

# Goal Setting for Success

Annabelle Beckwith



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# Introduction

## A note from the author



Hello! My name's Annabelle Beckwith, and I'm the author of this e-book.

First of all, THANK YOU for choosing to spend some of your valuable time working through this goal setting e-book. I know it's going to make you think, challenge you, and hopefully prompt you to take some bold steps towards your goals.

How do I know? Well, two reasons, really. The first is that everything in this e-book is derived from my own work coaching and training executives and motivated individuals over the past ten or so years, as well as from extensive research into what works and what doesn't.

Secondly, it incorporates key elements of the tried and tested methods that my colleagues and I use on a daily basis at our training company Never Mind the Buzzwords ([www.nmtbw.com](http://www.nmtbw.com)).

Between us we have over 50 years experience of working with people to help them develop their skills and potential, and a key factor in that – both for individuals and for organisations – is to be able to set aspiring goals.

We've also run a wide range of personal development and personal impact programmes and workshops for people who – either by personal choice or by force of circumstances – are rethinking their career directions: some have reached a point where they realise they've been stuck in a career they fell into for too long, others are facing redundancy and having to think carefully about where they go next.

Above all, the techniques, approaches and methods I'm sharing with you in this book are all ones which I used myself. Watch out in particular for the 'Goal Mindset' statements, which are captured again in the Appendix at the end, and for the questions to ask yourself.

I hope you find them as useful as I do.

*Annabelle Beckwith*

*Creative Director*

*Never Mind the BuzzWords*

### **How to use this e-book**

Most people spend at least a little time daydreaming about their goals – fantasy jobs, lifestyles and scenarios – at one point or another. For most people, though, this is where it stops. Most people won't actually do anything to really investigate, analyse and understand their goals and to make plans to achieve them.

If you've downloaded this e-book, then it's pretty safe to say that you want to set yourself some life and career goals...and you want to do so in a way that goes well beyond what most other people do.

In essence, the principles of goal setting – and the ones we'll work through in this book – are pretty simple: define your goals, make a plan to achieve them, follow the plan.

Why, then, do people not bother? Well, there are probably many reasons: perhaps the 'stuff' of everyday life gets in the way of their achieving their goals; perhaps the going gets tough and they find out that they weren't really motivated towards the particular goal they set in the first place; perhaps it's the worst of all reasons – that they don't realise that they actually HAVE a choice over their life and goals.

Before we begin to look at how to set goals and devise plans to achieve them, there are a few things I need to be absolutely straight with you about.

### Invest your time

Setting your own goals is an investment in yourself and your future. You owe it to your FUTURE self to be thinking NOW about what you want him or her to be doing in 5, 10, 20 years' time. Will your future self thank you for investing time now in order to secure a better future? You bet (s)he will!

The first thing that you must commit to doing at the very outset is to set aside time to work on your goals – they won't just happen by themselves. The stages I'm setting out for you here are ones that I've followed myself, that I've coached other people to use and that work...if you invest the time to actually DO them, and do them consistently.

Setting aside some time may take a certain amount of self-discipline, but it shouldn't be a chore – you shouldn't look forward to it with dread – after all, these are YOUR goals we're talking about. It should be fun, because you'll be working on things that YOU actually want to do, for your own future. Besides, think of the return on investment of that time spent NOW that your future self will reap.

### Spend time thinking

Part of the time invested in your goals will be spent thinking about what it is that you want to achieve. What EXACTLY it is that you want to achieve. Knowing 'roughly' what you want might not be enough. Knowing what other people expect you to want is definitely not enough.

As you go through this e-book, you'll find crucial questions within each chapter and section. Please answer them. Ideally, make sure you have a notebook and pen (or their electronic equivalent) handy so that you can write down your considered response (trust me, you won't remember it if you don't!).

Sometimes, you might need to think about the answers to these questions for a day or so, or add to your response over a period of time, so don't worry if you can't always come up with an immediate answer then and there.

Don't pass the questions by, though: challenge yourself to think about them and answer them, even if you do have to come back to them some time later. They are there for a purpose: to help to guide your thoughts, clarify your goals and plan for your future.

### DO something

You'll spend quite a lot of time thinking, especially at the beginning while you're working out your goals. It's critical, though, that your goal setting doesn't stop there!

This might seem a statement of the obvious, but it's vital that you DO something to achieve your goal.

Be prepared to put in a bit of spadework, put your plan into action, and take action to move towards accomplishing your goals.

Otherwise that dream's going to remain a daydream.

### A crucial starting point

Before you even begin to think about your goals, you must recognise and accept the fact that you have the right to shape your future. You just do. In my mind, there is no question about it whatsoever, and there must be no doubt in your mind either.

I'm guessing (it's certainly true for me) that throughout your life, other people will have made decisions for you. To start with, it will have been your parents or guardians. Obviously, this is entirely appropriate in childhood...however, many people allow childhood patterns to follow them into adult life and find that, without realising it, they are allowing other people, circumstances and outside factors to decide on big parts of their lives for them.

I was talking to someone recently who told a rather sorry story about her career (which, incidentally, is a very worthwhile one – she's a teacher). She began by saying that she'd always enjoyed maths and science at school, and decided that she'd like to be a doctor. She went on "but they told me I wasn't clever enough to do that, so I thought I'd focus on the maths side and be an accountant. But they said I'd have to go all the way to X University to study for that and it would take years to qualify, so I settled on becoming a teacher instead".

It's a shame that these people, even though they meant well, advised this lady not to follow her goals and encouraged her to aspire to something else. It's even more of a shame that she allowed them to do so.

When I was in my early teens, I remember telling people I wanted to be a doctor. I didn't want to be a doctor. I wanted to be an actress. My *mother* wanted me to be a doctor. I knew when I ran retching from the biology lab during the lesson where we had to dissect a cow's eyeball that I wasn't cut out for a medical career in any shape or form. I carried the façade on for a few more years until I finally had to risk the deep disappointment of my mother and choose arts and humanities as my areas of study.

So who are YOUR goal stealers? Who might – even with the best of intentions – be making your goal choices for you? Think carefully.

Your teachers might have been encouraging or inspiring...or might have crushed your hope altogether and told you that you'd never make it as a doctor, actress, astronaut, vet...whatever you were aspiring to at the time. One has to wonder sometimes whose interests they have at heart when they advise in this way.

Your parents and your wider family might, while meaning well, be pushing you in certain directions, and showing their approval or disapproval of your life and career choices.

A friend of mine is an artist and art teacher. She commented recently that most parents are keen for their children to experience and take part in as many activities as possible...until they reach a certain point at secondary school when their focus turns towards future jobs. From there onwards, there's a tendency for parents to push their children towards certain subjects (usually science and maths, etc.) and away from others (usually arts and creative subjects), purely on the basis of their beliefs as to how job-worthy these subjects are.

I'm advising my children to find something they love, and do THAT. If that turns out to be creative writing or art rather than accounting or business studies, so be it. If they find something that they love and set their goals accordingly, they will find their niche and they'll always be able to make a business out of it. Either which way, they will choose their own goals.

Your friends and peers might be subtly pulling you towards certain life choices. Are there things that 'people like us' do/don't do? Are there things that you enjoy that you wouldn't necessarily share with your friends and peers because they might show their disapproval, or throw you out of their clique?

I used to work at The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. I know for a fact that some people came to see the opera productions not because they loved opera, but because people of their class and status came to the opera. What's that about?! If you love opera, go! If you don't, don't waste your time and money – do something you want to do instead!!

In the workplace, you might be tacitly waiting for your boss, colleagues or the organisation in general to give you permission to move on up the company hierarchy, to change careers or to make a move.

I was delivering a workshop on Personal Impact recently, and I asked the participants in the room, "Whose permission do you need to succeed?"

After a lengthy silence, someone said, "Well, my boss does my performance review..." and someone else added, "It depends what opportunities there are in the company..." These factors may well have been true; HOWEVER, they masked the crucial point that these delegates were waiting for someone else to give them permission to succeed. Someone else!

It's NOT up to your teachers, your family, your peers, your boss, your company or anyone else. Your goals are up to YOU!

As a fundamental starting point on your journey towards your goal, please understand this:

**GOAL MINDSET #1****YOU DO NOT NEED ANYONE ELSE'S PERMISSION TO CHOOSE YOUR OWN GOAL****YOU DO NOT NEED ANYONE ELSE'S PERMISSION TO SUCCEED****IT REALLY IS UP TO YOU...AND ONLY YOU**

If you've accepted this and made the decision to choose your own goals, then it's time to start building the path that will take you there.

The collage consists of several photographs and graphic elements. At the top left is a dark red square. To its right is a man working at a desk with two monitors. Below that is a photograph of a modern building with illuminated windows at night. To the right of the building is a man holding a folder. The central part of the collage features two women smiling; one is holding a laptop and the other a smartphone. A large, stylized blue and white swoosh graphic sweeps across the bottom of the collage. In the bottom left corner, the website address [www.job.oticon.dk](http://www.job.oticon.dk) is displayed. In the bottom right corner, the Oticon logo is shown with the tagline "PEOPLE FIRST".



# 1 Establishing Your Goal

**"If you can dream it,  
then you can achieve it."**  
Zig Ziglar

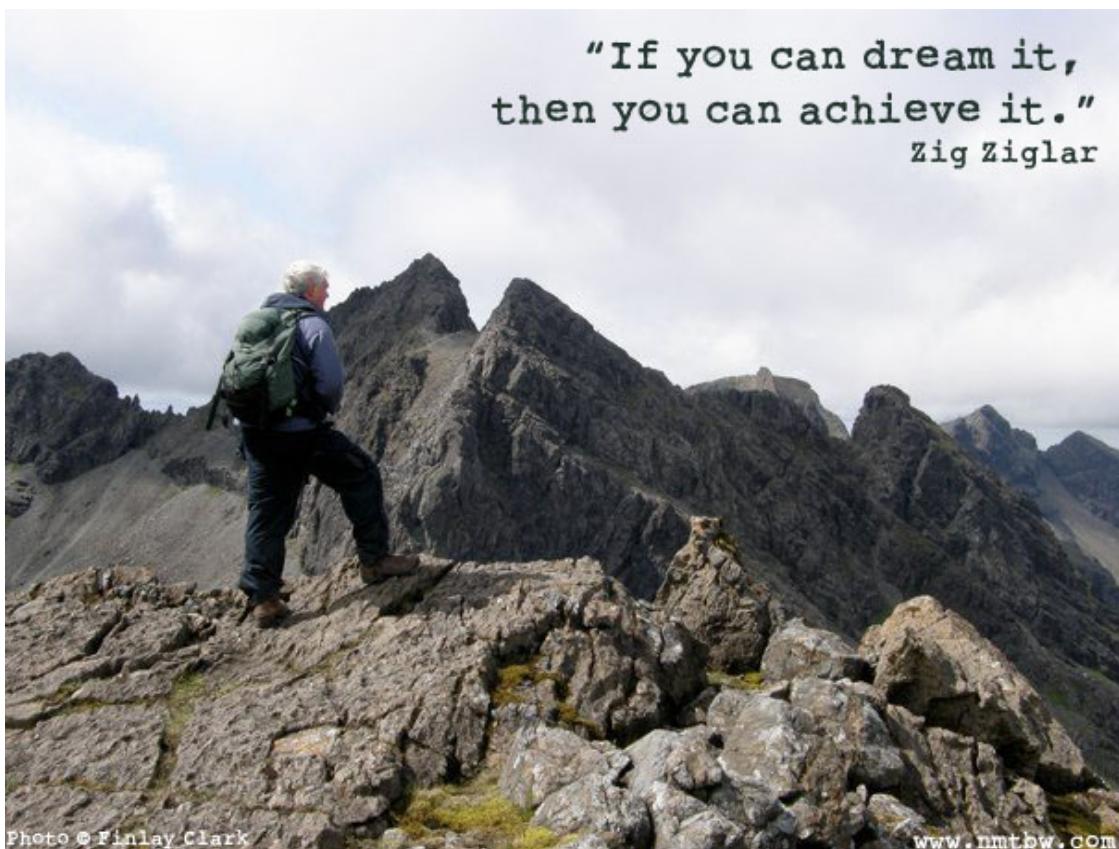


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Working out what you want to achieve and focusing on your goals is fun. Unfortunately, it's where most people start and finish when it comes to goal setting, in a 'wouldn't it be great if I could...oh, well, back to reality' sort of way.

We're going to start with a blank piece of paper (literally – so get your notebook ready) and think of your overall goal first of all, before breaking it down into its component parts.

Both at this early stage of the goal setting process and as we move through the e-book, we'll be following a principle (and what will become a recurring theme) of 'define the goal, break it down' before moving on to devise a plan of action that will take you closer to your goal...and then put that plan into action.

By the end of this chapter (if you've answered the questions and invested a bit of time!) you'll have a much clearer idea of your goal AND the key factors that contribute to it. You'll also have a much better understanding of WHY these are your goals, and this will become important later on when you start to make your plans and put them into action.

## Choose your goal

I'm sure that you'll have heard a lot of clichés when it comes to goal setting: Think big. Aim high. The world's your oyster.

These are all absolutely true...up to a point.

At this stage, use your imagination and don't put limits on yourself. This might SOUND unrealistic, but at this point in the process it's imperative. Don't worry – we'll be focusing on the practical aspects of putting your goal into action in later chapters. For the moment, it's important that you use your imagination and let your creative brain come to the fore.

For those of you with a more practical or logical mindset, this might prove more of a challenge. You might find that no sooner have you begun thinking about your goal than you're thinking, "I can't do that because..." or, "that means I'll have to..." STOP! At this early stage, you will need to consciously put your 'editor' or 'practical' brain to one side. We'll need it later, but not now.

A small caveat here: Challenge yourself to 'think big'...if that's what you want.

## **GOAL MINDSET # 2** **THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT,** **AND NOT ABOUT WHAT OTHER PEOPLE EXPECT YOU TO WANT**

I cannot stress enough how critical this point is, and it links back to some of the goal stealers and goal influencers that I mentioned in the introduction.

I've worked with so many people who have focused their energies – in some cases their entire working lives – on other people's expectations, and have turned round one day and realised that they've denied themselves opportunities which now, in retrospect, they wish they'd taken.

Please don't let this be you.

It's actually very easy to get swept along by other people's aspirations and expectations of you. We're constantly being fed images and ideals of the sort of lifestyle that we're supposed to aspire to by the media: a large house in the countryside with a sweeping drive up to the front door; a fancy executive car, and perhaps a sporty little number to sit alongside in that driveway; exotic holidays with smartly dressed hotel staff at your beck and call...

For me, much of the above represents a complete nightmare.

If what you'd rather work towards is a cottage in the countryside, a retro Volkswagen, and camping holidays in the great outdoors of the Scottish Highlands...then focus on that.

It really is YOUR choice. After all, YOU are the one who's going to live it...or live without it.

### **Start with the 'big picture'**

While running a workshop for teenagers, my colleague and I were encouraging them to set some life goals. In their case, it was a question of saying "imagine that you're 35" – to them, this represented a great age.

Predictably, the boys all said that they would be premier league footballers married to supermodels. The girls demonstrated a more mature response, and described the type of house they'd like to be living in, the family and career they'd like to have, the community they'd like to be part of and so on.

Here's where you and they are the same: the choices that you make in ten years' time will be governed by the choices that you make today.

### **GOAL MINDSET #3**

#### **START WITH AN OVERALL PICTURE OF YOUR GOAL**

#### **AND THE POSITIVE IMPACT IT WILL HAVE**

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Your goal can be absolutely anything you like, from a life or career goal, to a specific project at work, to a personal challenge. As I've already said, start with the 'what' at this stage. We'll focus on the 'how' later on: at this stage, gaining absolute clarity on what you want to achieve is essential.

Imagine you're booking the holiday of a lifetime. You'd make pretty sure you knew exactly where you were going and what it was going to be like, wouldn't you? You'd browse the internet, read reviews of the location, investigate some of the sights that you wanted to see, plan a few excursions and activities... you'd figure out what you'd need to take with you – some things you'd already have, others you might need to go out and buy especially. You'd pick who you were going with – friends or family, and so on.

You'd not spend large sums of money just knowing ROUGHLY where you were going. You'd not risk spending your valuable fortnight's holiday in some dive that looked OK online, so you didn't really check it out...and you forgot to bring mosquito repellent...all with a bunch of people you don't care about, would you?

How much more important are your goals? Make sure that you invest time NOW to focus on exactly where you're going.

### **Goal...or fantasy??**

Whilst it's important to daydream and allow your imagination a pretty free rein at this stage of the goal setting process, it's important that you're not setting your sights on something that doesn't actually exist.

### **GOAL MINDSET #4**

#### **MAKE SURE YOU'RE FOCUSED ON A GOAL AND NOT A FANTASY**

Here's the thing: when you focus on a goal, make sure it really IS a goal, and not just a pipe dream, and that it's based on the reality of achieving that goal. For example, imagine someone is intent on becoming lawyer and, having watched various dramas on TV, they picture themselves like Perry Mason – freeing innocent people wrongly convicted, arguing their case in front of an enthralled courtroom, and earning a fortune and the respect of their peers.

Is this an accurate picture of the life of a lawyer? Probably not. There will be lost cases. There will be times where you're defending people you're pretty certain ARE guilty; there will be times when you work long hours to complete a case in time.

Do some research if you need to, and make sure that the goal you're focused on is the real deal, and not just some sugar-coated media construct, or something you've read in a novel.

