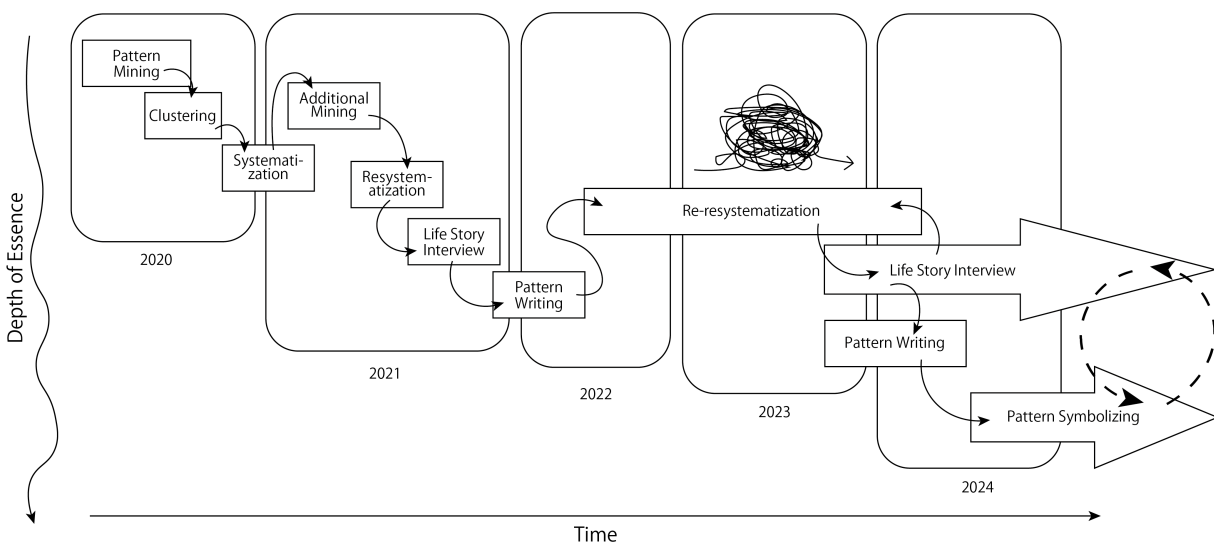


Figure 1: Creating Process of the Pattern Language

### 2.1 Pattern Mining

The first step in crafting a pattern language is Pattern Mining, which involves extracting implicit practical knowledge (rules of thumb) from people who engage in good practices. Through dialogues with practitioners, the authors “mined” tips for good practices from their narratives [5][6][10]. In this research, the authors conducted interviews with individuals they could directly approach, who had unconventional ways of working that did not fit into existing occupational frameworks and seemed to be living vibrant lives true to themselves.

For example, these individuals included a sustainable urban planner, an ethical fashion planner, a woman who runs a cafe that serves as a community space for parents raising children with the slogan “Adding to the Town through Parenting,” and a man who, when asked about his profession, replied, “I can't really define it... if I had to say, I'd call myself an ‘Occhan’ (a nickname in Japanese for an older man),” who is working on to creating exploratory spaces for children and adults. Interviews were conducted with a total of seven people, with each interview lasting between three to five hours. Additional interviews were conducted if there were any missed points or items that needed confirmation.

All interviews were transcribed and recorded, and the data was saved for later review and close reading after the interviews were conducted. The interviewees included a man and a woman in their late 20s, a woman in her 40s, two men in their 40s, and two men in their 50s. Additionally, all of them are Japanese.

In the mining interviews conducted for this study, there was only one predetermined question, which was used as an introduction: “What do you value in order to live an exciting life?” From this starting point, the researchers asked further questions as needed during the conversation and proceeded while carefully considering the responses together with the interviewees. The absence of set questions did not mean that the interviewers and interviewee chat freely; rather, the researchers always kept in mind the need to elicit what is important to do, how to do that practice specifically, and why it is important in the practices experienced by the subjects in order to produce good results.

For instance, if an interviewee responded that ‘it’s important to choose the direction your curiosity leads you,’ the researchers would then delve deeper, consciously probing into how one could become aware of ‘the direction their curiosity leads’ and how they could actively choose to pursue that direction. This approach ensured that the interviews not only identified key practices but also explored the Baby Steps of these patterns.

