Step One: Clear your mind.
Set aside a block of time — 20-30 minutes is usually plenty — when you won’t be interrupted. Silence your phone or computer notifications, and have something to write with nearby. Sit comfortably, and just close your eyes and breathe for a minute or two.

Step Two: Travel to the utopian future.
First, just imagine this fall semester as your ideal semester. Your life, your work, your teaching are all going well. Try to feel that in your body and picture it in your mind while considering the following questions, and write down whatever comes to mind.

It’s one month into your ideal semester.
- How are you spending most of your time?
- How do you feel (physically or emotionally)?
- What’s happening in your classes right now?
- How are your studies/research going?

It’s two months into your ideal semester.
- How are you spending most of your time?
- How do you feel (physically or emotionally)?
- What’s happening in your classes right now?
- How are your studies/research going?

It’s the last week of your ideal semester.
- How are you spending most of your time?
- How do you feel (physically or emotionally)?
Step Three: Travel to the past.

After picturing how you would like this semester to be, take a few minutes to look through your calendar or journal from last fall and focus on those same points in the semester: one month in, two months, the last week. Without getting bogged down in the details of each specific class, jot down answers to the same questions. See if you can discover how you were spending your time, how you felt, and what was going on in your teaching, your studies, and your research.

One month into last fall…
- How were you spending most of your time?
- How did you feel (physically or emotionally)?
- What was happening in your classes?
- How were your studies/research going?

Two months into last fall…
- How were you spending most of your time?
- How did you feel (physically or emotionally)?
- What was happening in your classes?
- How were your studies/research going?

During the last week of the semester . . .
- How were you spending most of your time?
- How did you feel (physically or emotionally)?

Step Four: Conscious planning.

Finally, take a few minutes to reflect on these questions:
- What differences do you see between your vision of this ideal semester and how things went for you last year?

- What three specific things could you do differently this year to help bring your ideal vision into reality?