## Useful techniques for defining your goal

### The ‘Forward Focus’ Approach

This approach simply involves focusing on and thinking carefully about your goal, as it is, in the future. Again, and just to state clearly this important point, focus your attention on WHAT you want to achieve at this stage. The HOW will come later.

Ask yourself the following questions (and challenge yourself to be really thorough in your response):

#### ***What is it that you want to achieve?***

Be as specific as you can. What IS the thing? Make sure that it's a specific GOAL and not an aspiration.

I was delivering a 'Life Choices' programme once, and one of the course participants said that his goal was "To make a difference in the lives of young people".

Of course, this was an admirable sentiment and one that came from the heart. However, it wasn't a specific enough goal. He needed to add a sentence or two to say, for example, "...by travelling to the developing world and carrying out voluntary work for a children's charity", or, "...by sharing the expertise I've gathered during my career with youngsters at school who are just starting out in life", or, "...by being a football coach on a local programme set up for local kids with nothing else to do in the evening"...or whatever.

In short, he needed to be MUCH more specific about what that goal would actually involve, and what he would be DOING.

#### ***What EXACTLY is it?***

Really challenge yourself on this one. It might take a day or so to flesh out your initial idea, but make sure you do. To put it bluntly, the clearer you are on exactly what you want to achieve, the more likely you are to get there.

#### ***What will your LIFE actually look like when you've achieved your goal?***

Consider what it will be like when you've achieved your goal. What will success look like? Where will you live? What will you eat? What will you wear? How do these differ from what's going on now?

#### ***How will you feel when you've achieved it?***

What will it actually mean to you to complete this goal...and conversely, how will you feel if you DON'T achieve it?

***How will others respond to you once you've achieved it?***

How might others react when you achieve your goal? How important is this to you? Many people will say, "Oh, I don't care what other people think of me". This is rarely true. Most people DO care about the opinions of people who they love and value.

Think about how they might respond when you are successful...don't think about whether or not they'd approve of your goal – remember, it's not up to them.

***Which parts of this goal are in your control? Which can you influence? Which are out of your control?***

It's important that your goal is something that you can control or at the very least influence. If its completion is totally out of your control...like winning the lottery, for example...then you really need to choose something else!

Make a note, though, of which factors you can actually control, which can you influence, and which factors might you have to leave to chance. The more you can control and influence – even indirectly – the better.

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***WHY is this your goal?***

Understanding the reason and motivation behind your goal is an important factor. There will be times as you work towards your goal when you'll wonder whether it's worth the effort...and at times like those, it's useful to remind yourself WHY you're aiming for your goal.

In some instances, your 'why' might be a positive motivator: to make a better life for your children, for example. In others, it might be negative: "My headmaster always told me I'd amount to nothing...I'll show HIM!!"

Either is valid. Just make sure that your reason why is geared towards the achievement of success and not the avoidance of failure: you're thinking about 'having a prosperous lifestyle' and NOT about 'I don't want to be poor'. We'll look at this a little further on when we consider how knowing what you don't want can help clarify what you DO want.

Understanding your 'why' is useful if for some reason you need to change direction, and cannot complete your original goal.

I've mentioned before that when I was younger, I wanted to be an actress. When I look back and consider WHY this was, I realised that there were two very important underlying reasons :

- 1) I didn't actually want the uncertainty of an actor's life – what I actually wanted, and my reason WHY, was to work in a creative environment, with creative people
- 2) I also wanted an audience – I find it easier in many ways to relate to and communicate with groups of people than on a one-to-one basis, unless I know them well

Whilst I'm quite active in amateur dramatics, just for fun, these two factors – working creatively and working with groups – have become a key feature of my career in learning and development.

I don't regret not being a professional actress, because I've fulfilled the underlying reasons 'why' in other things.

So think carefully about your goal...why is it exactly that you want to pursue THAT goal in particular? What is it about that goal that draws you?

Challenge yourself to write down ten reasons WHY this is your goal.

### The 'Already There' Approach

Whilst covering the same ground as the 'Forward Focus' approach, this method takes a slightly different starting point.

It relies on your ability to visualise, so set aside some time to really think about your goals, and what achieving them will mean to you.

Start by thinking about your whole goal AS THOUGH YOU HAD ALREADY COMPLETED IT. REALLY think about it. And write your answers in the present tense.

#### ***What exactly have you achieved?***

Writing in the present tense, tell yourself what you've achieved.

This might feel a little bit uncomfortable, but no more so than writing your CV, and reading it back to yourself and thinking "Hey – is that really ME?! I sound quite good!!" (I'm sure I can't be the only person who's done that!).

#### ***What have you overcome to get there?***

Think more deeply about the answer you've given. Here you should go into more detail about what you've achieved, the obstacles and challenges that you've overcome in order to reach your goal.

Usually these are personal challenges, for example, "I've overcome my fear of public speaking, and am now often called upon to speak..." and so on.

#### ***What else have you done in order to get here?***

In your imagined future, what else have you managed to do in order to achieve your goal? Successfully persuaded venture capitalists to invest in your business idea? Gone back to college and taken exams that will set you on a fresh career path? Moved to Barbados to open a beach bar??

#### ***How does it feel to achieve your goal?***

How do you feel about yourself? About other people? How do you respond differently to challenges and difficult people now?

#### ***What does your ideal day/week look like/feel like?***

Describe your lifestyle – what do you do in a usual week/day? Bear in mind what I've already said about a goal versus a fantasy: make sure you're looking at what it will REALLY be like.

**What do you think about...not think about?**

If, for example, you've been working towards health goals, you might spend more time thinking about which mountain you'll climb next, and less worrying about your cholesterol level.

**What do you do/not do?**

Again, what do you no longer do? Perhaps you wander into the garden with your laptop, rather than facing a two-hour commute through rush hour traffic to an office.

**Who have you become in order to get here?**

This can be a tricky question to answer: moving towards a new goal is going to mean making some changes to yourself. (If you didn't have to do that, you'd already be there, right?!)

Think carefully, in your imagined future state, about how you've changed. Have you become more self-disciplined? More tolerant of others? More open to new ideas? More willing to take risks? What??

So, how do you feel about the prospect of achieving your goals? Excited? Optimistic? It's important that you have some sort of emotional attachment to your goal. As you face challenges along your way, reminding yourself of the impact that achieving your goal will have on you and those close to you will help to motivate you to continue.

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**Techniques for if you're not sure what your goal is**

Thinking deeply about your goal in order to clarify it is all very well...if you actually know what that goal is in the first place.

Sometimes people don't actually KNOW what they want, which can make pinning down a goal more of a challenge.

If you're not sure about what your goals are (especially if these are life and career goals), here are some techniques and approaches that will help you.

**GOAL MINDSET #5****BE PREPARED TO REALLY FOCUS ON YOUR GOAL, AND THINK DEEPLY ABOUT IT.****The 'Menu' Approach**

Actually, once you've opened yourself up to the idea that you can set goals for just about ANYTHING, the choices open to you can become almost overwhelming.

I remember once staying in a very exclusive hotel overseas, and being told by the reception staff that if I required anything at all, I should just call room service, and they would see to it that I got it. Anything?? Anything at all? I began to wonder what I could ask for: freshly pressed juice from some exotic fruit? A sandwich made with delicacies from the four corners of the globe? Baffled by the possibilities, I began to think about just sticking to my comfort zone of a plain old cup of tea and a biscuit.

To be honest, having SO much choice was almost TOO much choice. So I looked at the room service menu and picked from the extensive list there.

If you're new to goal setting and don't quite know where to start, here's a possible menu of options to start with. We'll be returning to some of these in chapter 2, with a slightly different emphasis – for now, they might prompt some questions that will help you clarify your overall goals

## Main courses

### *Health goals*

*Your aspirations for your levels of health and physical fitness. Aiming to maintain your weight? Run a marathon?*

### *Lifestyle goals*

*The type of lifestyle that you'd like to have, your home, work-life balance*

### *Spiritual goals*

*How in tune with spiritual matters would you like to be?*

### *Career goals*

*Your work goals: become an entrepreneur? Become Chief Executive? Leave the rat race altogether and run a beach bar in the Caribbean?*

### *Finance goals*

*The levels of financial stability you'd like to achieve.*

### *Family goals*

*The aspirations you'd like to achieve with your family*

### *Social life goals*

*What would you like to achieve in your social life? Broaden your circle of friends? Spend more time with them doing different things?*

### *Esteem goals*

*How do you want to feel about yourself, and do you want others to feel about you?*

### *Community contribution goals*

*What do you plan to give back to the community or to do for others?*

### **Knowing what you DON'T want**

Sometimes it's easier to pinpoint what you DON'T want than what you DO want. Needless to say, this isn't precise enough for proper goal setting! However, it CAN provide a useful starting point. Focus on some of the things you know you don't want. Then think of the positive alternatives for each of these.

Take a piece of paper, or a page in your notebook and draw a line down the middle, from top to bottom. On one side write down some of the things that you know you don't want.

On the other side of the line, challenge yourself to pin down what you DO want instead.

For example:

What I definitely DON'T want:

- to be working 16 hour days for a boss/organisation that doesn't appreciate me and can make me redundant at any time
- to be stressed out meeting impossible targets set by someone else who has little idea what I actually do
- to be working weekends and ignoring my family because I'm running to stand still chasing the next paycheque

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Therefore, what I DO want is...

- I'm working in an environment where I have a work life balance (I'll need to think about what exactly that means). I leave work at a reasonable time and have time to have a life outside work. AND I'm fit enough to enjoy it and DO something with my time outside work...as opposed to doing more work or collapsing at the end of the day with a large whisky.
- I'm challenged at work, but not pushed to perform the impossible.
- My boss/clients appreciate what I do and I can make what I feel is a valued contribution to the business. I feel valued, and not just a 'cog in the wheel'.

You get the idea. In the next chapter we'll take this theme further as we look at what would constitute an ideal situation for you, what would be acceptable, unacceptable and so on.

For now, focus on working out the 'big picture' of your goal. If you know some of the things you DON'T want in your future life, challenge yourself to think of some positive alternatives that you DO want.

### **Tapping into your emotions**

Sometimes, the best way to look forward is to look back. If you're unsure about what goal you want to focus on, or perhaps unsure whether it's actually YOUR goal or someone else's expectation, focusing on times in the past when you've felt happy and fulfilled can provide some useful pointers to your future goal.

If you invest the time to think about some past scenarios and situations, you'll start to see patterns emerge; patterns that tell you about your personal values and aspirations.

Spend a little time thinking about the following:

Think about times in your past when you felt really happy and fulfilled. WRITE DOWN as much as you can about each situation, and try to think of at least five situations IN DETAIL:

#### ***What exactly were you doing?***

Think about the details: where were you? What was it about the project or task you were working on that you enjoyed?

#### ***Who else was involved?***

Were you working alone or with other people? Who did you enjoy working with? What was it about their contribution or the working relationship that you enjoyed?

***What were you aiming to achieve at the time?***

What were you working towards? Why?

***How did you feel when you achieved the goal?***

What did it mean to you to accomplish your goal? How did you celebrate your success?

***What other circumstances were important at the time?***

What else made it the great situation that it was?

By way of example, if I think back over my own past to when I felt really good, it almost invariably involves working with other people in a creative way, whether that's with a drama group putting on a play, or whether that's working with my colleagues at Never Mind the Buzzwords to devise a new training programme.

I'm also aware that many of my positive past experiences involve playing to an audience of some sort.

Both of these factors have influenced my current career choice.

**Harness negative emotions too**

Even negative emotions can be useful in figuring out your goal: not only do they give you a strong indication of situations that are negative and unacceptable to you, but they also help you to pinpoint your values, which are likely to be an important factor in your overall goal moving forward.

Bear in mind as you focus on some of the less positive aspects of your life and career, that thinking of negative situations in our past is not a pleasant experience – you're likely to experience some of the negative emotions that you felt at the time as you do so.

Consider also, though, that we are taking a logical – not an emotional – approach to goal setting, and that your negative emotions are in this instance working for you in a positive way, highlighting what you DON'T want in your future, and drawing attention to your values.

Consider the following questions:

Thinking about a situation/situations where you did NOT feel at your best, ask yourself:

- ***What was going on? What were the circumstances?***
- ***What were you doing? How did you react to those circumstances?***
- ***What did you do?***
- ***Who else was involved?***
- ***How exactly did you feel?***
- ***WHY did you feel this way?***
- ***What specifically made you feel bad?***

Once again, you should see certain patterns starting to emerge in response to these questions, and these patterns will help to highlight your values, and conversely, situations that are unacceptable to you.

Again, by way of personal example, I once worked in an organisation with some very dubious management styles. They were referred to as 'strong management techniques'. Given that people were stressed out, wanting to leave, demotivated and depressed, I called it 'bullying'. I was aware that as a manager I had two stark choices: conform to the bullying culture at work...or leave. I left.

I might have been able to build a great career in other respects at that organisation, but I wasn't prepared to conform to the company culture and expected behaviours in order to do so.

The image is a composite of two parts. On the left, a man in a dark suit stands in a field of tall grass, holding a large, detailed map over his head. He is facing away from the camera. On the right, there is a promotional graphic for TomTom. It features the TomTom logo at the top, followed by the question "WHERE DO YOU WANT TO BE?". Below this, there is a paragraph of text about the company's mission and history. Further down, it says "Founded in 1991 and headquartered in Amsterdam, we have 3,600 employees worldwide and sell our products in over 35 countries." At the bottom, it provides a website for further information: "For further information, please visit [tomtom.jobs](#)".

I left: at the time it was a difficult choice, but in retrospect it was the best career decision – LIFE decision, even – that I've ever made.

### Harnessing your feelings about other people

How you feel about other people and THEIR achievements will also give you some clear indicators as to what YOU actually want.

Consider the following:

#### ***Who do you admire because of what they've achieved? Why?***

On one of the Personal Impact programmes I deliver, I ask participants whose personal style they admire. There's always a variety of responses: Bob Dylan, Oprah Winfrey, Barack Obama.

Often, though, it's the reasons WHY that are most illuminating. Invariably, the person who admires Barack Obama for his ability to influence people and his persona of authority would like to be able to influence people and appear more authoritative themselves.

The person who admires Oprah Winfrey for her ability to engage with people at all levels and her dedication to good causes seeks themselves to engage with people and to contribute to making a difference in the lives of others.

The person who admires Bob Dylan for his unique style and being unafraid to be himself seeks to assert their personality and not blend into the background.

Who do you admire...and what does that say about you and your aspirations?

#### ***Are there people who others admire for their success, but you don't? Why not?***

Conversely, there are people that some admire, but you don't. A successful businessman, perhaps, (naming no names – I don't want to be sued!) who commands vast wealth but is seen to trample on others to achieve success.

Again, what is this telling you about your own aspirations and your values?

#### ***Is there someone you feel slightly jealous of, in terms of what they're like, what they have, how they behave, what they've achieved?***

Yes – even jealousy can be useful. Have you ever felt envious of someone else's success? Well, instead of feeling a bit guilty that you feel that way, ask yourself what this emotion is telling you.

I remember a year or so ago feeling pangs of envy on hearing that a friend of a friend had had a book published. Why? Because deep down I wanted to have a book published! Having figured that out, here I am, writing an e-book for a respected online publisher.

### To wrap up Chapter 1...

By now, if you've thought about the questions I've posed and invested a little time thinking deeply about your goal, you'll have a better understanding of:

- Your overall goal, and what it will mean to you to achieve it
- WHY you want to achieve this goal
- Your values

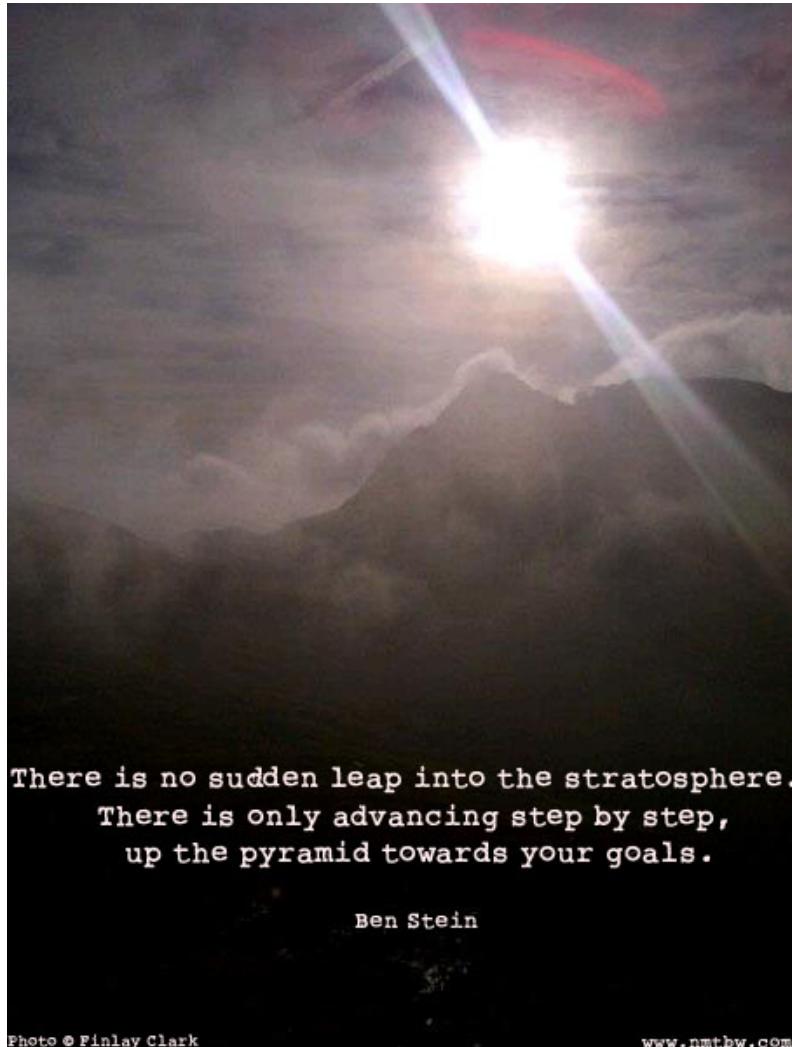
In Chapter 2, we'll move on to break those goals down, analyse them, and refine them.