## 2.2 Clustering and Systematization

Next, clustering was performed to sort the extracted Pattern Materials into groups of 20-30 similar items [11]. During the clustering process, while grasping the essential meaning of each Pattern Material, the haphazardly extracted Pattern Materials were condensed into a granularity that can be called elements. Once the grouping was refined to a point where it felt satisfactory and sufficient, the individual positions of these groups were considered to form a coherent system.

By systematizing the elements positioning them in a way that they interrelate with each other, it can be said that the implicit practical knowledge has reached a state where it can be recognized as a set of rules of thumb. In the Iba Laboratory refer to the elements in this state as “Pattern Seeds.”

As the final process described in this section, attractive names were given to these Pattern Seeds. When naming, reference was made to *Creating Words* and *Editing Literature*, which are types of Pattern Symbolizing. Efforts were made to avoid widely used and established terms as much as possible, and to use memorable, catchy words that would not cause resistance when encountered in daily life.

## 2.3 Life Story Interview

Third, as one of the features of this research, after conducting mining interviews, clustering, and systematization, we conducted life story interviews separately from the mining process with the individuals who were the subjects of the mining [12][13]. In the life story interviews, we asked the participants to narrate their personal histories as a single story in chronological order as much as possible, and we attempted to capture at a meta-level how the practice of patterns emerged within the flow of each person's life. These interviews lasted an average of two to four hours, and for one individual, we spent a total of 13 hours over two days to obtain a detailed account of their life story. All interviews were transcribed and recorded, and the data was saved for later review and close reading after the interviews were conducted.

## 2.4 Re-systematization, Attractive Naming, and Writing

Fourth, after conducting the life story interviews, we re-systematized the entire structure and Pattern Seeds from scratch, taking into account the identified issues. We aimed to create patterns that serve as reference points over the long timeline of life, rather than at the level of daily practices. In other words, the main objective of this research is to somehow capture life as a whole, which is conducted over a medium- to long-term time axis. Even if it is felt as a difficult practice that may require several years to achieve a good consequence, we must not exclude it or lower it to a level that anyone can easily accomplish. Doing so would ultimately render the patterns useless for life, defeating the original purpose. We approached the task with this perspective in mind.

We provide a specific concrete example of the most noticeable change: in the 2021 version of *A Pattern Language for Nurturing an Exciting Life*, the No. 1 pattern was *The Beginning of the Story*, whereas in the patterns presented in this paper, it is *How You Want to Live*. To explicitly state the difference, the previous version had a pattern like “By perceiving that a new story is about to begin, you can shape an exciting life from this point onward.” In other words, it was a pattern with a relatively low hurdle, suggesting that by changing your mindset here and now, you can make a fresh start.

On the other hand, the current version, *How You Want to Live*, is a grand practice where it is unlikely to find an immediate answer, and depending on the individual, it may take years to finally encounter something that makes them think, “This might be it.” After conducting a thorough re-systematization, we assigned attractive names to create a new, easy-to-use language.

## 2.5 Enrichment through additional life story interviews and pattern refinement

The final stage of the five-step process involved conducting life story interviews with 100 individuals from 13 countries, alongside making detailed revisions to the patterns (Fig. 2). These interviews were conducted in parallel with the research on the original seven subjects. The selection criteria for the life story interviewees were the same as before: individuals who had unconventional ways of working that did not fit into existing occupational frameworks and seemed to be living vibrant lives true to themselves. The researchers reached out to people they could directly approach for interviews.

When conducting life story interviews, we made an effort to hold them face-to-face whenever possible, with the aim of building trust and listening to more personal and in-depth narratives. Moreover, our engagement with the interviewees did not end with the interviews; we have actively shared our research activities and maintained opportunities for further interaction.

Through these life story interviews, we collected abundant concrete examples tied to the created pattern language while simultaneously making appropriate revisions to the overall picture of the patterns. These interviews, which we called Exciting Life Interviews, provided rich insights into how individuals navigate their unique life paths.



Figure 2: Life Story Interviewees

## 3. A PATTERN LANGUAGE FOR NURTURING AN EXCITING LIFE

*A Pattern Language for Nurturing an Exciting Life* consists of 27 patterns that describe good practices for finding your own creative way of living and living an exciting life. Figure 3 provides an overview of these patterns. The pattern language is composed of three interrelated categories: FACING YOUR FUTURE LIFE, BUILDING YOUR OWN LIVELIHOOD, and LIVING AUTHENTICALLY IN THE LONG TERM.

