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It Takes More Than Commitment to ACHIEVE YOUR TRUE GOALS

by Wanda Craig

A manager once told me that people who do not set goals, work for those who do. I am not sure this statement is totally accurate, but the fact that I remembered it for fifteen years says something of its wisdom. What I have also learned is that it takes more than just goal-setting, no matter how committed you are. The key is in setting the right goals that reflect your true wants, needs, and values.

As a corporate coach and veteran goal-setter, I am constantly setting goals or helping others achieve their own. Several years ago, I started using a new process that improved the quality of my goals and helped me achieve them consistently. Previously, I was focusing too much energy on achieving the goals, when what I really needed to do was create the right goals that energized me. The process I began using comes from Lynn Grabhorn's book, *Excuse Me Your Life Is Waiting*. It is a four-step process that is shown here.

Write down what you *don't* want

Begin by writing down what you don't want. For example, "I don't want to be fat, or, "I don't want to be poor." The reason for this

step being so important is that many of our goals are negative, and you are less likely to achieve negative goals. The common goals, "I want to make more money," or "I want to lose weight," are negative goals because they focus on not having enough money or on being overweight.

The key in this step is that energy comes from thought. Negative goals produce negative thoughts. In order to make your goals positive rather than negative, follow the next step.

Turn your negative goal into a positive statement

The negative goal is "I don't want to be fat." Change this to the positive, "I want to be 10 pounds lighter." One way to truly understand your true goal is by doing the "Ask

Why" exercise. If you say, "I want to weigh 120," ask yourself why this is important. You may say, "Because I want to be slim and attractive." Why? You might add, "My appearance is important to me." Why is that important? You might say, "I want to feel good about myself." Why? "I like feeling good." Why? "I enjoy feeling healthy." Why? Maybe your final answer would be, "I want to be healthy so that I can enjoy a good quality of life and take care of my family." Asking "why" until you have nowhere else to go, you will reach the real goal. You want to be healthy. If looking slimmer energized you, you have achieved it. This step is good for ferreting out those persistent, but never-achieved goals.

This step also helps you align your goals with your values. Asking "why"

Achieve Your True Goals... (cont.)

repeatedly will assist you in finding what is truly important to you, and is another way of defining your values.

Most people stop at this point and go about achieving the goal, which is why many people will never achieve them. The next two steps are critical in the process.

When you can feel it, you can achieve it

In this critical step, engage all senses you can to visualize. To have what your heart desires, it is essential to find a way to feel good, really good about the goal before you even achieve it. If your goal is to be healthy, imagine yourself feeling lighter and healthier. Imagine your family thanking you for your healthy vitality. Visualize looking into your mirror and seeing how healthy you look. Try to imagine feeling slim. If you've been overweight for a while, this may be challenging, but keep trying.

People have different sensory preferences. Some people automatically hear sounds or words in their visualization. Others have a strong visual image. Push yourself to engage more than your preferred sense and to engage as many senses as possible. If you are unable to sense your goal on many levels, it is possible you will

not achieve the goal. The goal has to become embedded in your sensory memory to create the energy to pull you forward.

This step also helps you define success. Have you ever achieved a goal yet felt unfulfilled? It may have been because you had not clearly defined what success would feel like. By engaging the senses in this step, you fully define and feel success before it happens; making it more likely that you will work to fully achieve that feeling.

Intend that you will achieve your goal

Once you've identified what you really want, you must intend for it to happen. Intending is not wishing for it, longing for it, or getting discouraged about it. Intending means that it will happen. Be very clear with yourself that you intend this goal to happen. If the intention is weak at first, pretend that you believe the goal will be achieved. Keep affirming your intention until you are no longer pretending.

This step may also surface a self-imposed barrier. If your intention is weak, then complete the "Ask Why" exercise again until you get to the basis of your stumbling block.

Taken alone, the intentions for your goal to happen might be mistaken for just

being committed. You can commit to achieving a goal without committing to the goal itself. If you fall into that trap, you will have a momentary sense of feeling good because you met your commitment, but a hollow feeling about the goal. Having a clear intention about what you want to happen is much more powerful than simply making a commitment to yourself.

It takes all four steps combined to make the process work. Do not expect consistent results unless all four steps are used. Using the four-step process above, I have lost weight, increased my income, and achieved many other goals. This process has helped my clients resolve conflicts and grow their businesses for example. One of my clients used the process to increase her Real Estate sales. Another client used this process to manager her career.

The beauty of this process is that it is flexible enough to use for any goal and powerful enough to deliver results.