For now, I'll leave you with a poem to consider...

### My Wage by Jessie B. Rittenhouse

*I bargained with life for a penny,  
And life would pay no more,  
However I begged at evening  
When I counted my scanty store;  
For life is a just employer,  
He gives you what you ask,  
But once you have set the wages,  
Why, you must bear the task.  
I worked for a menial's hire,  
Only to learn dismayed,  
That any wage I had asked of life,  
Life would have paid.*

## 2 Refining your goal



**There is no sudden leap into the stratosphere.  
There is only advancing step by step,  
up the pyramid towards your goals.**

Ben Stein

Photo © Finlay Clark

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If you've worked through chapter one, you should have a fair idea now of your overall goal, and of the reasons and values that lie behind that goal. And I hope you've accepted your right to choose your own goals, and have focused on these, and not other people's aspirations on your behalf, or what you think you ought to aspire to.

Once you've got to that point, it can be difficult sometimes to know where to start, so in this chapter, we'll be looking at defining and refining your goal, and breaking it down into do-able chunks.

Our starting point will be something with which you may well be very familiar – turning your overall goal into a SMART goal.

**GOAL MINDSET #6**

**BREAK YOUR OVERALL GOALS DOWN INTO SMALLER GOALS.**

**BREAK THESE DOWN INTO EVEN SMALLER GOALS**

**UNTIL YOU HAVE A DAILY 'TO DO' LIST.**

### Making your goal SMART

Start by writing your goal down in a sentence or two: stick to the high level overview here.

Let's use, as our working example, Kate, who expressed the following goal "within the next 3 years I will set up my own business, based on my hobby of crafting and embroidery."

This is a clear goal, with some obvious parameters: it's not like the aspiration that I mentioned in chapter one, of 'making a difference in the lives of young people' which gives little indication as to what the person with this aim will actually DO.



.....

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What if you could build your future and create the future?

One generation's transformation is the next's status quo.  
In the near future, people may soon think it's strange that devices ever had to be "plugged in." To obtain that status, there needs to be "The Shift".



However, to make that goal more robust, it must be SMART, that is

- Specific
- Measureable
- Attainable and Action orientated
- Relevant
- Time bound

Kate can make her goal more *specific* by considering details of her business:

- What exactly will she do? Teach her skills to others? Sell her products...and if so which ones and where – online, offline?
- How big does she want this business to be...to take over from her existing job, or to run alongside it?

...and so on.

She can introduce some *measurable* elements by being clear on, for example:

- how much she would like her business to bring in
- how many hours a week she's working in her business
- what the milestones are that will tell her she's on the right track to meet her specific goal

To be fair, there might be some things which Kate can't actually measure: maybe she wants 'to be taken seriously as a business, not as someone playing at a hobby'. How do you measure that?! In cases like these, what she could be looking for is positive and negative 'indicators' that will tell her whether or not she's being successful in this area.

Positive indicators might include being invited to speak at a networking event about women in business, or being featured in a newspaper article about new business start ups.

Negative indicators might include an absence of the above, but also things like a business development agency pointing her in the direction of a craft association for help and advice.

Only Kate will know if her goal is really *attainable* – it certainly looks on the face of it as though it is. Goals must be a challenge, but there MUST be a realistic chance of success occurring. Her goal is also *action orientated* – it involves her doing something to make it happen.

Kate's goal must be *relevant* to her and to her values. It clearly is.

This point about being 'relevant' becomes all the more...well...relevant when we come to break down your overall goal into sub-goals: each sub-goal should be relevant and contributing to the overall goal. If it's not, it could be a distraction.

Kate does have a ***time-bound*** element to her goal: she wants to be up and running in 3 years. However, she could go into more detail here:

- where exactly does she want to be in 3 years time...just launching, or already up and running?
- What exactly does she mean by three years? Three years from today, or 'by the end of 2015' or something else?
- If she intends to launch in 3 years, what milestones need to be in place between now and then? If she doesn't put these into place and put together some sort of schedule, it might never happen.

Look at the goal you've written down and ask yourself:

### Be SPECIFIC

If your goal is still a little vague, now is the time to sharpen it up and clarify what you're aiming for

- *What exactly do I want to achieve?*
- *What will it look and feel like?*
- *How will I know I've got there?*
- *Which parts of it are measurable?*
- *What aspects of my life will be different to what they are now?*
- *Which parts of it are under my control? Which can I influence? Are there any that I will have to leave to chance?*

### Make your goal MEASURABLE.

You'll need to know whether or not you're on the right track and making progress as you move forward towards your goal.

Ask yourself:

- *Again, how will you know when you've succeeded?*
- *What are the milestones along your way that will confirm to you that you're moving in the right direction?*
- *If these can't be counted numerically, what will indicate to you that you're heading in the right direction (or not)...remember Kate's positive and negative indicators of being taken seriously as a business*
- *HOW will you measure your progress?*
- *How will you celebrate these milestones as you reach them?*

### Is your goal ATTAINABLE and ACTION ORIENTATED?

Aim high with your goals, and be prepared to DO something to achieve them.

Ask yourself:

- *What knowledge and skills do I need to achieve this?*
- *What's holding me back?*
- *What's REALLY holding me back (is it...ME?!)?*
- *Who can help me achieve my goal?*
- *What's the first thing I need to DO?*
- *On a scale of 1-10 how willing am I to put in the work to get there?*

### Make sure your goals are RELEVANT to your own personal values

It's important to ensure that your goal doesn't conflict with your personal ethics and beliefs. If it DOES in some way...is it actually your goal, or someone else's expectation?



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Ask yourself:

- ***Why do I want to achieve this goal?***
- ***What will be the benefits to me and those around me?***
- ***What am I prepared to do to meet my goal?***
- ***What am I not prepared to do?***
- ***As you move forward, consider each sub-goal, and weigh up how relevant it is to your overall goal.***

### **Make sure your goal is TIME-BOUND.**

This is often the biggest single point of failure in goal setting – people simply don't set themselves deadlines....in which case, more often than not, time drifts on, and nothing happens.

Set yourself some timescales, even if you have to be flexible later on. Aim for something. Put it in your diary.

Ask yourself:

- When do I want to achieve this by?
- When do I need to start?
- Where am I now?
- Where do I want to be by the end of the year?
- Where do I want to be by the end of the month...week.....day?!
- What's the consequence of NOT setting some deadlines?

Setting SMART goals – and writing them down and putting them somewhere where you can see them – is a major step forward.

It's important that your goal is exciting to you – that you're motivated by it and that you stop every so often to review your progress and check that you are where you need to be.

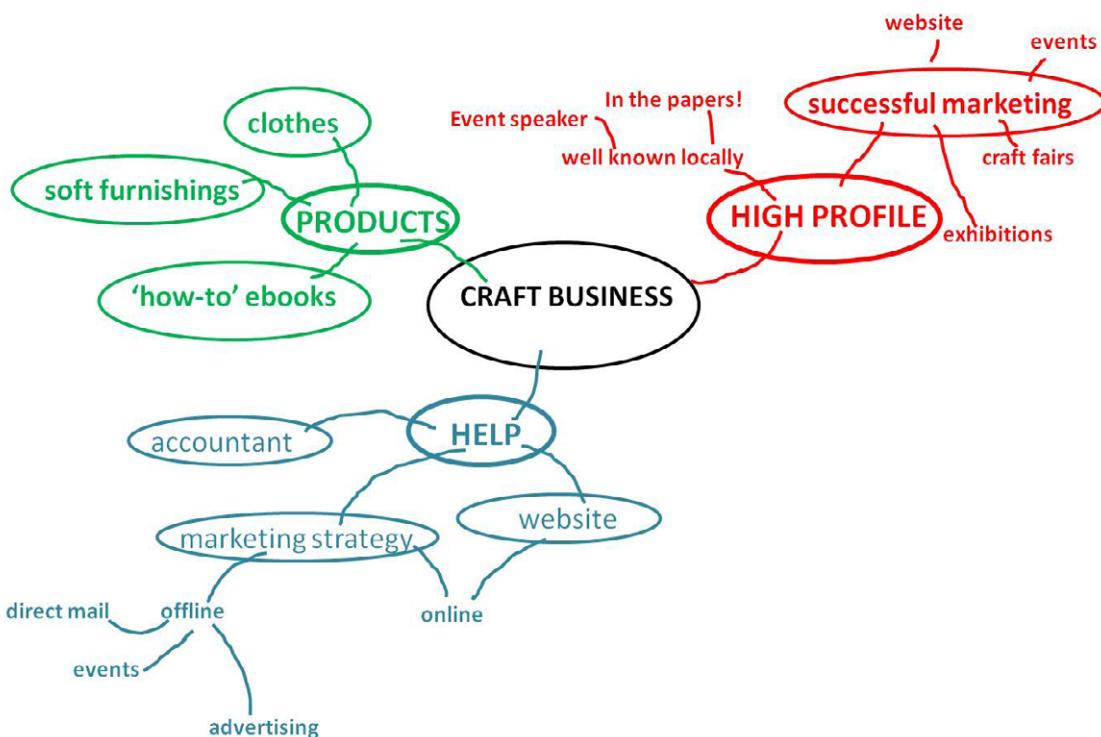
### **Some useful techniques for refining your goal**

#### **Mind Map approach**

Drawing a mind map of your goal provides greater clarity as to what exactly is involved, and it helps you to visualise what you need to do. For both of these reasons, it's a useful precursor to your actual planning, which we'll be looking at in the next chapter.

It's particularly useful because it's NOT a list....it's a shape which you can add to in the coming days without having to re-arrange the rest of it.

Take a large piece of paper and some coloured pens and write your goal in a circle the middle of it. From this central point, draw branches and add themes that are linked to your goal as you think of them. Mind mapping works best with colours and images – here's an example, Using Kate's business goal from earlier in the chapter. In essence, what you're doing is mapping your train of thought, rather than trying to put together a list.



(For more information on how to use mind maps, the website of their originator, Tony Buzan is the best starting point <http://www.tonybuzan.com/about/mind-mapping/>)

Mind mapping is also useful for considering other aspects of your life that will be affected when you achieve your goal and as you move towards it.

Remember the 'menu' in chapter 1? I'd like you to move on to consider other aspects of your life that will see the positive benefits as you move towards your goal.

If you haven't already considered these, then it's worthwhile doing so here and now.

### **Great – acceptable – unacceptable**

With both of these mind maps, allow yourself to think pretty freely about what you would like to happen: we're not at the actual planning stage for your goal yet – that will come in the next chapter.

When you've completed your mind map – and bear in mind that you might want to put it aside and come back and add to it in the coming days, look closely at what you've written.

With the key sections (you'll know what they are) think to yourself:

- *What would be great – the best possible result?*
- *What would be acceptable – I could live with that and still feel that I had succeeded?*
- *What would be unacceptable – if this happened, I'd feel like I'd NOT succeeded?*

Being more certain of these things will help you to tighten up the 'measurables' in your SMART goals... and also give you a much keener sense of EXACTLY what success will look like, in your own terms.

#### GOAL MINDSET # 7

**BE CLEAR IN YOU OWN MIND: WHAT CONSTITUTES FULL SUCCESS,  
WHAT'S ACCEPTABLE...AND WHAT'S UNACCEPTABLE**

**The 'web' approach.**

The 'web' approach allows for another visualisation of your goal. In the example below, I'm going to use the 'menu' options that we used for our second mind map and which appeared in chapter1.

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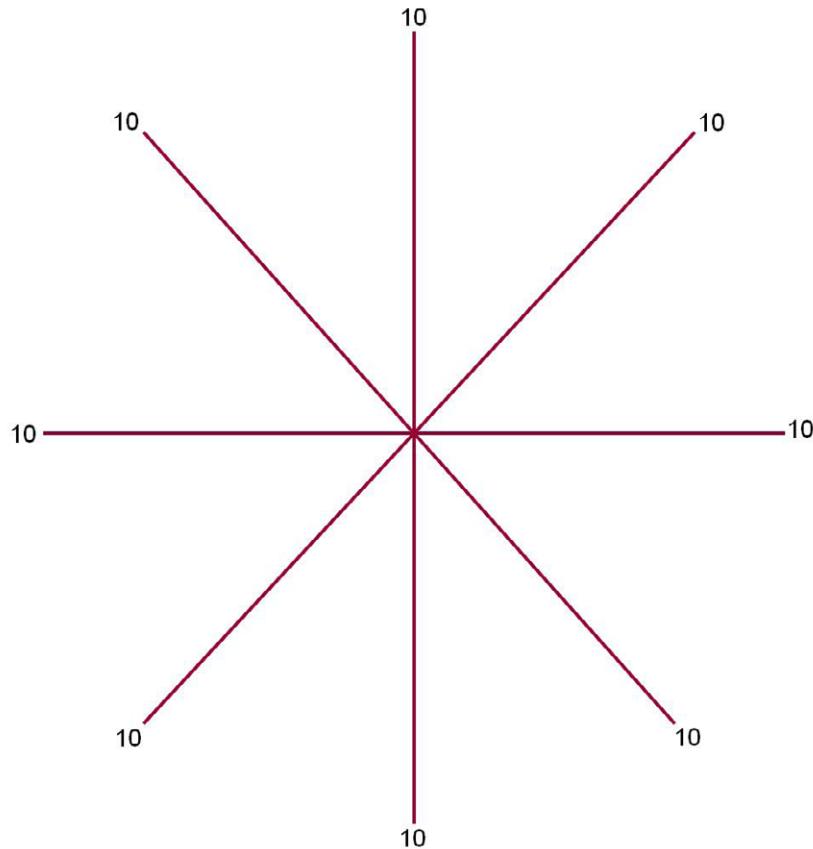
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First, draw something like this on a piece of paper: it looks like the spokes of a wheel at the moment, but it will look more like a web when you've finished



Around the edge, at the end of each line, write a factor of your goal that you'd like to consider.

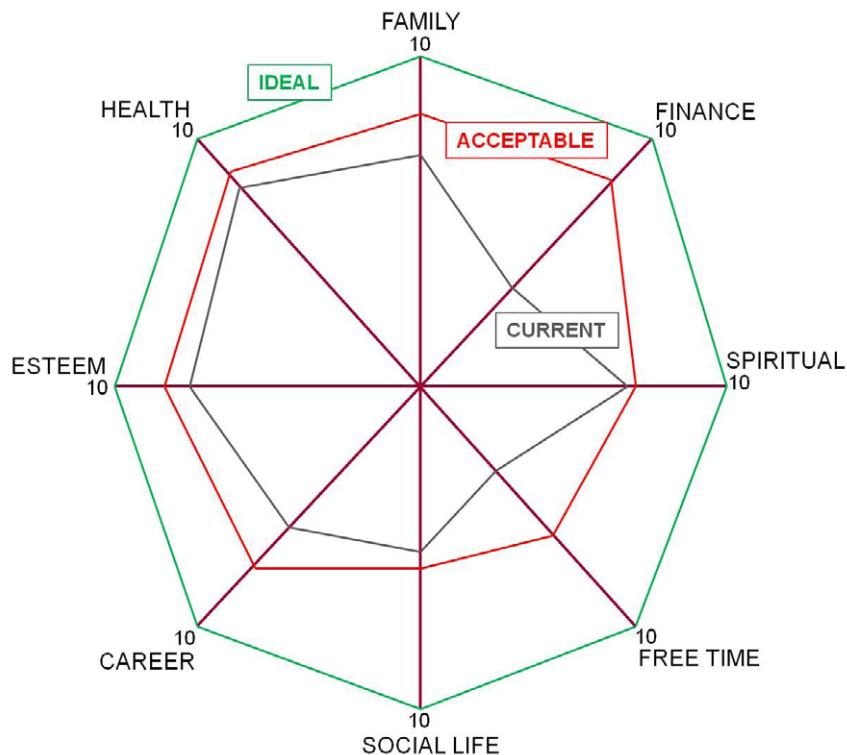
Imagine that '10' in each case is your goal fully and wonderfully achieved – the 'great' result that I've already mentioned.

Consider now where on that line 'acceptable' would be. Draw a dot on each line to represent where that is, and then join those dots up.

With a different coloured pen, consider each of these factors again, and think about where you are NOW with regard to each of these things.

Again, draw a dot on each line to represent where you feel you are now, and join the dots.

Here's an example:



'10' still represents the fullest success: the red line represents what, to this person, would be an acceptable success. The grey line shows where they feel they are now.

Looking at your own 'web', where are the biggest gaps? Which areas need to most work?

Clearly, for this person here, they are happy enough with the level of spirituality that they already have (however they choose to define that). Their level of free time, however, is NOT what they would want it to be. This doesn't necessarily mean that they are a social pariah: it could simply mean that they are dissatisfied with the current state of things: perhaps they work away from home a great deal and do not spend enough time with their family and friends or to socialise.

Remember, this web – and the mind maps – are just for YOU to refine your goals and get a clear perspective on them. They are YOUR goals and not for anyone else to judge.