Each category is further divided into groups, with each group consisting of three patterns. In the FACING YOUR FUTURE LIFE category, there are three groups: Starting from Now, Moving Towards the Future, and Confidently Nurturing Growth.

In this chapter, we focus on the nine patterns belonging to the FACING YOUR FUTURE LIFE category and present their full descriptions. Moreover, since the first three patterns are grand patterns that can be considered inevitable for life patterns, we have created Baby Steps Patterns to provide more practical support.

Furthermore, the first three patterns in this category encompass grand themes that summarize the entire pattern language. As a novel approach to create patterns that are easier to concretely imagine in practice, each of these patterns is further broken down into three “Baby Steps Patterns,” providing a more granular and accessible framework for practical application (Fig. 4).



# A Pattern Language for Nurturing an Exciting Life

Find Your Own Creative Way of Living and Live an Exciting Life

## 0. Nurturing an Exciting Life



Figure 3: Overview of *A Pattern Language for Nurturing an Exciting Life*

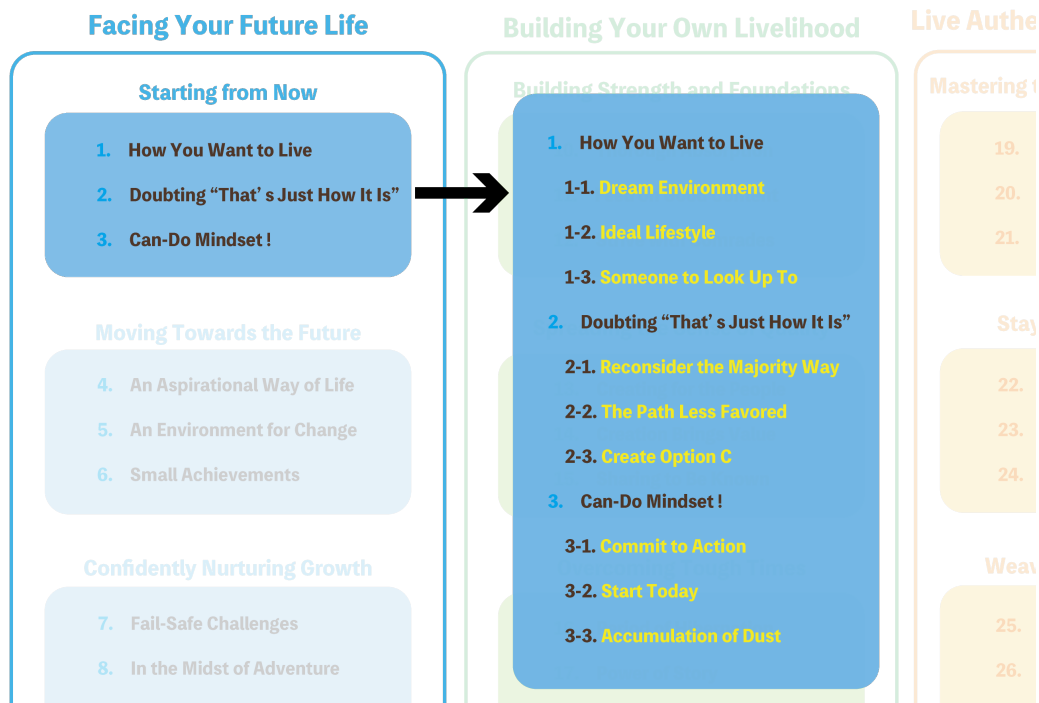


Figure 4: Overview of Baby Steps Patterns

### 3.1 How You Want to Live

## How You Want to Live

Face head-on the question of what kind of life you want to live

You are considering your future path and the life ahead.

▼ In this context

**Starting with the question “what do you want to become?” purely in terms of earning a living can leave you struggling to find a path that truly resonates with you.** You might proceed down a typical career path that seems easy to envision and choose, while carrying a vague sense of uncertainty that could persist for years. Sometimes, you might prioritize meeting others’ expectations over following your own interests and passions.