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OUR CHANGING WORLD

"In 1989, there were 1.3 million millionaires in the United States. In 1999, there were more than 5 million millionaires. In 1982, there were 13 billionaires in the United States. In 2000, there were more than 298 billionaires. Hand held calculators cost \$120 when they were introduced in 1972; today they cost \$10. Color TVs cost \$1,000 when they were introduced in 1954; today they cost \$299. VCRs cost \$1,395 when introduced in 1978; today they cost \$199. Cell phones cost \$4,195 when they were introduced in 1984; today they are free with activation."

Fast Company Magazine, September 2001

A 2001 study by Rogen International of 1,400 senior and middle level executives in North America, Europe, Asia, and the Pacific indicates that business leaders are spending an average of two hours a day using e-mail. Furthermore, e-mail usage has jumped more than sixfold over the past six years. "In 1995, employees sent a daily average of three e-mails from work and received five, but today they send 20 e-mails per day and receive 30."

American Demographics, September 2001

Achieve Balance

The pressure to perform well is found in some many roles we assume—employee, boss, parent, child, co-worker, church leader, civic/community leader, and student. These roles are coupled with the fast pace of our world, can make achieving balance in our work life and our personal life challenging. Try these strategies:

INTEGRATE

Identify what you want and create a life space to accommodate it.

NARROW

Choose what's important, and eliminate the nonessential.

MODERATE

Set limits on the time and energy you give to tasks and roles.

SEQUENCE

Set priorities—don't do everything at once.

ADD RESOURCES

Get the people, systems, and money you need to take the pressure off you.

Source: Lee and King. Discovering the Leader in You: A Guide to Realizing Your Personal Leadership Potential, 2001.

Bennett Joins Executive Coaching Network Team

John Bennett, Lawton Associates president, was recently invited to join a select team of consultants and coaches working through the prestigious Executive Coaching Network (EXCN), a global coaching firm providing customized services that develop current and future leaders and their ability to improve results.

EXCN represents a powerful link between executive development and long-term profitability and business growth. They provide access to many of the brightest and most talented thought leaders in business who coach leaders to achieve greater results with integrity. By joining this team, John will be able to bring members of the EXCN team to client engagements and to work with other professionals on these engagements. EXCN's accomplished executive coaches focus their vast corporate experience on improving business performance through leadership development. Real world, common-sense approaches promote accelerated and meaningful results through:

Strategic Executive Coaching

One-on-one coaching to executives in areas they have identified as vital to their effectiveness or future performance. This highly personal process optimizes leadership ability and

improves bottom-line results.

Feedback Coaching

Drawing from feedback and other assessment tools to develop strategies and action plans that improve results.

Organizational Values Clarification

Helping ensure that leaders are both aligned with the organization's vision and values and can embrace its strategic intention.

Customer-Client Feedback

Identifying customer's needs and expectations. Creates individual action plans that are customer defined.

Team Effectiveness

Identifying the criteria for team success, and developing team structure and processes for optimal results.

Workshops

Providing the tools and training leaders need to establish "best-practice" standards in key areas.

Assessments

Assisting individuals, teams, and organizations in identifying issues that affect workplace performance.

For more information about EXCN or any of these services, please contact us at (704) 660-6000, or inquiry@lawton-assoc.com.

Recent Client Results

A John Bennett recently presented a program to the Institute of Management Consultants. Participants rated the program on a scale of 1-10 (best), and John received outstanding comments and an approval rating of 8.5.

B We recently developed and conducted a coaching skills training program for congregational leaders of five religious denominations. They will use these skills to improve working relationships, resolve conflicts, and develop congregations.

Coaching Federation Chapter Election

John Bennett, Lawton Associates president, was recently elected vice-president/president-elect for 2002 of the Charlotte Area Chapter of the International Coach Federation. The Charlotte Chapter is one of nearly 130 chapters throughout the world and serves as a local association of professional business and personal coaches aimed at professional development and promotion of the profession.

Recommended Reading

In the Company of Women: Turning Workplace Conflicts into Powerful Alliances

Heim, Murphy, and Golant provide a well-researched and documented book that is useful to men working with women and women working with women. With a mix of facts, examples, and practical tips, this book is a well grounded and practical resource for understanding women in the work place.

Eureka! Ranch CEO, Doug Hall's newest book, *Jump Start Your Business Brain* is full of ideas to improve your business from a marketing and operations points of view. If you want to spark new and creative thoughts that will energize your business, this is a must read.

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GOOD LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS

Doug Hall, the author of *Jump Start Your Brain* says, "The best leaders are easy to spot. Wicked good leaders:

- ▶ Inspire people to perform above themselves
- ▶ Create confidence among customers
- ▶ Are maniacs when it comes to quality
- ▶ Have the guts to get it done. Sometimes, they have a gut, too
- ▶ Have equal proportions of heart and brains
- ▶ Love people
- ▶ Lead by example
- ▶ Take responsibility for everything
- ▶ Accept neither praise nor money that are not deserved
- ▶ Are honest, with themselves and with others.