Nor is it for anyone else to judge where you think you are with regard to those goals: often people will contradict you on this: for example, you can imagine someone saying to the individual who drew this example web 'but you have a social life – you're always out and about!'

Goals can be a very individual thing, and how you FEEL about them...and where you are now is really important.

However, it's also important to retain some perspective: if everyone, for example, is saying that things are OK and you don't feel they are, do you have higher standards than they do....or do they have a point?

There are some questions, that are well worth asking yourself at this stage:

It's also worth writing down your answers so that you can refer back to them when necessary.

### ***How well do I really know my goal?***

Make sure that you know and understand your goal, and that you're not aiming for a fantasy that doesn't actually exist. COUNTLESS websites exist promising a multi-million dollar income on a four hour day... something which (in my opinion) simply does not exist. Aim high – but be real. If you need to know more, do some digging and research your goal. Look up people who have already achieved what you're aiming for, and learn from them.

### ***What have I already tried, in pursuance of my goal?***

What's worked so far? What hasn't worked?

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In all probability, unless you're going for a complete career change or have only just begun to think about what you want to achieve, you will already have begun to make steps towards it. Look at your 'web' and consider how far you need to go on any one of the factors you've considered AND how far you've already come.

### ***What will I have to change in order to move forward?***

This is really important: what will you need to change as you move forward towards your goal? There's a well known saying "if you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got".

If you want to 'get' something that you haven't already got...you'll need to do something different – it's no good hoping that you can achieve new things by doing the same things. It won't happen. So what needs to change?

### ***What might I miss about the current situation when I move on?***

With what will I replace these 'losses'?

Change and moving forward will mean that you gain many new things. It might also mean that you lose some. What might these things be, and with what will you replace them?

### ***What am I prepared to invest?***

Closely linked to this is the question of compromises, sacrifices and investment. Don't worry – it's not as drastic as it sounds, and it's something we'll cover more in the next chapter!

For example, if you're wanting to start a business, you'll need to make some investments in that area in terms of your time and finances. What will you be prepared to sacrifice...and what won't you? This might be something as straightforward as 'I'm prepared to lose my evenings relaxing in front of the TV, and will do a couple of hours work instead...but I'm not losing out on time with my kids'.

It might mean reining in your spending in one area so you can spend it on your business – are you prepared to skip that overseas holiday this year and go somewhere closer to home?

The decisions you make now will help form your plans as you move forward.

### ***From where I am now, what barriers are stopping me from moving forward?***

Are they real or imagined?

As I discussed in the first chapter, it's vital that you don't fall into the trap of thinking 'I can't because...' when it comes to your goals. Think carefully, what IS stopping you? Is it REALLY??

***On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do I want to achieve my goal?***

How do I move closer to 10?

Before you spend time planning your goal and then following that plan, ask yourself NOW how much you want to achieve it. On a scale of 1–10, if it's anything less than and 8, you'll need to question whether or not you actually want to achieve it. If not, you might want to focus on another goal. Unless you're really self-motivated, it might not happen.

***What are the core values that I will carry forward?***

As I've said before, your goals – and the means by which you achieve them – should be in line with your values. This is one for you to judge: what values will underpin HOW you achieve your goals?

***What happens if I stay where I am?***

This is always worth considering: what happens if nothing happens? How happy are you being where you are at the moment? What is the 'burning platform' that is spurring you on towards your goals?

What's the impact of doing nothing?

***WHY am I doing this?***

Remind yourself why you're doing this – what will it mean to you to achieve your goals. What will it mean to those around you? Think carefully about this – having a clear reason WHY to focus on will help you overcome the challenges that you might face along the way.

**Make a 'Goals Board'**

I have one of these and it's fun to make. Basically, it involves getting hold of a pin board and collecting images that relate to the achievement of your goal – pictures of the holiday destinations you'd like to go to, the type of house you'd like to live in, the type of lifestyle you'd like to lead.

This is more than just a wish-list of dreams, though: you've spent some time now really thinking about your goals and what you want to achieve, and this is a visual representation of those things.

When you have challenges to overcome in the coming months, looking at these images and reminding yourself where you're going is a powerful motivator.

And finally...

Remember, that as you move forward towards something, it becomes clearer. Ensure that you start with as clear and SMART a goal as possible, but be prepared to learn new things about your goal – and what success will mean to you – as you move forward towards it.

Bear in mind also that as you look closely at your goal, it might be bigger than you initially thought. Worry not. That's normal.

By way of a metaphor, a couple of years ago a group of friends and I decided to climb a mountain – Goat Fell on the Isle of Arran, just off the West Coast of Scotland. We see it every day from where we live, across the Firth of Clyde.

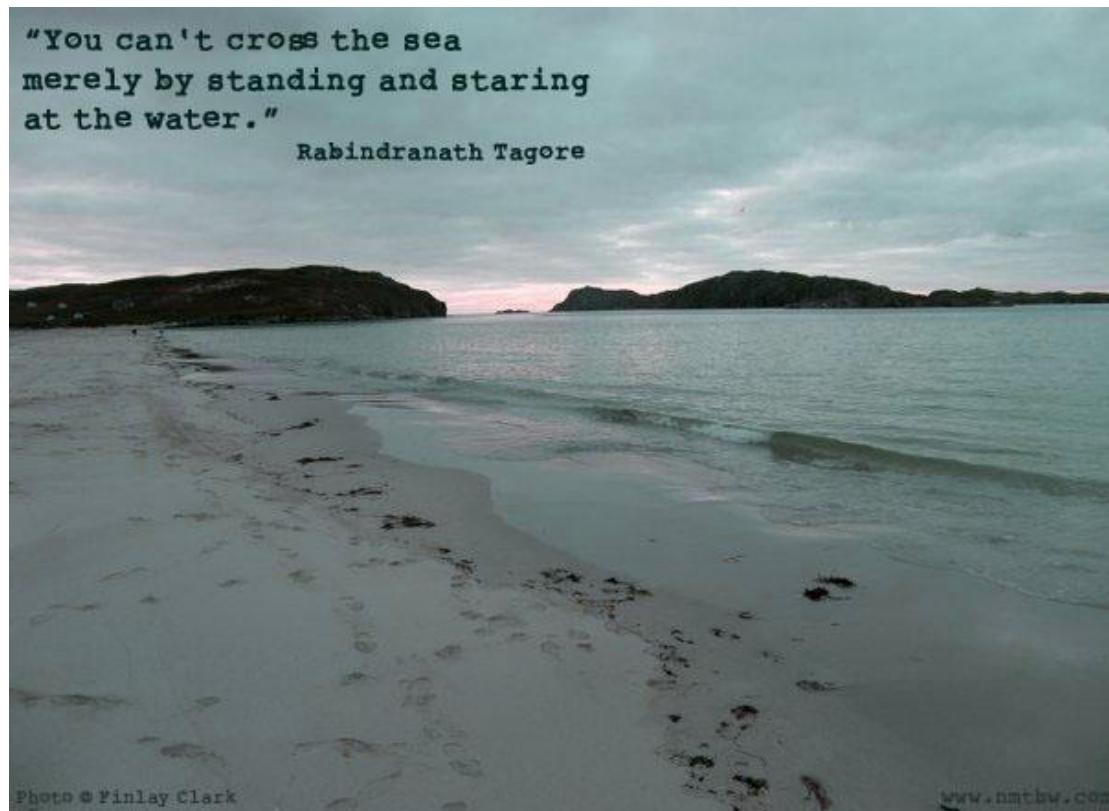
As we got closer to the island on the ferry, the mountain lost its fuzzy and ethereal appearance and started to loom very large indeed. It was almost intimidating in a way that hadn't been apparent from a distance.

It took a few hours...but we did get there.

And the view from the top was amazing.



# 3 Devising a plan



Having gained clarity over your goal and reasons and values behind it, this section will be a 'how to' on breaking your overall SMART goal down into manageable and realistic chunks, and building a practical plan to achieve it.

There are a couple of points to make here before we start with the chapter.

To some people (myself included) who are more action orientated and would rather just define their goal and get on with it, this planning phase can seem a little dull.

To others, who have a more thoughtful and process- driven approach to life, it will be easy, as it's all about taking your ideas and aspirations and turning them into the practical steps you need to take to achieve your goal.

For those action-orientated people who want to skip the planning stage and start running towards their goal now...pause for a moment. Planning is vital and in this chapter, you'll be considering factors that will in the end help you to get to your goal quicker.

For those who enjoy thinking and planning – ensure that you remain focused on achieving your goal, and not in planning for planning's sake.

Once you have your plan, it'll be a question of sticking to the plan and being self disciplined if the goal is to be achieved.

A plan on paper is worthless. A plan in action is priceless. And with that in mind consider also that you should start taking your first few steps towards your goals as soon as you have clarified your first few steps: don't wait until the whole master plan of your life has been drafted out in full...begin to walk the path as soon as you can.

**GOAL MINDSET #8**  
**PLAN. DON'T JUST DIVE IN.**

#### **Make a list**

Start by looking at your overall SMART goal, and start with what you want to achieve and your timescale (the S and the T).

Think carefully about all the things that need to happen if you are to meet that goal in that timescale, and make a list. To start with, just write things down in any order, and bear in mind that more things might occur to you in the coming days.

It's also extremely likely that things will be added to this list as you move forward: at this starting-out point there will be things about your goals that you don't know you don't know...you'll find out as you journey towards it.

At this stage, be as thorough as you can though – the more detailed your overall 'to do' list is, the more robust your plan will be.

Let's take the example that we saw in chapter 2 of Kate, whose goal is to set up a business based on her crafting skills.

Kate's initial list might look something like this:

- Find workshop premises
- Develop website
- Make more products to sell
- Start with soft furnishing and clothes
- Buy / source more raw materials to work with
- Think about farming work out for completion
- Think about design services, completed elsewhere...
- Branch into home décor and 'how to' resources online
- Join craft networks to share ideas
- Learn business skills
- Contact the bank to set up an account
- Sell product range on TV shopping channels
- Run craft workshops and residential weekend programmes
- Find an accountant
- Find someone to help with marketing
- Contact the local enterprise agency for business start-up advice
- Join and attend business networking groups

...and so on

As you do this, look also at the goal mind map you drew in chapter 2 – what elements there can be added to your list? It's likely that, like Kate, you'll have a heading and several sub-headings, for example 'successful marketing' and online, offline, articles, blogs etc. etc.

Add these to the list you're putting together now.

Work through the list

Clearly with each of these, further thought is required.

The first consideration is what needs to be tackled first?

Looking down Kate's list, it's fairly safe to say that things like

- Visiting the local enterprise authority for business start up advice
- Setting up a bank account
- Finding an accountant
- Start with soft furnishing and clothes

(and some other factors)

....are going to have to happen before, for example, she starts selling things via TV shopping channels.

Considering the factors on her list like this might make Kate think about some factors that she might not have considered before:

How big do I want to start – go for major bank investment, or fund it myself and work from home to start with?

And leading on from this:

- What sort of start up businesses do the banks lend to?
- How much do they lend?
- What are their terms?
- What are the implications for me?

These questions in turn might lead her to think about researching funding options BEFORE choosing a bank and setting up her account.

In terms of her overall goal, Kate might reflect that she wants a successful business in three years time, so she'll need to invest heavily at the outset to get the ball rolling.

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Or she might decide that, in terms of her lifestyle and other commitments OUTSIDE her goal, she'll make her ideal business a ten year plan and grow more slowly.

As for your own list, it's important that you take each point on it and ask yourself:

- *Where does this sit in relation to other things on my list?*
- *How important is this thing, in terms of my overall goal?*
- *What is involved with getting this particular thing done (you might even want to draw another mind map to capture your thoughts around any particularly complex points)*
- *When does it need to happen – right away? In six months time?*
- *When EXACTLY will I do these things?*
- *Who do I know who can advise/help me with this?*
- *What else do I need to find out about this? Where can I go to find out?*
- *What will I need to do to achieve that step?*

Following on from this, once you've organised your list into some sort of timeline order, each thing on your list will need to become a mini SMART goal.

### Set mini SMART goals

By now, you should be familiar with SMART goals if you weren't already.

You'll already have expressed your overall goal as a SMART goal. Here. We're looking to turn each of the factors on your list into a SMART goal in itself.

**Specific** – be as accurate as you can about exactly what it is that you need to get done.

**Measurable** – what are the measurables, in terms of what you're actually doing and in terms of the results you expect to see? Make sure that at least some of your measurable factors are results based: don't fall into the trap of being busy, but not seeing any return on that investment of your time.

For example, on her list, Kate has written that she wants to join networking organisations, and attend at least once a month. These things are easy to measure – she's either been or she's not. She needs also, though to put a measurable on what she wants the outcome to be – to make 3 new contacts and follow them up, per event, say.

If she finds that, six months in, she's been attending events but has made no useful contacts at all – she'll need to rethink the events she's attending, what she's doing and who she's talking to at the event etc. Otherwise she's in danger of going through the motions, but not getting any results.

**Achievable** – don't make excuses, but are the things you've set yourself achievable with the resources and time that you have? It's important to challenge yourself, but remember your wellbeing and work-life balance!

**Action orientated** – as you move forward with your goal, your actions might involve motivating someone else to do something for you, Kate might check, for example, that her web designer has everything she needs etc

**Relevant** – this becomes REALLY important at this stage. As you explore your mini-goals, are they relevant to your overall goal...or are they distractions?

It's all too easy to rationalise things and give them a place on your plan, but sometimes it's really worth asking yourself if the things you're doing are fundamental to your goals, or will take you away from them.

**Timebound** – put a date in the diary for when you'll do these things, or when you'll have them done by.

This will become particularly important when you consider the dependencies between the factors on your list: Kate can't go out and buy raw materials from suppliers until she has a bank account set up and has worked out her budgets....so the longer she takes to do these two things, the longer the delay in purchasing the raw materials...in making the products...in selling those products and so on.



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This might seem like overkill – after all, haven't you already spent time making your overall goal into a SMART goal and listing down all the things you'll need to do to get there?

It's not. SMART goals prompt action – especially if you write them down.

**GOAL MINDSET # 9**  
**IF IT'S NOT A SMART GOAL, IT'S NOT A GOAL.**

Challenge yourself at each point:

- *What exactly do I need to do here?*
- *How am I measuring whether it's been done well or not?*
- *Can I actually do this?*
- *Is it taking me towards my overall goal?*
- *WHEN will I do this?*

### **Brainstorming for ideas and solutions**

It's possible that there will be some elements of your goal that leave you thinking 'how on earth am I going to do that?!'

Brainstorming is a useful technique to tackle those challenges.

#### 1. Generate ideas

Set aside some time for this, and be prepared to think about it over the course of a few days. What you're aiming for is to come up with as many ideas as possible that might take you towards your goal or sub-goal.

Aim for at least ten, and don't worry too much if the ideas you're coming up with seem a little far-fetched at a first glance, just write them all down anyway. If you're struggling for ideas yourself, ask for the input of friends, family or colleagues who can provide ideas WITHOUT judging your rationale.

What can often happen is that people will come up with two or three ideas, and then try to work through them. The thing is that the first few options you come up with will be the blindingly obvious ones that they've been chewing over for months.

Challenge yourself to come up with new, less obvious possible actions...however ludicrous those might seem: at this stage it's about getting as many ideas as possible out in the open.

Come up with as many ideas as possible as to what you're actually going to do to achieve your goals, BEFORE analysing and discounting any of them. Why? If you move too quickly into analysis mode, you'll miss out on some good ideas that come from lateral thinking, and inadvertently close down your possible actions, rather than opening them up.

## 2. Analyse your ideas

Once you have your list of ideas (at least ten, remember) place them aside for a day or so.

Then set aside some time to analyse them.

At this stage, don't be too quick to write off any that you think you can't do – there may be ways round that.

Understanding the reasons WHY you want to achieve your goals can be an influencing factor here, and help to eliminate some ideas, and push others to the top of your action list: some of your options will align with that reason why, and some won't.

Consider each of these options carefully, and then narrow them down – I find that categorising them as 'no' 'yes' and 'maybe' is fine.

Make sure that you're not discounting ideas because you don't have the skills to do them (you can learn) or because you don't think you can. Make sure also that your options tie in with your values, and the reasons WHY you are aiming for your particular goal.

Let's imagine that Kate has been brainstorming some low-cost publicity-generating ideas, and her list includes:

- A pop-up craft shop
- Workplace workshops
- Sending marketing material out on fabric not paper
- Being a 'rogue crafter' pinning up her work in public
- Designing and wearing an outrageous outfit to a networking event

In her analysis, she might decide that sending out marketing material on fabric not paper isn't practical or cost effective....but it COULD lead to her sending out something more interesting in terms of her direct marketing.

Running the risk of arrest by posting her work up in public places might not be an option.... but getting permission to do so in an office building, to promote craft workshops as part of a large company's wellbeing programme might be a more realistic possibility.

In essence, some ideas will receive an outright 'no'. Some are obviously a 'yes'....and some might seem ridiculous at a first glance, but could lead to something very productive.

### 3. Decide on your course of action

Make sure that your thought processes so far don't just stay as thoughts – work out what your first steps need to be, and make plans to actually DO them (setting yourself another SMART goal in the process).

At this level, you're starting to come up with a focussed action plan or to-do list, and that action plan will be prioritised: by now you'll know what you need to do first, and what your timescales and measurable factors are.

Think about some contingencies too – if this particular course of action isn't doing what you need it do so, at what point will you call time on it and try something else?