▼ Therefore

**Begin by contemplating how you want to live your life, then work backwards to determine what choices you should make now to move toward that future.** Once you have a clear vision of the life you want to lead, seek advice from those who have walked similar paths or who support your vision. Make each small choice with intention, always selecting options that bring you closer to your desired way of life.

▼ Consequently

An exciting life begins here. Like tending a garden, you’ll learn when to water, when to add nutrients, and when to plant new seeds. As time passes, your life’s landscape will transform and grow richer. There may be storms or droughts that cause some plants to wither. Yet even if what’s visible above ground dies back, the soil beneath grows richer. Nurture your life’s garden thoughtfully, creating the optimal environment, sowing seeds of curiosity, and absorbing the nourishment you need.

#### 3-1-1. Dream Environment

Imagine where you’d like to live. This could be by the sea, in a quiet wooden house nestled in the forest, or perhaps on a southern island in the near future. If no setting immediately resonates, try watching movies, browsing magazines at bookstores, or visiting various places until you find a scene that makes you think, “How wonderful it would be to wake up to this view every morning.” Interacting with local residents might also help you discover places that suit your nature.

#### 3-1-2. Ideal Lifestyle

Consider what kind of life would be ideal for you. Perhaps you want to live with a dog, enjoy four-day weekends, or have a lifestyle that allows you to travel for two months each year. Explore whether you prefer a structured routine or an adventurous life with new challenges each year. Consider what makes you most comfortable, it might be having a stable income, or something else entirely. Even if something seems difficult at first, don’t immediately judge its feasibility. Instead, focus on fully expressing your ideal.

#### 3-1-3. Someone to Look Up To

Find someone whose way of life deeply appeals to you, someone who makes you think “I want to be like them!” Such a person might already be in your surroundings, or you might discover them in movies or books. Consider

attending events where people you admire might gather, even if you initially think “I could never be like them.” When you actually talk with these people, you might discover unexpected aspects of their journey or hear specific, actionable advice that makes you think, “Maybe I could do this too!” Such encounters can represent big steps forward on your path.

### 3.2 Doubting “That’s Just How It Is”

## **Doubting “That’s Just How It Is”**

“Everyone does it” is a sign of assumption.

You have begun to see the way you want to live your life.

▼ In this context

**Despite having a vision of how you want to live, you might sometimes give up, thinking, “Life isn’t that easy,” or “Starting now isn’t realistic.”** When your desired lifestyle deviates from the norms or unspoken rules of your current environment, the path forward might seem particularly challenging. Financial concerns or lack of family understanding might make you feel like giving up is your only option.

▼ Therefore

**Challenge thoughts like “That’s just how it is,” “Everyone else is doing it,” or “Things should be this way.”** Examine the assumptions you’ve taken for granted. Dig deep into why you believe certain obstacles can’t be overcome. Break down each barrier methodically and plan how to address them one by one.

▼ Consequently

You’ll begin to shed the preconceptions and assumptions that have been limiting your perspective, making your thinking more flexible and open. Surprisingly often, things work out when you actually try them. However, along the way, you might face strong opposition from family, friends, or mentors that makes you want to give up. But if your conviction comes not from stubbornness but from genuine certainty in your heart, it’s crucial to persist without yielding. As you continue, you’ll gradually grow stronger, eventually developing the ability to think even more freely and independently.

#### 3-2-1. **Reconsider the Majority Way**

Examine whether what your family, friends, mentors, or society in general affirm is truly valid. Even long-standing cultural practices and trends might not continue unchanged as times evolve. Rather than passively absorbing information, actively seek it out, evaluate it carefully, and find the direction that best suits you.

#### 3-2-2. **The Path Less Favored**

Investigate whether paths that others oppose or that appear unstable at first glance are truly as risky as they seem. The concerns of those around you might be based more on impressions than actual experience or evidence. Gather your own data and make your own assessment.

### 3-2-3. Create Option C

Look for a path that suits you in the gray area between yes and no. If you can't find one, create your own. If there's no precedent, decide to become the precedent yourself and move forward with determination. Remember that even paths that seem obvious now once had pioneers who faced opposition and skepticism. While new paths always come with uncertainty and doubt, if your instincts are saying "yes," there's likely potential worth exploring.

### 3.3 Can-Do Mindset!

## Can-Do Mindset!

Don't avoid things because you think you can't do them,  
do them and become able.

You have let go of your assumptions and started moving towards the life you want to live.

