

Goal Direction

Every year I talk to several hundred people about their goals and aspirations for the future, and I am amazed to discover (year after year) that most people do not really know what they want from life. Now this is the mystery: "*How does anyone expect to get anywhere if that person does not know where he is headed?*"



When you have no goals or if your goals not clearly defined, you'll probably spend your life achieving other peoples' goals. So you may progress some, and you may even achieve some great things and win some accolades along the way, but often with little lasting fulfilment. So being busy is great but being busy and rudderless is like watching a puppy chase his own tail – full of beans but going nowhere!

This is the time of year when millions of people around the globe make *New Year Resolutions*; and we know that more than 90% of these resolutions will fade by the first day of February next year. Why is this? Sometimes our attitudes and habits are so deeply entrenched that we find it difficult to change. Many fail because they try to change too much too fast; or because they do not persist long enough for the new habits to set in and displace the old ones.

When you genuinely know what you want from life and why you want it, you will find it easier to apply yourself to the challenge of overcoming the inevitable obstacles. A goal directed life is one of steady progress. Yes, ordinary people can do great things! Great things develop when we constantly do the little things very well. People used to believe that it was a human impossibility to run the mile in less than four minutes. Then Roger Bannister did it. He ran the mile in only a fraction of a second less than four minutes, but his achievement shattered the mental barrier in the minds of people. It shattered their firm belief that breaking the four-minute mark was impossible. Before long, several other athletes were breaking that barrier. There was a change in performance, a change in information and a change in attitude. As a result, what seemed impossible became realistic and possible. In a 2001 event a well-known athlete ran the 'mile' in 3 minutes and 55 seconds, and still came stone last. The world had a new standard and the old one was just not good enough any longer. So it is with most things in life; standards change and some will accept and adapt to the change while the majority will try to get by *yesterday's* standards - usually to find that this is just not good enough any longer.

So things do not always work out the way that you want them to; still every experience can be a positive one when your mind is set on learning from every situation. One day a client told me this story: He had been influenced by an advertisement showing the glamour of sailing around the world on the open oceans. He lived with this image for many years; visualising how he would one day buy a yacht



and sail around the world with his family. They would live as free people moving as and when they wanted. He tells how the images he carried in his mind for so long drove him to levels of excellence in his work so that he could make the money he needed to retire young, and fulfil his dream. He did eventually sell his business, and bought the yacht. However, once he achieved this goal, the images changed! Reality replaced the dream. He no longer saw the glamour; for all he saw day after day was his wife hanging over the side of the boat vomiting into the sea. He returned to business later in life and accepted this as a very expensive lesson; but without regret. He learnt that his goals in life were not really that important; but what was important was who or what he became in the process. He had learnt that life goes on; he also learnt that the inner person he discovered was more lovable than the one who felt trapped in the rat race, for he actually missed the hustle and bustle of business on his trip. So when he returned to his work it was with a new-found vigour; and a new attitude to serve others as best he could, instead of just for profit. The mistake was paid for; and the lessons were truly valuable. So the only time in life you're not going to make mistakes is if you do nothing; ironically then by trying to avoid making mistakes, you may end up making the biggest mistake of all—that is to do nothing. In fact, most of us learn effectively when we have to correct our own mistakes in life. So things are not always what they seem and we will not always get the benefits that we dream of. We will however have to pay a price for everything we want to enjoy in life. So it is wise to be sure that we know what we really want; why we want it and what price we are willing to pay to get it.

Goals are simply dreams with deadlines and standards; targets that bring purpose and direction to our lives; and in a way that helps us to monitor our progress. Goals also bring order to our thoughts and actions; giving us more control over the things that influence our lives. Think about someone who goes shopping without a list. Then compare this to someone who goes shopping with a list; and you'll probably find that the person using the list will buy the things that she needs. She'll also get through her shopping quicker, and probably spend less time browsing because she knows what she wants. I expect that she'll use less money, energy and time to achieve her objective.

Let's look at some athletic analogies: Some challenges we need to approach like a hundred metre dash, quick off the mark and running flat out. Others we must approach like a long distance race; pacing ourselves for the long haul. I like the idea of approaching my goals like a hurdle event, visualising that the end result (or the finish line) almost comes to me as I get over or past the hurdles; but with some priorities we must visualise being part of a relay team. We must be constantly alert and ready to take the baton, do our bit and then pass the baton on to the next runner. Whatever

situation you find yourself in, you must train to be at your best to complete in the game of life - and to *enjoy* the challenge of competing.

If you know where you are headed and how to get there, then God-speed and go do well in 2011; but also try to find some or other rudderless person and give him a hand up (not a hand out). However if you do not know where you are headed in life then it surely must be time to get some direction. Imagine someone going to the gym to get fit, looks at the equipment then sets off home. You'll call him a fool I'm sure. You know that he will have to use the equipment and apply himself before expecting any positive results. So what will you call someone who reads this message and then sets it aside waiting for improvement without applying himself? You figure that out.

Complete the scorecard below, and then try to identify you top ten goals for 2011:

Rate yourself from 1-5; with 5 indicating excellent and 1 indicating very poor. If an item does not apply, then leave it blank.

PHYSICAL	Rating	FINANCIAL	Rating
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general impression • fitness level • adequate rest • energy condition • proper check-ups • adequate exercise • weight condition • correct diet • handling stress 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowledge of financial affairs • planned purchases • spur of the moment purchases • earning capacity • living within my income • status of my accounts • budgeting • thrifty spending • status of savings 	
MORAL PRINCIPLES	Rating	SOCIAL SKILLS	Rating
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • integrity • reliability • setting good examples • loyalty • responsibility • consideration for others • respect of regulations 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sense of humour • self-confidence • manners • gracious behaviour • involvement in community • avoid gossip • ability to listen • friendliness • acknowledge others' 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scriptural training • positive influence on others 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • achievements 	
MENTAL	Rating	FAMILY LIFE	Rating
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • formal education • on-going education • intelligence level • creativity • attitudes • motivational training • general knowledge • inquiring mind • drive and energy • self esteem 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ability to listen • setting positive examples • establishing firm principles • ability to forgive • encouraging others • ability to express love • sharing family meals • state of family relationships • understanding and cooperation • spend quality time 	

This exercise will create an awareness of some areas in your life that may need attention. Do not attempt to change everything overnight, rather develop the patience and move progressively.

With Christmas just around the corner, perhaps work is the last thing on your mind. However, you'll need a clear plan of action to [get on track quickly](#) in January. So, be sure to plan ahead and avoid wasting time to get going early in the New Year.

Spoil yourself (or loved one) - Order our goals program to get you off to a quick start in 2013.

[We pray that you have a very Merry Christmas, and a Wonderful New Year!](#)

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