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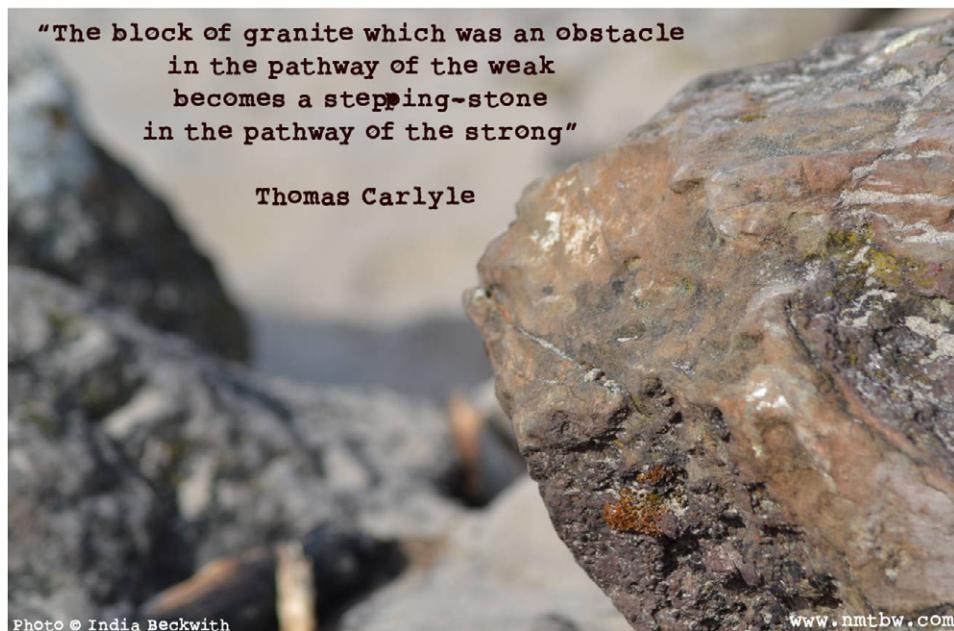
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## Contingencies and scenario planning



Inevitably as you journey towards your goal, you'll come up with certain obstacles, and it's worth doing some scenario planning at an early stage to try and plan ahead.

Be aware that there's a balance here though – it's useful to consider a few options where you genuinely think you might face a challenge: it's NOT useful to plan and plan and plan again and try to cover every eventuality, because you won't be able to, and you could end up spending so much time planning that you don't get round to actually DOING anything...and if you don't actually DO anything all your planning has been a waste of time.

Whenever you come across challenges – even if it's in this scenario planning stage – it's important to think back to your overall goal and the reasons why you want to achieve it. At which point ask yourself "am I going to let this barrier/challenge/inconvenience prevent me from achieving my goals?". I'm sure I hardly need say that the answer really should be 'no'.

You might want to consider some of the bigger 'what if's' simply to get used to the idea that you will sometimes have to come up with a 'plan b', and you may well also have to hone your problem solving skills as you go along.

Let's imagine that Kate, in setting up her business, is going to ask the bank for funding...but is concerned that they might not lend to a business like hers. Her 'plan b' might be

- To fund her business start up herself...and accept that it will take longer
- To look for investment from independent funders
- To see if the local enterprise agency has a funding scheme
- To give up altogether

Of course I've put that last one in to make you think 'obviously she's not going to do THAT!'

One would hope not. Every day, though, people give up on their goals because of some issue that they might well have been able to overcome or think their way round...they have just chosen that 'give up' option instead.

Please don't let this be you. Learn to problem solve. Become resourceful. Develop your ability to stop and THINK to overcome a challenge, and not to let your frustration about the challenge stop you in your tracks. We'll be looking at some of these skills in later chapters as we look at how to maintain momentum and motivation.

For the moment, hold yourself to account – YOU are responsible for your goals, and how and when (and indeed if) you achieve them.

**GOAL MINDSET # 10**  
**LEARN TO PROBLEM SOLVE. BECOME RESOURCEFUL. DEVELOP YOUR**  
**ABILITY TO STOP AND THINK TO OVERCOME A CHALLENGE**

### **What to do now**

Spend a little time looking back at everything you've written down as you read this chapter. You should have quite a bit: a list or mind map of all of the factors associated with your goal, further details about what each of those points involve, a clear idea of which things need to happen first, and which things depend on other factors on your list...and now your possible contingency plans.

Look closely at what needs to be done...and what needs to be done first; you may already have made these actions into SMART goals – if you haven't now is the time to do that, and to build up your 'to do' list.

Focus not only on the large scale plan of what needs to happen in the next 6 months, but on what needs to be done NOW to get the ball rolling.

Set yourself tasks that you commit to achieving within the next week. Write them down and put them somewhere where you will see them.

Tick them off the list as you do them.

Hold yourself to account, and GET THEM DONE! Your goal depends upon it!

And remember to reward yourself along the way as you move forward towards your goals.

Ask yourself:

- *Do I need to break my goal down further?*
- *Which bit will I focus on first? Why?*
- *What can I do to move this forward? What else can I do? What else? What else? What else?*
- *Who else might I ask for suggestions?*
- *Where else will I look for information?*
- *If anything were possible, what would I do?*
- *What's holding me back, in a practical sense?*
- *What psychologically is holding me back?*
- *What am I going to DO first? When?*
- ***THEN GO AND DO IT!!!***

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# 4 Developing the confidence to succeed



It's absolutely vital (I cannot stress this strongly enough) that you have the confidence and self belief that you will achieve your goals. Self belief is crucial to success. If you don't believe you can make it, then you probably won't – even if there are other people who do.

Depending on how ambitious your goals are, this might sometimes mean flying in the face of those who don't think you WILL achieve. And that can take some bravery.

There will be times when you have to ignore the voices of those around you (we spoke about them in chapter one) and dig deep into your inner resolve and believe in yourself to succeed.

I cannot overstate how VITAL it is to have self confidence, and a strong self belief (which is why I'm repeating myself again so soon). The same goes for teams and organisations: if you don't actually believe that you can achieve your goals, or – worse still, that you aren't really worthy of them – then it's pretty much 'game over' from the start.

I'm not talking about becoming arrogant, ignoring feedback from others and thinking you're infallible or invincible – I'm talking about a balanced view of yourself that doesn't indulge in false modesty and self-pity, and an inner view of yourself that is strong enough not to be crushed and defeated when someone challenges you.

I've worked with a lot of senior executives and company directors over the years, and I'm astonished at how many of them have 'impostor syndrome': they almost don't believe they are worthy to be where they are, and some of them focus upon issues that really are NON issues. One of them was deeply concerned that her accent and tone of voice grated on people: another very senior director fretted about his writing style, which he didn't think was as good as his colleagues. Yet another one felt guilty that he had risen to a senior position, and didn't have a university degree. NOT helpful baggage to be carrying around!

Here's the thing. You must develop the mindset and confidence to achieve your goals. If you really want to reach your goals, you cannot afford to wallow in thoughts of 'I'm not good enough'.

Don't think "is that statement (about your accent, writing, lack of education etc.) true or not?" Think to yourself "is it helpful to focus on this?" If not, ditch it.

## Confidence techniques

### Self Talk

What is your inner voice telling you? Is it your best coach...or your worst critic? It's been said that we often talk to ourselves in a way that we'd never allow anyone else to. If your inner voice is always telling you how stupid you are, how you're not as thin/beautiful/clever/wealthy as someone else...then it's time to shut it up.

I used to know someone whose standard phrase used to be "it's very difficult for me because...." And guess what. She seemed to struggle with EVERYTHING, from finding a boyfriend to holding down a job. She was CONSTANTLY telling herself how difficult life was for her, and it became a self fulfilling prophesy. She could have made a slight – but profound – change by focusing on a solution rather than a problem 'I face challenges head on' is a lot more useful than 'Woe is me, everything is so difficult'. Are you talking about brain surgery here? Rocket science? No? Then how hard can it be?!

If you find yourself making negative statements to yourself, think of a positive statement you can say instead. Discipline yourself to say this positive statement WHENEVER you catch yourself thinking the negative. Every time.

I'm quite clumsy, and have often found myself dropping a sheaf of papers all over the floor, spilling my coffee on my desk...on one occasion I was wearing a long and heavy pendant necklace to a meeting, and as I leaned forward to pull my chair up to the table, the pendant swung forward and smashed the glass of water in front of me.

Here's the thing. If I say "I'm such a klutz, I've got to be careful not to drop/spill/smash anything" it's going to result in nervous behaviour that will probably lead to those very things happening. I choose to tell myself "I'm every inch the successful businesswoman". Believe it or not, this makes a huge psychological difference.

I was once at Heathrow airport buying a coffee, and as I lifted my briefcase off the floor, I managed to catch it on a shelf of potato crisps. The entire shelf fell off the wall below the counter.

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Inés Aréizaga Esteva (Spain), 25 years old  
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– You have to be proactive and open-minded as a newcomer and make it clear to your colleagues what you are able to cope. The pharmaceutical field is new to me. But busy as they are, most of my colleagues find the time to teach me, and they also trust me. Even though it was a bit hard at first, I can feel over time that I am beginning to be taken seriously and that my contribution is appreciated.



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As the crisp packets scattered in all directions across the floor, I reminded myself that I was “every inch the successful businesswoman”, confidently apologised for my mistake, politely asked if I could ‘leave this with them’ and left with my coffee. As opposed to grovelling on the floor at everyone’s feet to pick up the crisps, probably ending up spilling my coffee too, and feeling like a complete idiot.

Self talk. Sounds daft. Try it – it works.

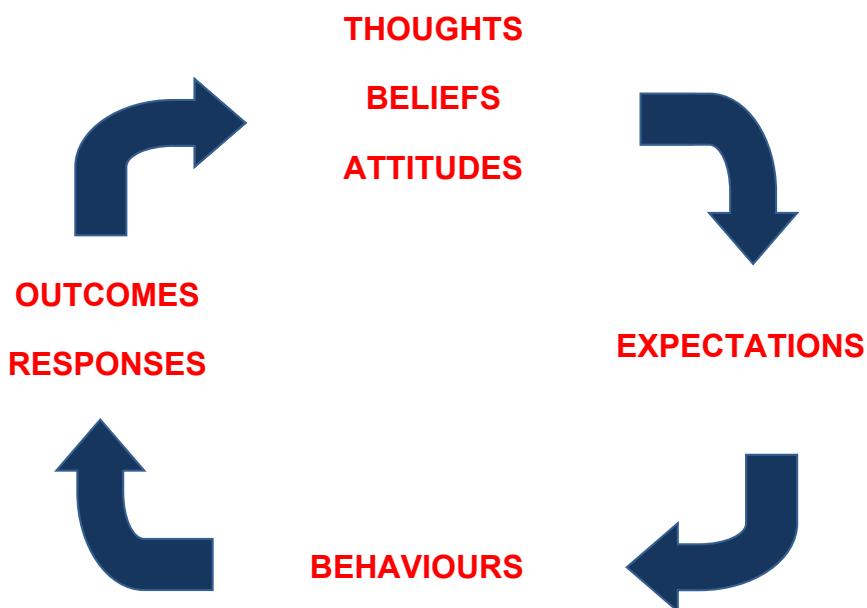
**GOAL MINDSET #11**  
**TALK TO YOURSELF. IN A GOOD WAY.**

### The Behaviour Cycle

What you think about and what you say to yourself has a profound effect on your behaviour and on what happens to you. I’m sure we’ve all known someone who has been worrying about something they have to do – make a presentation at work say – and has constantly spoken about how badly they think it’s going to go. When it DOES go badly, they’ll turn round and say ‘I KNEW that would happen!’.

They probably don’t realise that they created their own self-fulfilling prophesy.

Have a look at this:



Our thoughts, attitudes and behaviours...YOUR thoughts, attitudes and behaviours towards your ability to achieve your goal...have a profound impact on your expectations of the situation.

In turn, your expectations will impact on the way in which you behave in a given situation.

People obviously can't actually see what's going on in your head, they respond to your behaviours, and this can become a negative cycle.

Imagine that Kate is on her way towards her goal of setting up her craft-based business, and is invited to speak about her start-up experiences at a business networking meeting.

Imagine she thinks to herself "oh good grief, why did I offer to do this? I HATE presenting in front of people. It's going to be awful: I'm going to be so nervous my face is going to go all red and blotchy, I'll forget what I'm supposed to say no-one's going to take me seriously...it's going to be a disaster!!"

What impact does this thought process have on her expectations of the situation? She's not expecting it to go amazingly well, is she?!

Her expectations of the event not going well are going to impact on her behaviour: she might not prepare as well as she might, because at the back of her mind she's thinking "what's the point – it's going to be a disaster anyway!!"

She's EXPECTING to feel nervous and flushed, so she's likely to be focussed on how nervous she's feeling, and this will come out in her body language and her voice. People will SEE that she is nervous.

They might show some sympathy for a first-time speaker and respond well...or they might think that, because of her nervous approach and poor delivery that she's not a very convincing business woman. It could go either way.

Instead imagine Kate – although she's nervous about giving a presentation in public – saying to herself "this is a fabulous opportunity to share my business, and I've got a great story to tell!". Literally every time she has a negative thought, she consciously says this to herself instead.

What will her expectations of the event be? In this case now, that she's going to tell a great story and share her business.

Her expectations WILL have an impact in the way she comes across. It just will. She'll still be nervous, but her focus will be on giving a good presentation and telling her story.

Again people will respond to her positive approach, and have a much better impression of her.

Tell yourself that you will succeed. That nothing's going to stop you. That you deserve success (remember what I said in chapter 1 about that). Tell yourself until you believe it.

Ask yourself:

- *In relation to my goal and my ability to achieve it, what am I saying to myself?*
- *How has the behaviour cycle impacted me in the past?*
- *Moving forward, how can I focus on positive mental statements?*

### Be accountable for the achievement of your goal

Being confident means accepting responsibility for your goal, and believing that one way or another you have the wherewithal to achieve it.

In chapter 3 we looked at planning for contingencies: a confident person with self belief will think their way round problems to achieve their goal – someone lacking in confidence might be prepared to give up in the face of obstacles.

I was recently delivering a training seminar to a group of leaders within an organisation. The question put to them was ‘Who can clearly articulate the company vision’. No one put their hands up...and a conversation sprang up about how difficult it was to find the company mission statement on the intranet, and how they’d never heard their managers articulate the vision and so on.



WRONG!!! Blaming others demonstrates an inappropriate victim mentality that is not conducive to success (and certainly not to leadership). The issue was that they as leaders could not express the company vision. At their level within the business, they should have been able to. End of.

Whilst it can be a little frightening to think that ‘it’s up to me’...it can also be very empowering as well.

### **Focus on the things you do well**

One of the things that can help to boost your confidence is doing a bit of an ‘inventory’ of the skills and attributes that you already have that will help you on your way.

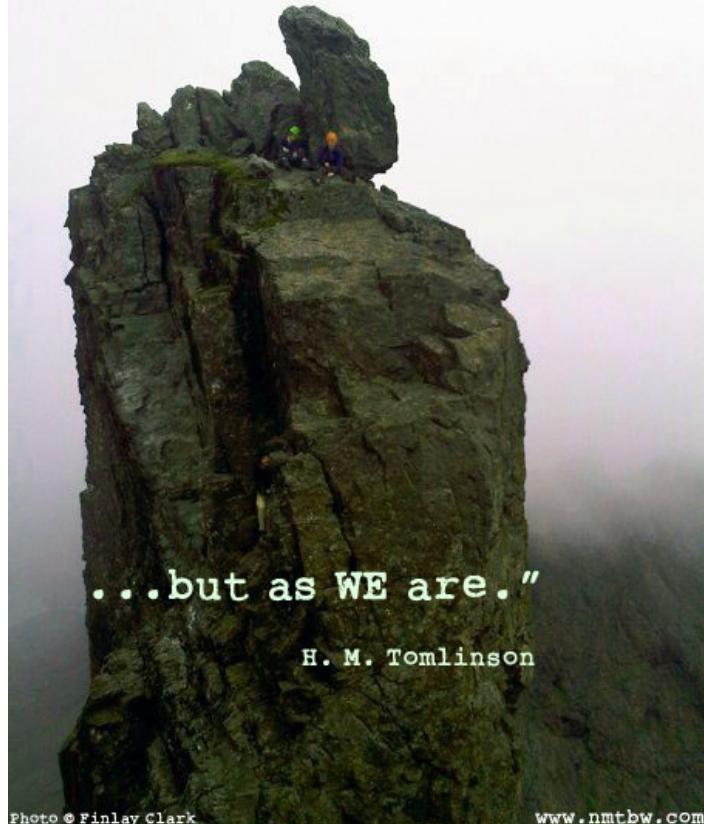
We’re going to analyse these further in chapter 5, as you work out what new skills you need to learn, but at the outset of your goal journey, reminding yourself of what you’re good at, what you CAN do and what you’ve achieved in the past can be motivating and confidence building.

Ask yourself:

- *What am I good at?*
- *What do people value me for?*
- *What have I received compliments and positive feedback for in the past?*
- *What have I achieved in the past that I perhaps didn’t think I could?*
- *What challenges have I overcome in the past? What skills helped me to do this?*

Write your answers down so that you can refer to them later: there may be times when you need to remind yourself of your capabilities as you move towards your goal.

**"We see things not as they are...**



Whilst it might feel a little uncomfortable, it can be worth asking the opinion of a trusted friend or family member what they think you're good at. There may well be achievements that they respect you for that you've forgotten, and it may be that they recognise a core skill of yours simply because they don't have it and you do (if this is the case, it's easy for you to think that everyone has this skill...and they don't).

Make a note of these second opinions too. Take them at face value: don't devalue them by saying "well I asked my dad and he's BOUND to say nice things about me".