#### ▼ In this context

**Even though you've found clarity about how you want to live, you might give up before even trying, thinking it's not something you can easily achieve.** Looking at your current abilities, you might struggle to envision a successful future and lose confidence, thinking "I probably can't do this after all." Additionally, without any guarantee of success, you might fear failure and regret so much that you make the extreme decision of "Then I won't try at all." You might also assume that successful people were naturally talented from the start and fundamentally different from you.

#### ▼ Therefore

**"Doing makes it possible!" with this mindset, you will start taking steady action from now on.**

To achieve the desired goals, it's important to consider what's needed and how much is required by when, building things up one by one. If there are people who can serve as role models, consulting with them might help, and gathering useful information after verifying reliable sources could also be beneficial. While the pace of growth may fluctuate, getting closer to becoming someone capable of these things is better than doing nothing at all. By taking time to make steady efforts, you will surely reach a point that fulfills your vision

#### ▼ Consequently

You will become a different person than you were before. Starting with the mindset that you can become capable will lead to noticeable growth in just a few months. The experience of becoming able to do something you previously couldn't will give you confidence to face future challenges. Moreover, the practice of steadily acquiring skills over time develops fundamental strength that proves valuable in any endeavor.

### 3-3-1. Commit to Action

Ask yourself whether you truly want to do it. If you can't clearly say "I don't want to do it," answer "Yes" and commit to your practice. Instead of spending time hesitating, use that energy to plan how you'll proceed. The moment you make this commitment, you've already grown beyond who you were yesterday.

### 3-3-2. Start Today

Begin today. Consider “By when, what, and to what extent do I want to be able to achieve?” Then work backwards from that goal. Assess your current state and identify what you need to start with first. Once you’ve figured that out, take action immediately. Keeping a record of your progress and sharing it with supporters makes it easier to see how time and growth have brought change, which will boost your motivation when you look back at some point.

### 3-3-3. Accumulation of Dust

*Inspired by a Japanese proverb: “Even dust, piled up, becomes a mountain.”* Don’t try to move a heavy stone all at once. Instead, focus on making small efforts that feel manageable even when you’re tired. Every minute spent, every attempt made, brings you closer to your goal than doing nothing. Rather than thinking “Is this tiny amount really meaningful?” focus on what you can sustain day after day, year after year. This steady accumulation of small efforts will produce far more impressive results than short bursts of intense activity that burn out quickly.

## 3.4 An Aspirational Way of Life

### An Aspirational Way of Life

A collage of ways of living that you admire.

You have started taking actions, believing that you will be able to do it.

▼ In this context

**Although you’ve taken the first step, the lack of precedents might make you anxious and slow your momentum.** Even if your final goal is clear, without a concrete image of how to reach it, you might feel like giving up, thinking it wasn’t realistic after all. During periods when you need to make steady efforts, the lack of visible progress can make you lose motivation.

▼ Therefore

**Find and keep examples of admirable life and career paths that can serve as inspirational references.** You can look up to one person or combine various aspects of different lifestyles. Study how these role models progressed through their journeys, what kinds of efforts they made and what results they achieved. When you feel tired of making steady efforts, remind yourself of your goals and how your role models persevered through similar challenges.

▼ Consequently

Your excitement for the future will increase. When things aren’t going well, understanding that life has its ups and downs by looking at the paths of those you admire will help you stay motivated. Until you have your own experiences to draw from, borrowing the life experiences of others can help fuel your drive to move forward. One day, you might find yourself becoming a trusted advisor to others facing similar crossroads.

### 3.5 An Environment for Change

## An Environment for Change

Find an environment where you can make efforts as your current self.

You are striving towards an admired way of living.

▼ In this context

**No matter how much effort you put in, it won't lead to growth if your current environment doesn't suit you.** The lifestyles of people around you influence you, and your way of being affects your environment. If these don't align well, it creates a negative situation for both sides. Also, when pursuing an admired lifestyle, ups and downs in life are unavoidable, but you can't keep pushing through these challenges all alone in isolation.

▼ Therefore

**Find a place where you can train your necessary skills and gain experiences that will help you exchange.** Being in an environment with people who can pull you upwards allows you to aim higher than you could alone. Even goals that seem a bit beyond your reach become pursuable when you're surrounded by people who encourage and uplift you. Having people to share both joys and hardships with gives you strength to navigate an uncertain future. When you feel comfortable in your environment, you can productively challenge yourself and grow.