Look for patterns in your own responses and in what other people are telling you: this will give you an insight as to your strengths AND will boost your confidence.

When you have moments of self doubt, refocus on these things. Review your list, and your past successes, and tell yourself – however cheesy it might feel – "I CAN do it...and I deserve it!"

### **Be inspired by others**

One of the things that has always inspired me and given me the confidence to succeed is looking at other people who have succeeded.

Sometimes (but only sometimes) the person in question has a rare or special quality that I don't possess, and this has taken them to the top.

Nine times out of ten, though, I can't help noticing that it's their perseverance, attitude and determination to succeed that have taken them to the top, not necessarily the extent of their abilities. Nine times out of ten, I end up thinking to myself "if THEY can do it...so can I".

Find yourself some role models whom you admire, and whose story of success inspires you. What can you learn from them in terms of:-

- Their attitude and approach
- Where they started from (some of the most inspiring people had the most humdrum beginnings)
- How they overcame challenges
- How they made the most of their abilities
- How they leveraged the skills of others along the way
- How they handled their success

Remind yourself that these too were ordinary human beings who, once upon a time, had an idea and a hope and a goal, and set about determinedly to achieve them and didn't give up until they had.



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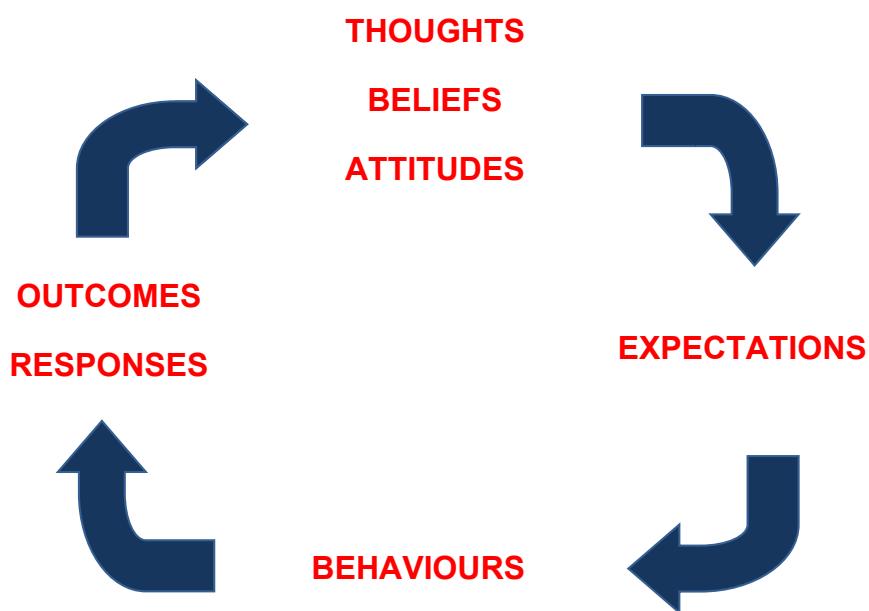
### GOAL MINDSET # 12

**REMEMBER THAT ALL SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE STARTED OUT AS YOU ARE STARTING OUT – WITH HOPE AND WITH AN IDEA. IF THEY CAN DO IT, SO CAN YOU.**

**Take on the ‘mask of the expert’**

In layman's terms, this means 'fake it till you make it', and acting as though you ARE the thing that you want to be. In the past I've found it a useful technique for situations which I'm new to: I'm literally saying to myself 'now what would so-and-so do in this situation?' and acting as I'd expect them to act.

Let's go back to the behaviour cycle for a moment:



Earlier in the chapter I wrote about how important it is to think positively about what you're doing. I also said that people don't know what's going on in your head, they merely respond to what they hear and see you do – your behaviour.

Luckily, we can leverage this if we take on 'the mask of the expert'.

To begin with, focus on a role model who inspires you, and watch people who appear confident. How do they behave? What do they wear? How do they carry themselves? How do they talk?

Begin to notice these things consciously, and absorb some of the techniques into your own behaviour. This is not about trying to ape someone – this is about emulating successful behaviours that you see in others.

I used to be terrified of networking situations – walking into a room of strangers and trying to strike up a conversation. To my mind there's nothing worse (there still isn't!).

I used to watch my boss Lesley walk into a room with her head held high, and start talking to someone, effortlessly. I started to copy her body language...make no mistake, I was just as terrified as before, but I'd think to myself 'what would Lesley do' and I'd just do that.

Amazingly, I had broken into the 'behaviour attitude cycle.' I had deliberately changed my behaviour, by taking on the 'mask of the expert' and copying someone else. Somehow, this changed people's attitude towards me – they thought I actually WAS confident. This changed their behaviour in response...which began to change MY attitude. It became a virtuous cycle.

I still don't enjoy walking into a room full of strangers and striking up a conversation...but I've got to a point where I can actually do it reasonably well, appear confident, and get results.

### **Empower yourself to succeed**

I mentioned this important point right at the very beginning of the e-book – you do not need anyone's permission to succeed. It really IS up to you.

Whilst this, in effect, offers few excuses for not succeeding, holding on to that thought will also give you the confidence to move forward towards your goals.

There will, of course, be times when permission to do something MUST be sought. What I'm talking about here is when we actually give up responsibility for our own actions and potentially give up on our goals and aspirations.

At this point in your journey towards your goals ask yourself again...whose permission are YOU asking to succeed...and why?

#### 1. The Government's?

If you're waiting for the economic tide to turn before you start a business/sell your house/plan for the future...you might as well give up now. The best time to start moving towards your goals is NOW.

As a surveyor friend of mine put it recently, we have to work on the basis that this is the 'new normal'. We live in an uncertain world. We must make bold decisions anyway. We must raise our aspirations anyway. We must move forward anyway.

## 2. Your bosses or clients?

I was working with someone a while ago who had felt that her career had run into the buffers because her boss wouldn't let her attend a training course that was necessary for her to progress, because he felt she wasn't ready for it. She'd been inspired by something she heard in a song on the radio: Labi Siffre's 'Something Inside So Strong'. The words that caught her attention were 'When they insist we're just not good enough...just look them in the eyes and say "I'm going to do it anyway". Without her boss's consent, she funded the course herself, and was able to move forward in her career.

I faced a challenge recently where I'd devised some life skills workshops for teenagers, and was literally seeking a headteacher's permission to run them in a school somewhere...with little success. As soon as I decided NOT to seek permission and to run them myself anyway, I was able to move forward, and ran them in the community instead.

The decision to progress is an individual one.

**"I studied English for 16 years but...  
...I finally learned to speak it in just six lessons"**

Jane, Chinese architect

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### 3. Your family and friends?

Usually your friends and family have your best interests at heart. They don't want to see you get hurt. They don't want to see you fail. They don't want to see you make a fool of yourself.

And sometimes, they can unwittingly put a halt to your plans and aspirations.

Marconi's friends tried to have him committed because, according to them, he must have been mad to try to get sound to travel through 'thin air' via radio waves. Enough said, really.

Challenge yourself: WHY are you asking the wrong people for permission? To my mind, there are 3 key reasons...all of which can be fixed.

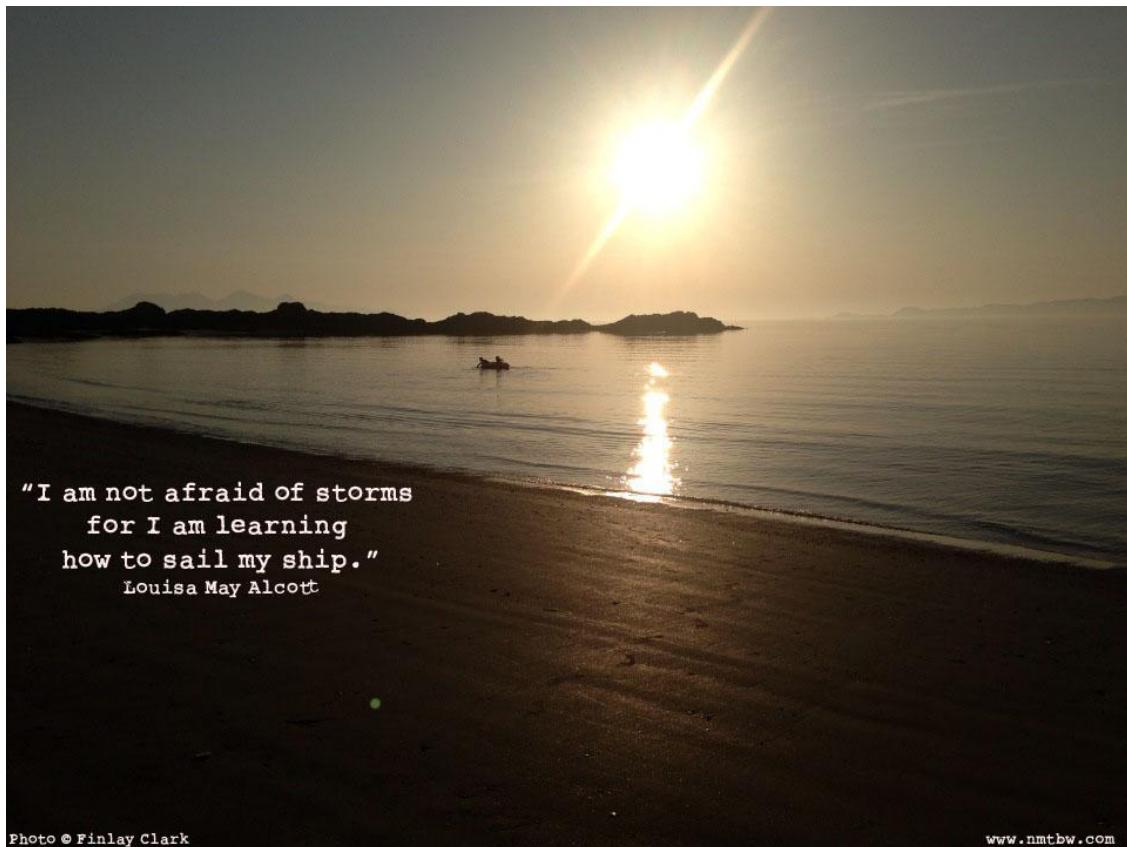
- a) Fear. Fear of getting it wrong, fear of what people might say, fear of looking like an idiot. Asking someone else's permission (whoever that might be) can indicate that you're looking for reassurance. Which is fine...but what if you don't get it? Do you have the courage of your convictions to just get on with it anyway? Is it really a confidence thing that's holding you back?
- b) Procrastinating. Asking for permission allows you to delay decision making and put off taking action. The ball is in someone else's court. You can't move forward until they get back to you, or until they give you the go ahead. Is this really the case...or can you move ahead anyway? Is this more about your motivation levels than anything else?
- c) Lack of personal accountability. Asking someone else's permission absolves you of responsibility for the outcomes, and provides you with plenty of excuses why failure wasn't your fault. Is it really fair to blame someone or something else...or is it more about YOU?

So whose permission do you need to succeed? It's a question you really need to ask yourself.

In conclusion, ask yourself:

- *What am I good at?*
- *What do people appreciate me for?*
- *How have I used these skills successfully in the past?*
- *What am I saying to myself in my head?*
- *Where are my negative self beliefs coming from?*
- *Whether they're fact or fiction, are they useful?*
- *What positive messages or mantras will I say instead of the negative things?*
- *Who inspires me?*
- *What can I learn from them?*
- *AM I looking for someone else's permission to succeed....if so, WHY?*

# 5 Your skills, and what you need to learn



Inevitably, striving towards a goal will mean learning new things. If it didn't, you'd already be there.

In this chapter, we'll look at how to evaluate your skills, make the most of the ones that you have, and figure out how to either develop the ones you haven't, or leverage the talent of other people to plug the gaps.

It's important to think as broadly as possible about your skills, and to ask other people for their thoughts as to where your abilities lie. Often, when it comes to our own core strengths and abilities, we are so familiar with these and they are so much part of who we are that it becomes impossible to imagine that other people can't do the same thing.

My brother is a very gifted artist and props-maker ([www.tonyhitchcock.co.uk](http://www.tonyhitchcock.co.uk)). During the early part of his career, though, he seemed not to realise that he had a talent that went way beyond most other peoples.

Because he'd been drawing and making things since he was a child, he thought that this was something that everybody did, and the reason they were asking him to design something for them was simply because they didn't have the time.

I had a similar 'wake-up' moment a year or so ago while I was talking to some of my colleagues in leadership training. One of them said that he had recently spent several hundred pounds purchasing business games that he could use in the training room with his participants.

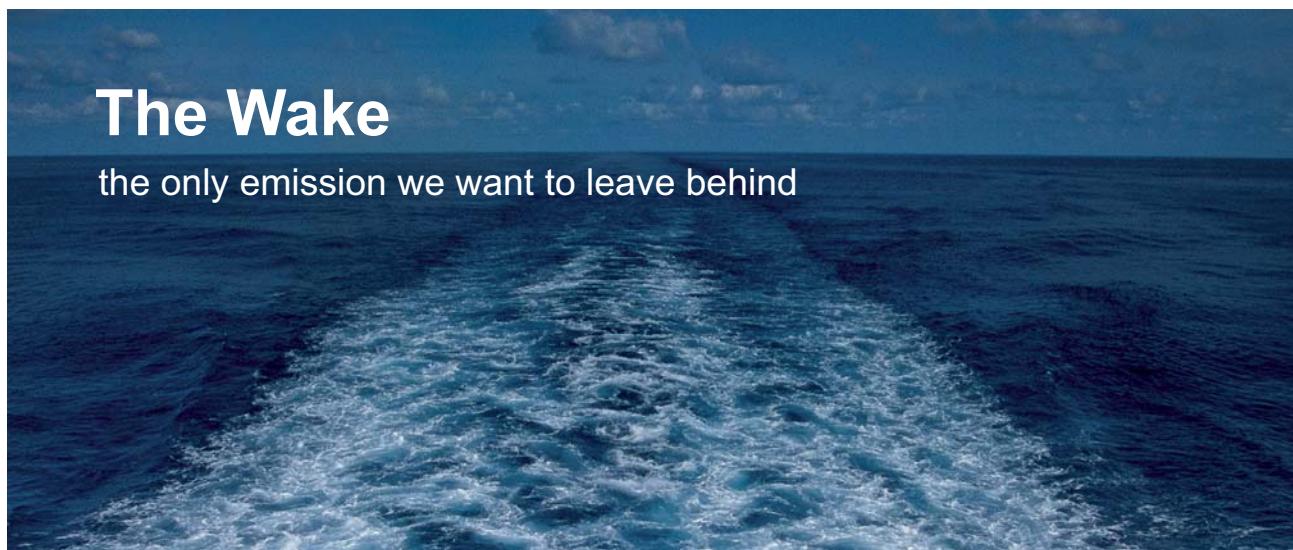
If I need a game or activity for a training programme, I invent one myself – and I had thought that that's what all trainers do.

Think about the things that you do, how they are unique to you, and how you can leverage them as you move forward towards that goal.

Think about what other people value you for, and perhaps asks the opinions of trusted friends and family as to where your key strengths lie.

## Your Skills

As I've already said, it's important to consider your skills in several areas. A useful model for looking at this is the Multiple Intelligences theory of Harvard University's Dr. Howard Gardner.



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Whilst his work was geared towards something different entirely – analysing different types of ‘intelligence’ within an academic context – the different intelligence types that he identified are useful for us here in considering the broad areas into which our abilities fall.

Often, we may find that society is geared towards recognising the first two intelligences below: an ability with words and numeracy skills. However, your broader talents will be just as important – possibly even more so – in getting you to your goal.

Bear in mind also that whilst you might have very strong abilities in one area above all others, it’s likely that you have a range of skills that fall into several intelligence categories.

Make a note of which ones apply most to you.

### **Linguistic**

Are you a good communicator, verbally and/or in writing? Think carefully about this: because so much of our education and work system revolves around being able to communicate at some level, you may well think that everyone can communicate.

Whilst everyone CAN communicate some people do it better than others. Are you one of them? How will a way with words be useful to you as you move towards your goal?

Signs that you are particularly strong in this area might include:

- You like word games, crosswords and so on
- You enjoy reading and telling stories
- You have a good memory for information
- You may be good at public speaking, debating and reasoning (although some linguistic people prefer written communication)
- You may be good at learning languages

Strong linguistic skills are common amongst authors, journalists, writers, politicians and editors.

### **Logical-Mathematical**

Are you organised and methodical? People with strength in this are typically very good at analysing data, and following a logical thought path. This strength will be an asset to you as you figure out how best to achieve your goals, and as you move towards them step by step.

Typically, people with abilities in this area are likely to:

- Be good at maths, logical reasoning, and calculations
- Like abstract thinking
- Like being organised and precise
- Like analysing data

People with strong skills in this area are likely to be drawn towards careers in science, accountancy, IT, law, the police and so on.

### Kinaesthetic

People with a bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence are, in a nutshell, physically co-ordinated and gifted in terms of precise movement. Sportsmen and women are perhaps the most obvious to fall into this category however, others include surgeons, dancers and those working with precise mechanics.

Do you:

- Have good timing and reflexes
- Enjoy sport and physical activity
- Tend to fidget if you're required to sit still for a length of time
- Prefer to act, to DO rather than to analyse
- Remember what was done, rather than what was said or seen
- Respond to the physical environment
- Like models and machines
- Mentally review while you're doing something else – working out, housework, or whatever

Don't relegate your kinaesthetic skills to the hobby bin. How will you use them to reach your goal?