▼ Consequently

You can build up the right kind of effort toward your goals. Additionally, in collaboration with community members, you're much more likely to discover information, opportunities, and ideas that you might never have found on your own. Having people who inspire you allows you to challenge yourself effectively while maintaining consistent effort. Feeling that you're also a necessary presence for your companions becomes another source of energy.

### 3.6 Small Achievements

## Small Achievements

Create tangible examples of "I did it," even if they are small.

You have placed yourself in an environment conducive to growth.

▼ In this context

**Even if you are diligently practicing, thinking you are still on the way, others may not see your efforts, and you might struggle to feel a sense of progress.** When your ideals are high, you might hesitate to present your work, thinking, "I can't show it to the world until it's perfect," or "I'm not



there yet.” However, if you don’t shape and present your efforts, the world will see you as someone who hasn’t done anything, leading to missed opportunities and a lack of confidence.

▼ Therefore

**At a certain stage, even if it’s not perfect yet, try to give form to your work and bring it to completion.** Just as you advance to the next grade by passing your exams—even without perfect scores—creating tangible milestones at appropriate times allows you to visibly progress to the next level. This helps you see your next goals more clearly and continue forward with renewed motivation. While striving for perfection is certainly important, there are also valuable lessons to be learned from putting something into concrete form first.

▼ Consequently

Tangible examples will accumulate, allowing you to share your achievements with the outside world. Building achievements enhances the credibility of your activities, leading to more significant collaborations and larger scales. Getting used to presenting your work will expand your standards of what you can and cannot do, gradually taking you beyond your comfort zone into exciting new possibilities.

### 3.7 Safe-Fail Challenges

## Safe-Fail Challenges

Take measures to ensure challenges don’t result in major failures.

You are striving towards your admired way of living.

▼ In this context

**The fear of failure might stop you from taking action.** Challenges into the unknown come with uncertainties, making you hesitate. Also, the fear of irreversible consequences might make you endure constant anxiety. However, remember that excitement and anxiety often go hand in hand eliminating all anxiety might also remove the excitement that makes challenges worthwhile.

▼ Therefore

**Prepare thoroughly and take on challenges in a way that, even if you fail, the damage won’t be significant.** It’s not about taking on challenges with a defeatist attitude, but rather building confidence through careful preparation and creating a safe environment. Also, instead of trying to make a huge leap, adjusting the scope of your challenge to something you feel. “I can do this” is one approach. It’s better to lower the bar and accumulate achievable challenges, moving closer to your desired way of life.

▼ Consequently

You can take on challenges with the confidence to enjoy them. Even if you fail, you'll be able to recover and gain specific ideas for future improvement. This will gradually build comfort with risk, lowering the bar for challenges and eventually giving you the courage to try more significant new things.

### 3.8 In the Midst of Adventure

## In the Midst of Adventure

Perceive yourself as currently living a part of your adventure story.

You are continuously striving towards the life you want to live.

▼ In this context

**No matter how hard you try, comparing yourself to others or your ideals might make you feel inadequate.** Even if you understand that everyone has their own path, moments of self-doubt or future anxiety might arise. Despite your steady growth and achievements, a single failure can easily overshadow your progress, causing feelings of frustration or defeat.

▼ Therefore

**By understanding that you are living your unique adventure story, acknowledge how far you've come and all the interesting things you've achieved so far.** Like in movies, novels, or comics where the storyline is exciting because the protagonist rises from their lowest points, remember that your life too will have its ups and downs. Reflect on your adventure so far and recognize that after every fall, there's a rise, and overall, your story is trending upward.

▼ Consequently

The adventure story you've lived thus far will become a source of confidence, encouraging you to make your future even more exciting. Each time you feel down, recalling your past journey will help you recover and motivate you to keep going. Knowing your own story will also help you envision new developments, potentially revealing "I want to make it even more interesting" and opening up new possibilities.

### 3.9 Confidently Nurturing Growth

## Make it the Right Path

Strive to make the chosen life path become the right one.

You are walking the path you have chosen.

▼ In this context

**You might wonder if you should have chosen differently, or regret not taking another path.** However, dwelling on these alternatives leads nowhere and leaves you trapped in regret. The desire to pursue challenging but meaningful goals often conflicts with the desire for stability and safety. This internal conflict can become particularly acute during slumps or after major setbacks, potentially making you lose the drive to move forward.

▼ Therefore

**Put all your effort into making sure that the path you chose becomes the right one.** Whether your choice was correct will be determined by how you live your life moving forward. If you hadn't chosen this path, you might have avoided major setbacks and failures, but you might still be wondering "Is this really okay?" or "I wish I had tried that back then." Take pride in choosing an adventurous path and persist until you reach a state where you believe your choice was right.

▼ Consequently

Your confidence that "Choosing this path was truly right" will gradually strengthen with each small achievement. The experience of overcoming setbacks and failures will give you courage for even greater challenges. Above all, by sincerely walking the path you chose with your own will, you'll develop unwavering confidence in your values, rather than comparing yourself to others. Your future self is likely living an even more thrilling and exciting adventure story than you can currently imagine.

#### 4. NARRATIVES LINKED TO PATTERNS

In this paper, we presented nine patterns belonging to the FACING YOUR FUTURE LIFE category from *A Pattern Language for Nurturing an Exciting Life*. In this section, as a discussion, we will select one pattern from each of the groups: Starting from Now, Moving Towards the Future, and Confidently Nurturing Growth, that constitute this category and link them to specific stories told in the life stories. The narratives presented here are from one of the seven subjects who participated in both pattern mining and life story interviews. Additionally, since all interviews were conducted in Japanese, the author has translated them into English as faithfully as possible to the original content.

##### 4.1 Narrative Tied to 3-1. *How You Want to Live*

First, for the narrative related to *How You Want to Live*, we focus on the life story of a man in his 40s. As background information, he grew up in a rural town in Ibaraki Prefecture, Japan, and due to a complicated family environment, he was unable to study satisfactorily, leading him to enter high school through a sports recommendation. However, as he struggled to grow taller, he felt his limitations as a volleyball player and, for the first time in his life, sought a path other than sports.

*While thinking that it would be great if there were height-based competitions, I quit volleyball around the beginning of my third year in high school because I couldn't participate in matches. I spent about a year during my third year of high school worrying about what to do next. Around that time, I thought, "I have to do something drastic to break out of this cycle." One of those drastic things was going to America.*

He said, "If I do the same things as ordinary people, I won't be able to break out of this negative spiral, because I'm not smart and I'm short, and I didn't have any particular motivation. I have to do something that others don't do." He felt that he needed to do many things that seemed to have no future prospects. It was at this point that he considered *How You Want to Live* and decided to leave Japan and attend a university in the United States. He later spent up to his

master's degree in the United States, and after working at several companies, he learned urban design and urban development at the development bureau of Portland, an environmentally advanced city known as “the most livable city in the United States.” Currently, he is active as an independent sustainable urban planner, *An Original Title* (Pattern No. 19) he created for himself.

#### 4.2 Narrative Tied to 3-5. *An Environment for Change*

For *An Environment for Change*, we focus on the narrative of a man in his 40s (at the time of the interview). To provide context for understanding his story, we briefly describe the preceding conversation. First, the author responded, “Listening to your story so far, about doing what you want to do and doing it because it excites you, it seems like it’s not just about the excitement you feel now, but more about the feeling of doing what you like.” To this, the interviewee replied, “Thinking about life and stuff only started when I entered grad school; I wasn’t thinking about that at all back then.” From this point, he was asked to reflect on how he had made his career decisions, starting from his third year of university.

*There was no option to take a leave of absence, so I had no choice but to move forward. At that time, I wanted a little more time, but I couldn’t take a leave of absence. It was an era when you had to pay the full tuition fee of 1.3 million yen or so if you took a leave of absence, unlike now when you can take a leave of absence for around 150,000 yen, so there was no option for a leave of absence. ... And then, when I was job hunting, I think you (Rio, the author) can get what I’m saying, but when I went job hunting, I felt like the other university students were just so shallow. And I was like, ‘Is this the kind of world it’s gonna be?’ At SFC (the abbreviation of the university the interviewee attended), the density was really high, and we knew the most cutting-edge stuff at a really high speed, but when I went out into the world, I was like, ‘So this is what happens, and this is where I’m gonna be compared?’ I often say it’s like comparing acorns, but if the question is whether I can talk in this way... I couldn’t do that, so when I realized that I needed to have a different axis, I thought that in a new field like this, there might be opportunities for young people too.*