### Interpersonal

People with interpersonal intelligence have strong social skills, and might describe themselves as 'a people person'. These are skills often found in politicians, teachers, public relations and human resources professionals among others.

Do you

- Mix well with others and find yourself able to relate to them
- Read other people's intentions accurately
- Work well as part of a team, and enjoy co-operating
- Empathise with other people
- Recognise your impact on other people

Whatever your goal, it's extremely likely that you're going to need to involve other people at some stage. This skill is therefore, arguably one of the most important ones you possess.

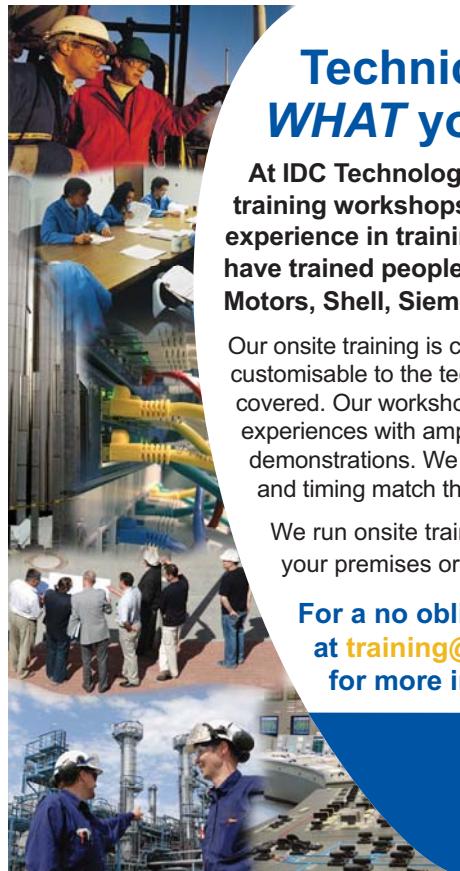
### Naturalistic

This particular intelligence is often overlooked in the grand scheme of things, yet you might find that it's central to your goal or your ability to achieve it.

Are you someone who:

- Keeps pets
- Enjoys nature and being outdoors
- Feels an affinity with nature
- Feels strongly about environmental issues
- Enjoys gardening
- Sometimes prefers animals to people

Where does this have a bearing on your goal? Think how you might use your skills to move forward towards your goal.



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### Intra personal

Intra-personal intelligence revolves around self awareness and intuition. In any circumstances, a strong sense of self is going to be important in your achieving your goals.

Are you someone who:

- Has a strong sense of self knowledge
- Doesn't feel the need to 'follow the crowd'
- Has a sense of your own purpose in life
- Has a keen sense of your own values
- See yourself as a 'deep' person
- Is inclined to be introspective
- Can motivate yourself
- Is intuitive about others

How might you capitalise on this sense of self as you move forward?

### Visual/spatial

Do you have a good memory for images, and tend to remember things in pictures? If so, it's possible that you have strong visual and/or spatial skills.

Where does this play a part in your goal or in your achieving your goal? Where MIGHT you be able to use it to fullest advantage?

Having a visual/spatial intelligence doesn't necessarily mean that you're good at art: it may be that you are good at visualising concepts.

Do you:

- Think in pictures
- Use metaphors to explain concepts and ideas
- Like art/drawing/painting
- Prefer looking at charts and diagrams to abstract data
- Have a good sense of colour
- Enjoy going to the cinema or watching TV

Visual and spatial skills are often LESS recognised – and even valued – than other skills, but this is a mistake. They are incredibly valuable in a wide variety of contexts.

## Musical

If you have a musical intelligence, you'll know it. Again, it can sometimes be sidelined as a hobby, but it still has the potential – like ANY intelligence type – to take you towards your goal.

Musical people are likely to:

- Be sensitive to pitch and rhythm
- Be sensitive to the emotional power of music
- Find it easy to study to music
- Relax or workout with music
- Play a musical instrument or sing
- Write music

Music has a powerful psychological impact in many areas that we don't even think of. Where might you be using it to your advantage to meet your goal?

## Your Knowledge

In addition to your underlying skills and intelligence type, there will be a wide range of knowledge at your disposal: things that you've learned and that you know about.

Think carefully about what you know: there'll be more than you think.

I was recently running a workshop for young people, focused on helping them to put together their resume, and on interview skills. One participant had a fairly short list of knowledge, skills and attributes, which she had confined to her fairly modest school career.

I knew this girl outside school: she was in a cheerleading team that had competed at international level AND she had been heavily involved in voluntary work and fundraising activities for a children's charity in Romania – two hugely significant factors which she'd completely forgotten about!

It's not QUITE the same, but it does point to the fact that some of your knowledge and indeed skills will be 'hidden in plain sight'. In which case, it's as well to ask someone else for their thoughts to add to your own list.

What knowledge do you take so much for granted that you almost forget that you have it?! It could be one of your strongest assets.

Ask yourself:

***What do I have qualifications in?***

***What do I do as a hobby?***

***What do I read?***

***What do I watch on TV?***

***What am I interested in?***

***What do I do in my spare time?***

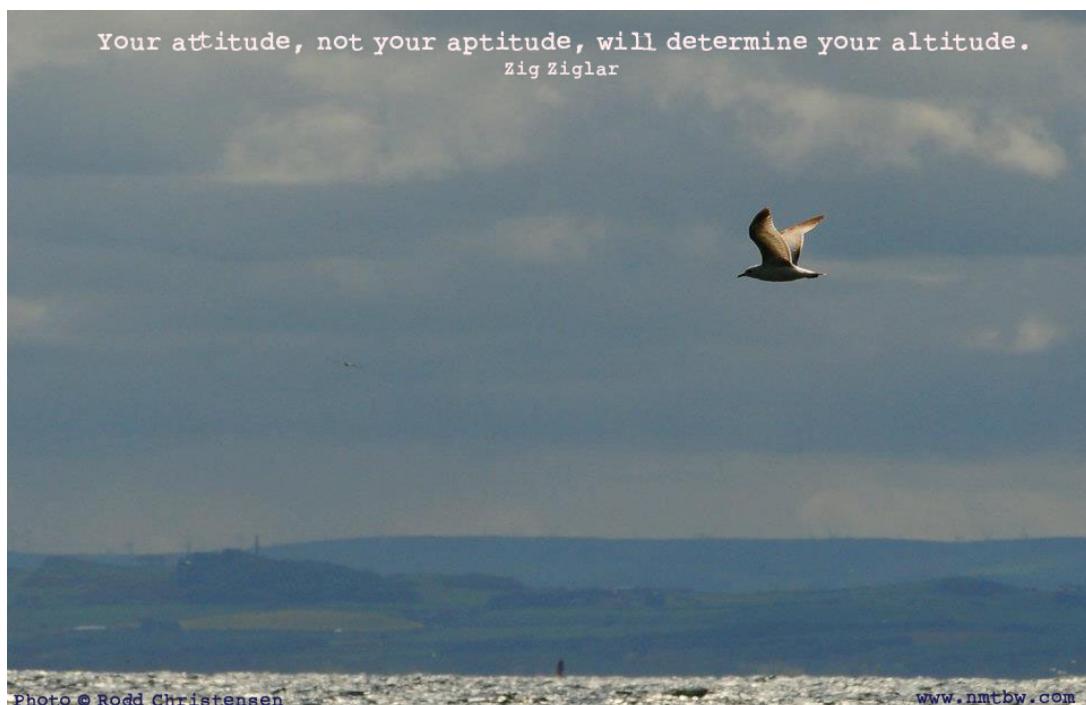
***Where do I go on holiday?***

***What do I do at work?***

***What am I asked to help other people with?***

***What subject areas really motivate you?***

### Your attitudes and approach

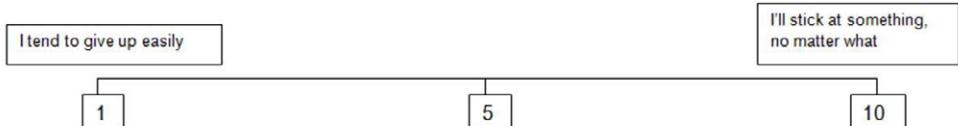
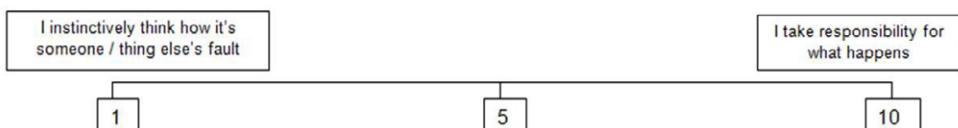
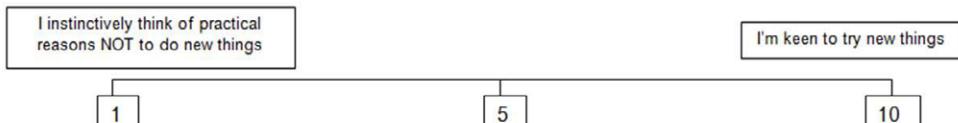
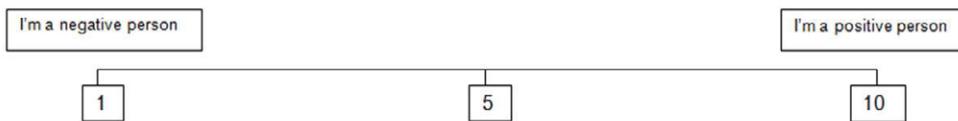


There are innumerable quotes that point to the fact that even if you don't yet have the skills to succeed, if you have an attitude and a mindset for success, it will weigh heavily in your favour.

The behaviour cycle that we looked at in chapter 4 come into play here. CHOOSE your attitude.

In chapter 6 we'll look in more detail at maintaining momentum and motivation as you move forward.

For now, take a few moments to think about your general attitude, on a scale of 1–10.



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Consider the same 1–10 scale for a range of factors, such as the ones below. Whereabouts are you on the line with each of these?

*I take a long time to recover from setbacks...bounce back from setbacks quickly*

*I see the worst in people...I see the best in people*

*I look for reasons why...I look for reasons why not*

*I don't like change...change happens and I get on with it*

*I base my self esteem on what others think of me...I base it on my view of myself*

...and so on. This list is far from exhaustive, but it will help you consider your attitude and approach in general – and especially to consider what triggers you to falter.

Being aware of it can help you prepare mental strategies to keep you on track.

### **Your underlying personality traits**

These relate to your personality type. There are no rights or wrongs – it's just how you are. As you move towards your goal however, it's worthwhile being very aware of who YOU are, and of who you need to be in order to achieve your goal.

There are a wide number of personality questionnaires available online, many of them free of charge so invest a little time filling some of these out.

Some will provide results which will make you think “Ah YES, that's me!”, whilst others might have you questioning whether or not you really ARE like that.

I recently completed a questionnaire whose results claimed that ‘people often comment on your sense of calm’ – and yet little could be further from the truth! In reality I'm a bit of a drama queen!

Even if you're not convinced by the results that the questionnaire gives you, this in itself can be telling. If you know that this ISN'T what you're like, that in itself is pointing you towards what you ARE like.

Fill out several questionnaires. Reflect back on personality profilers that you might have completed at work – Myers Briggs, Hogan Assessments, Gallup Strengths Finder – there are plenty to choose from. Look for patterns. If all the questionnaires are coming up with results that say how logical and pragmatic you are...they're probably right.

Don't allow yourself to be defined by personality questionnaires, though – they are there to inform you and build your self-awareness, and that is all. They're certainly not there to provide you with excuses for **not** doing certain things or developing in specific areas. Too often I've heard people do this: "I'm a logical analyst – I don't do all that touchy feely people stuff", or conversely "I'm spontaneous and creative, so don't ask me to be organised!". Wrong. That's NOT what these questionnaires are there for.

To my mind, one of the most useful and straightforward theories in this area is that of Social Styles, developed by Merrill and Reid. They defined four styles: Driver, Analytical, Amiable, and Expressive.

As with all of these things, most people will be a mix of the different types, but will have stronger tendencies in some areas than others. There are no rights and wrongs. Whilst we may all have a tendency to value our own style above others, in fact, we can all learn valuable things from each trait. Indeed, too much of any one of these could prove to work against us:

**Drivers** are instinctive and direct. They want to get on with things. They are focused on performance and the achievement of results, and probably like to be in control.

**Analytics** are logical and process orientated. They like to analyse data, and to be clear about the facts before moving forward. They are likely to prepare carefully and thoroughly and will opt for planning above spontaneity.

**Amiables** are a 'people person' who thrives on working with others. They are keen to promote harmony and for this reason are more likely to conform. They value loyalty, and prefer work to be relationship orientated.

**Expressives** are creative and spontaneous. They are flexible, work at a fast pace and are keen on new ideas (perhaps more than following them through). They enjoy recognition.

As a start, consider the following pairs and which is most interesting to you.

**People or things?**

**Practical or theoretical?**

**Thinker or doer?**

**Spontaneous or planned?**

**Sequential or random?**

**Positive or negative?**

**Extrovert or introvert?**

**Logical or imaginative?**

**Change or status quo?**

**Starter or finisher?**

**Disciplined or haphazard?**

What does this tell you about your personality, those of the people around you, and how you relate to them?

How might your personality traits impact your goal and how you achieve it?

### The tipping point

I mentioned earlier that too much of any one trait can actually work against us. Sometimes on my training programmes, I'll ask participants to consider the pros and cons of each of the social styles... and an interesting thing happens.

Those who have a strong tendency towards a particular style tend to find it much easier to think of all the positive aspects of their own style, and also easy to think of the negative aspects of other styles.

Conversely, they are sometimes surprised at the negative aspects of their style highlighted by people of a different style.

For example, Drivers will often see themselves as focused on achievement, getting things done, and moving forward – all of which are good things. An Amiable person might see them as ‘ruthless’, ‘heartless’ or ‘would stab their own grandmother to get ahead’. NOT so good.

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PEOPLE FIRST

Expressives might see themselves as fun, creative and full of energy... Analyticals might see them as lightweight, shallow, and not thorough.

On the premise that, at some stage, other people will become involved with or affected by your goal, it's worth bearing this in mind. Where are your strengths most useful to you...and at what point do they start to work against you?

Beware aware also that you CAN have too much of a good thing...

A useful model here is that of Daniel Ofman:

<p><b>Core Quality:</b></p> <p><b>A Skill, quality or trait that you already have</b></p> <p>E.g. Amiable – promoting harmony and collaboration</p>	<p><b>Pitfall:</b></p> <p><b>If you display too much Core Quality</b></p> <p>E.g. being TOO nice, letting other people 'win' over you, valuing other people's opinion over yours, putting yourself down</p>
<p><b>Allergy:</b></p> <p><b>What you are afraid of being</b></p> <p>E.g. being TOO assertive (i.e. aggressive) and offending and upsetting people.</p>	<p><b>Challenge:</b></p> <p><b>Your development area – THIS is the area you need to work on</b></p> <p>E.g. being assertive in order to be respected and valuing other people's views whilst still expressing your own.</p>

Your core quality is your strength – in this case, the characteristics of an Amiable person, but you can substitute in whatever is most relevant to you.

You pitfall is what happens if you have too much of that quality: perhaps in this case you're so concerned in promoting harmony and making sure that everyone else is OK that you adopt passive behaviours and let people walk all over you.

Your challenge is the area that you need to work on: in this case, learning to be more assertive.

Your allergy is what you're afraid of becoming, and it's usually the polar opposite of what you are. The harmony promoting Amiable does not want to become what they perceive as the ruthless driver who'll stop at nothing and not consider the feelings of others as they storm relentlessly towards their goal.

The Analytical's 'allergy' might be becoming the sort of person who acts spontaneously on a whim rather than weighing up all the options in advance.... Conversely, the Expressive might hate to be the sort of person who analyses everything to death before taking a single step forward.

In fact, you're not ever going to become the person you are 'allergic' to. The key point is that all too often FEAR of becoming that person prevents you from making steps forward in your development area.

For example – I was delivering a training programme in the finance sector recently. As you can imagine, there are a LOT of analytical people in that line of work, and I was trying to encourage some creative thinking, with a view to fostering innovation.

One of the participants was uncomfortable with what I was asking him to do and said "we're bankers – we don't do 'jazz hands'". His concern was that I was asking him to be something that he was not.

In fact (as I pointed out) no-one was asking him to suddenly become a 'jazz hands' performer. We WERE, however, asking him to allow himself to think a little more creatively, rather than analytically, with a view to developing a more innovative culture at that organisation. His fear of 'jazz hands' – which was NEVER going to happen anyway – had been preventing him from developing the skills he actually needed in his leadership role.

### **GOAL MINDSET #13 RECOGNISE THAT YOU NEED TO LEARN**

So where does all this self analysis lead us?

It's important to recognise that there will be much to learn as you move towards your goal: the knowledge, skills and attributes that have got you THIS far, but you will have to develop new ones to take you further.

Ask yourself: ***what does your goal require of you?***

Think back to the earliest chapters when I asked you to imagine that you'd already achieved your goal... what did you imagine that you had actually done?

Imagine yourself in that place again. What does your goal require of you in terms of your knowledge, skills and attitudes...and how can you leverage your natural personality?

Consider this in the light of each of the headings we've just looked at, and consider where the gaps may lie: what standard is required for you to reach your goal, in terms of your skills knowledge and behaviours...and where are you now? How will you develop and learn?

Bear in mind that once you've identified a gap in skills or knowledge, you'll need to consider how you might address these: it might involve building your own knowledge, reading a few books on a given subject or attending classes...or you might decide that you'd rather use someone else's talents to plug your gap.