After that, he “had no intention of going for a doctorate” because he “thought that a doctorate was a place where odd people go,” but after meeting various people and seeing his seniors doing what they liked, he thought, “But to do interesting things... 23-year-old me thought that being a researcher might be a pretty good position. Moreover, there’s a doctoral course in grad school, and the doctoral course seems to be quite free. You don’t have to take classes, and I thought it was pretty sweet.” He went on to pursue a doctoral degree and is currently continuing to nurture an exciting life as a pioneering researcher, working to establish a new discipline called Studies on Creation and Practices.

#### 4.3 Narrative Tied to 3-9. *Make it the Right Path*

For *Make it the Right Path*, we focus on the narrative of a man who was 53 years old at the time.

**Interviewee:** *It might have been the toughest year of my life. But you know, it’s all about the ups and downs. Like, when you look at life’s trajectory, there are many examples of people going bankrupt one year and then having their best year the next. In that sense, while that final year at UDS (the venture company where he previously served as president) was the worst for me, and I was treated terribly by Odakyu, a Japanese railway company, now that I’ve come to Tsuno [a town in Miyazaki Prefecture], it’s been nothing but great things. So I wouldn’t say it was entirely negative. So I wouldn’t say it was entirely negative. It’s like, when you look at the big picture, I’m still ahead in the game of life.*

**Researcher:** *Yeah, it’s like you had this drive, this determination to ultimately make things better no matter what. Like, you couldn’t stand the thought of leaving things in a bad state - that frustration and refusal to accept defeat was a powerful motivating force, wasn’t it?*

**Interviewee:** Right, I always want to keep bouncing back, no matter how many times I get knocked down. I want to die in the midst of some new challenge or endeavor, you know?

**Researcher:** Definitely. You want to live in a way where you're not just coasting on the aftereffects of past successes, but actively engaged until the end.

Previously, he served as the president of a venture company with an office in the center of Shibuya, which had about 500 employees at the time. In 2020, at the age of 53, he moved to Tsuno Town in Miyazaki Prefecture, a town with a population of 10,000, where he currently works on community development and regional revitalization.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research presents *A Pattern Language for Nurturing an Exciting Life*, which offers a structured approach to finding one's creative way of living and maintaining an exciting life. The nine patterns within the FACING YOUR FUTURE LIFE category, explored in this paper, provide practical insights and guidance on how to navigate future uncertainties with a proactive mindset. By focusing on actionable steps such as defining how you want to live, questioning assumptions, fostering a can-do mindset, and seeking supportive environments, individuals can systematically work towards a fulfilling and exciting life. The narratives tied to each pattern illustrate the real-world applicability and transformative potential of these patterns. This study contributes to the broader discourse on life planning and personal development. Future research will expand on these patterns, incorporating additional life story interviews to further refine and validate the proposed pattern language. Moreover, as part of our future work, we aim to deepen our understanding of the garden metaphor and its appropriate use in enhancing the persuasiveness and depth of this pattern language.

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## APPENDIX

In the 2021 version, we began to think that among the 27 patterns that were supposed to have been carefully selected, there were some patterns at the level of daily life, even though they were intended to capture life as a whole over the medium to long term (fig. 5). For example, Pattern No.6 *Ride the Wind*, No.10 *Deep Reading*, and No.19 *Savoring the Present Moment* are certainly important, but they seemed to be quite superficial patterns to include among the 27 patterns for designing life over the medium to long term. Incidentally, *Deep Reading* is not a pattern that will be discussed in detail in this paper, but it has been absorbed into No. 11 *Feed on Good Content*. As a side note, the overview as of 2021 directly employed the metaphor of a garden to capture life, resulting in expressions reminiscent of gardens and plants. The garden metaphor continues to be used today, which is why the title of the pattern language includes the term “Nurturing”.



Figure 5: An Overview of the Pattern Language up to Around 2021

Returning to the detailed life stories of individuals through the life story interviews unexpectedly revealed the need to revise patterns that were thought to lack the necessary inclusiveness to be described as practices that have shaped one's life up to that point. Some of the patterns presented in this paper have remained unchanged since then, while others have been updated with more attractive expressions.