For example, let's consider Kate, from our example in previous chapters, as she looks to set up her own business based on her talent for crafts. Her talents lie mainly on the creative side and she might be less comfortable with the numbers aspect of her new business. She might prefer to hire a book-keeper rather than to undertake all the finances on her own.

(Just a word to the wise, though, especially where finance is concerned: if you really don't like working with numbers by all means bring in an expert...but make sure you know ENOUGH to know what's going on. You hear too many horror stories about people who have left BIG aspects of their goal in the hands of someone else, and it's all gone horribly wrong.)

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Leveraging the skills of others is not an excuse to be lazy or to avoid doing the things you must – it's about playing to your strengths in order to achieve your goal.

Consider again that at some point your strengths will reach a tipping point and start to work against you.

For example, being a logical sequential thinker who's deeply analytical is extremely useful in many situations and lines of work. However, it can work against you if you are trying to come up with new ideas and fresh approaches: you'll find yourself trying to analyse ideas and possibly kill them off before you've fully explored them.

Or you might find that you get into 'analysis paralysis' – so busy going over the data that you have that you don't actually get a move on and DO something.

Conversely, the person who is confident and bases their self esteem on their own opinion of themselves might actually veer towards arrogance, ignoring the feedback of others and choosing to believe that they are consistently right.

### **And now back to your plans...**

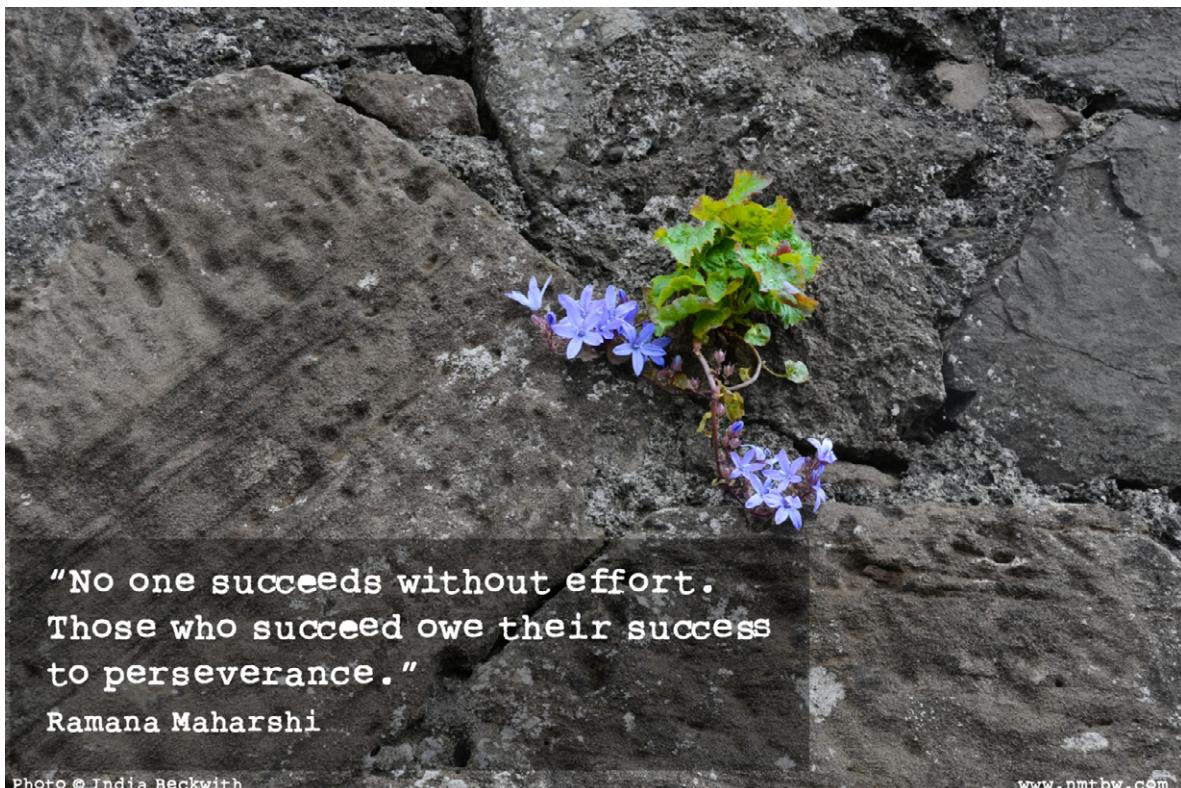
Once you've identified any development areas – and indeed any ideas that might make even more of the abilities that you already have – you'll need to work these into your plans, and develop some SMART goals.

- *What exactly do you need to learn?*
- *How will you know when you've developed these skills enough?*
- *Do they involve you actually doing something, rather than things just happening?*
- *Are these skills really relevant to your overall goal?*
- *WHEN will you learn this?*

Once you've added what you want to learn and your development points to your overall plan, it's a matter of working the plan.

In the next chapter, we'll look at how to maintain motivation and momentum as you do so.

# 6 Maintaining momentum and motivation



**"No one succeeds without effort.  
Those who succeed owe their success  
to perseverance."**

Ramana Maharshi

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It goes almost without saying that in order to reach your goals, there are times when you're going to have to be determined, resourceful and motivated to get there.

Everyone is gung-ho and raring to go when it comes to starting their journey towards their goal. Many falter along the way. Sadly, many give up and settle for something less than they set out to achieve.

Those who DO give up are likely to rationalise this to make it feel like the right thing to do. Common rationalisations are:

- Thinking you got your goals wrong in the first place (if you've spent as long working on defining, researching and building your goals as I've suggested in this book, you won't have)
  - Thinking 'it just wasn't meant to be'
  - Thinking 'my obligations to my family/spouse/kids/job make it impossible to continue'
  - Thinking (subconsciously) 'I'm not sure I deserve it'

If you ever get to a point where you're seriously considering letting go of your goals, do not do so lightly.

Remember the words of Winston Churchill “ we will never never never give up”...and of Chumbawumba: “I get knocked down, but I get up again. You’re never gonna keep me down....”

### GOAL MINDSET # 14 DEVELOP RESILIENCE FOR THE LONG HAUL

#### **Know why – the bedrock**

As I've already said in previous chapters, knowing WHY you want to achieve something and thinking back to your desired outcome can provide a reason to go on when difficult challenges arise.

Revisit your goals often to remind yourself where you're going, and why. If you've gathered images of your goal, look at them often, just to remind you what you're aiming for.

#### **Pick the right journey**

If you've defined and investigated your goal as thoroughly as I've suggested, you'll have a clear idea of what's involved in getting there, so hopefully the stumbling block of “I didn't realise it was going to be like THIS!” won't be one that trips you up.

The advertisement features three young adults (two women and one man) standing in front of a large globe, all with their arms raised in a celebratory or successful pose. To the right of the globe is an orange ribbon-shaped badge with the text "#1 in eco-friendly attitude". Below the badge, the text reads "STUDY AT LINKÖPING UNIVERSITY, SWEDEN RANKED AMONG TOP 50 UNIVERSITIES UNDER 50". A smaller text below states: "Interested in Engineering and its various branches? Kick-start your career with a master's degree from Linköping University, Sweden." At the bottom right is the Linköping University logo and name. A yellow button with the text "Click here!" and a hand cursor icon is located at the bottom right.

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It has to be said, though, that there IS a difference between giving up and changing direction. You might reach a fork in the road along your journey and decide to take one path rather than another. Your ultimate goal and your reasons why you want to achieve it, though, will probably remain unchanged.

By way of example I started out a few years ago wanting to run my own business, and to build it up into something which I might have the option of selling in 10–15 years time.

I've changed direction slightly in that I've joined forces with two business partners to establish Never Mind the Buzzwords, and we've set up a business together capitalising on the skills of all three of us, working with a range of associates from specialist areas.

I don't see this as 'giving up' on my ambition of running my own business – I'm still working towards my overall goal of developing that business in the coming years so that it will provide for my (early) retirement.

I've just changed direction slightly in pursuance of that goal.

For me, giving up would be throwing in the towel completely and getting a regular job.

In my opinion, it's neither fair nor accurate when people say "you just didn't want it enough – if you had, you wouldn't have given up you'd have got there!" I'm guessing that every single finalist in the 2012 Olympic 100m race DESPERATELY wanted to win. Usain Bolt just ran faster. End of.

There might be other factors which mean that you aren't able to achieve your goal or you wish to change direction: circumstances change, your life goals change...stuff happens.

However, if you have really thought about the reasons WHY you wanted to achieve that goal you'll be able to find another route that takes you to a different destination that meets the same needs.

Change direction by all means, but DO NOT give up. Take a step forward every day. Every SINGLE day.

Ask yourself am I going to let this hurdle destroy my dreams? It might sound melodramatic, but it can work.

### **Know your 'triggers'**

There's a well known quotation that states "it's not the mountain that will stop you – it's the stone in your shoe".

Ask yourself: what's the stone in YOUR shoe? What's the little, annoying thing that might just have you throwing your hands up in frustration and saying "Oh just FORGET the whole thing!!!"

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Seriously, think about things that annoy you. If you are aware of what your triggers are, then you're more likely to recognise them when they come along, and to be able to deal with them logically, rather than make a knee-jerk, emotional response.

Recognise when you start to become angry or frustrated and ask yourself "am I going to let this thing/person/circumstance stop me?"

If it's a person who's annoying you, you're certainly not going to let them get the better of you.

In the light of this question, a jammed printer when you're trying to produce an important report or a traffic jam on the way to a meeting becomes less significant. You're more inclined to find a way round it than to sit down and give up.

(And let's face it, do you REALLY want to be saying to yourself in years to come "I gave up because the printer jammed and I'd been having a bad day"??)

### **Stories of inspiration**

Look for stories of inspiration – there are plenty around. JK Rowling was turned down by dozens of publishers before someone at Bloomsbury took her – and Harry Potter – on.

Thomas Edison had over a thousand failures before he finally invented a light bulb that worked.

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (love her or loathe her) was the daughter of a grocer.

Dame Kelly Holmes came back from a series of career-threatening injuries to win both the 800 and the 1500 metres titles at the 2004 Athens Olympics.

Look for your own stories. Who inspires you? What do you admire about their stories, their resolve, their commitment, their persistence?

Tell yourself that if they can do it...so can you.

### **Develop resilience**

The concept of 'mental toughness' in sports psychology is one which is well worth further study.

It's NOT about developing a ruthless streak that strips you of your values and means that you'll stop at nothing to reach your goals.

It IS about ensuring that your mind works FOR you in all circumstances.

## Coping with challenges

### 1. Recognise the signs

Become aware of what your body is telling you. When you face challenges and hurdles and you start to become tense, try to identify where physically you become tense.

I tend to clench my teeth: I've a friend who starts drumming her hand on the table. Other people might feel a tightness about the chest, or feel a prickly heat on their scalp.

If you can recognise these early physical symptoms of stress and bring them from the subconscious to the conscious, then you'll be able to do something about them

Starting with breathing and relaxation techniques is best. Take a few moments. At the very least, STOP, BREATHE and THINK...in that order!

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The collage includes:
 

- A large black and white photo of a woman with long dark hair looking down at a desk.
- A smaller photo of a man with dark hair looking down at a desk.
- A photo of a lecture hall with many students seated in red rows.
- A photo of students sitting at tables outdoors.
- A logo for CHALMERS UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY.
- A mathematical equation overlaid on the collage: 
$$\frac{1}{\sigma} \int_{t=0}^{L_1} r(l)^2 \exp \left\{ -\frac{q^2 r(l)^2}{R_1^2} \right\} d_l$$
 and 
$$2p \left[ -\frac{q^2 r(l)^2}{R_1^2} + \lambda \right]$$
 followed by 
$$1 - \exp \left( -\pi \mu \int_{t=0}^{L_1} r(l)^2 \exp \left\{ -\frac{r(l)^2}{2\sigma^2} \right\} d_l \right)$$
.

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## 2. Stop...breathe...THINK!

Challenges will arise. And you can overcome them, or work round them.

Remember the belief cycle from Chapter 4? As challenges arise, choose carefully what you choose to think and what you choose to say to yourself about them. CONSCIOUSLY tell yourself something positive instead. If you catch yourself in a negative frame of mind, STOP, BREATHE and THINK...in that order!

Re-frame the negative thought into something more useful: I'm not suggesting you go from "I just can't get to grips with this issue!" to forcing yourself to think "hurray – I'm an expert in this". If it's an unconvincing lie, then there really is no point.

However, you COULD re-frame this negative thought into something more useful like "I'm going to learn how to do this" or "I can figure this out" or "I'm going to get through this".

My personal favourite is to consciously ask myself: "Is it rocket science? No. Is it brain surgery? No. Then how hard can it be?!"

### **When your commitment is tested**

Sometimes it's easy to lose sight of the mountaintop that you're heading towards when you find yourself slashing through the undergrowth unable to see more than a few feet in front of you.

Step back from time to time to re-focus on your goals and remind yourself of why you're aiming towards them. Remind yourself of how far you've come. Above all KEEP MOVING FORWARD. Do something every day – even if it's a small thing that you don't really feel like doing – that will take you a step closer to your goal.

You've invested a lot of time by now in defining your goals, refining them and devising a plan. Now just follow the plan.

### **Beware bright shiny distractions**

As you move towards your goals, be aware that 'opportunities' might well come your way. Weigh them up carefully – are they opportunities that will contribute to your goal or to your journey towards your goal in some way...or are they distractions?

Some time ago, soon after I'd changed career from marketing and PR to learning and development a friend put me in touch with a potential client who was looking for someone to do his public relations.

At the time, it was an opportunity for some extra income in the form of a retainer; however, the more I thought about it the more I saw it as a distraction rather than an opportunity. I was moving away from PR into learning and development. Undertaking the work would have been pulling me back towards my past career rather than forwards in to my new one. After some thinking time, I decided not to go ahead with the contract.

The moral of the story is, weigh up opportunities to check that that's what they are. Think back to your SMART goals – is the new opportunity relevant to your achieving your overall goal?

If not, consider the fact that it might be a distraction that actually ends up taking you away from where you want to be.

### Maintaining your confidence

#### Self talk

Remember what we said about self talk in chapter 4? Bear in mind that changing habits – whether mental habits or practical ones – requires repetition. Positive self talk isn't something to be done once in a while it's something to practice constantly.

Remember:

- If you're used to saying something negative to yourself, CONSCIOUSLY choose something positive to say instead.
- WHENEVER you catch yourself saying something negative to yourself or talking yourself down CHOOSE to say something positive instead. You might not feel like it, but just do it.
- Make a choice to be your own cheerleader. Strange though this might sound, sometimes when the going gets tough, you need to hear a voice saying "You're doing OK!" Keep going!"
- Sometimes, that voice has to be your own.

#### Steer clear of negative people

Some people have an innate ability to sap the life out of people around them. Some people seem to think it's funny or fashionable to grumble about anything and everything. For some people, the glass will always be half empty.

Steer clear of them all as far as you can. Obviously, if they're in your family then that's a bit more difficult – make sure you offset their negative opinions with a circle of friends who are positive and supportive of what you're doing.

## Visualisation

This is a straightforward but very effective technique that warrants your investing a bit of time in it. It's perhaps useful to think of it as structured daydreaming.

In essence, what you are doing is visualising in your mind's eye your achieving your goal or some aspect of it. Psychologically, you're focusing on there being a positive outcome: I'm sure all of us at some point have allowed ourselves to think of a forthcoming challenge and pictured the worst possible outcome. How helpful is that?!

I remember once working with an executive who hated public speaking but who was required to give a short presentation at a company event. He was completely fixated on the idea that he was going to fall over as he got onto the stage and that his entire speech was going to be a total disaster.

We worked on a few things:

- Working with the behaviour cycle to consciously think about the positive impact that his presentation was going to have (as opposed to 'this is going to be awful')
- Positive self talk "I'm going to deliver my message clearly" as opposed to "I hate public speaking – it's just not my thing"
- Visualisation – imagining the audience applauding warmly at the end of his presentation... as opposed to laughing at him falling on his face before he'd even started.

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Did it help? Almost certainly. The man in question is never going to be a gifted orator – but the presentation went well, he communicated his message clearly, and his confidence was boosted by the response that he received from the audience, and from his line manager.

### **Self motivating actions**

It's important, as I've already mentioned, to know what your triggers are, and to recognise when you're starting to become demotivated or distracted. Sometimes thinking through the issue is the best way forward. Sometimes, it's better to DO something to take your mind off the problem or challenge, and to allow your subconscious to work on it.

Draw up a list of self-motivating actions: things that will pick you up when you're feeling a bit down. Please DO NOT include counter-productive things like drinking alcohol or binge eating a huge chocolate bar in this list: they must be things which are to your benefit.

Whenever I ask course participants what motivates them, I'm always surprised at the range of their answers, which have included:

- Listening to music
- Going for a run
- Remembering my faith in God
- Playing a computer game
- Going to sleep – it's never as bad the following morning
- Talking to a friend
- Reading something inspiring
- Watching my favourite film
- Playing with my kids
- Cooking or baking something
- Going to the shed and doing a bit of woodwork

What might you do? Rather than focusing on a challenge or problem and remaining in an unproductive frame of mind, what quick-fix will enable to you to shake off negative feelings and re-focus on moving forward?

Ask yourself:

***WHY do I want to achieve this goal?***

***What will it mean to me when I get there?***

***What really motivates me?***

***Who really motivates me?***

***In the past, what's caused me to give up?***

***Who drags me down?***

***What actions can I take to motivate myself?***

***How will I aim to respond if things don't go the way I planned?***



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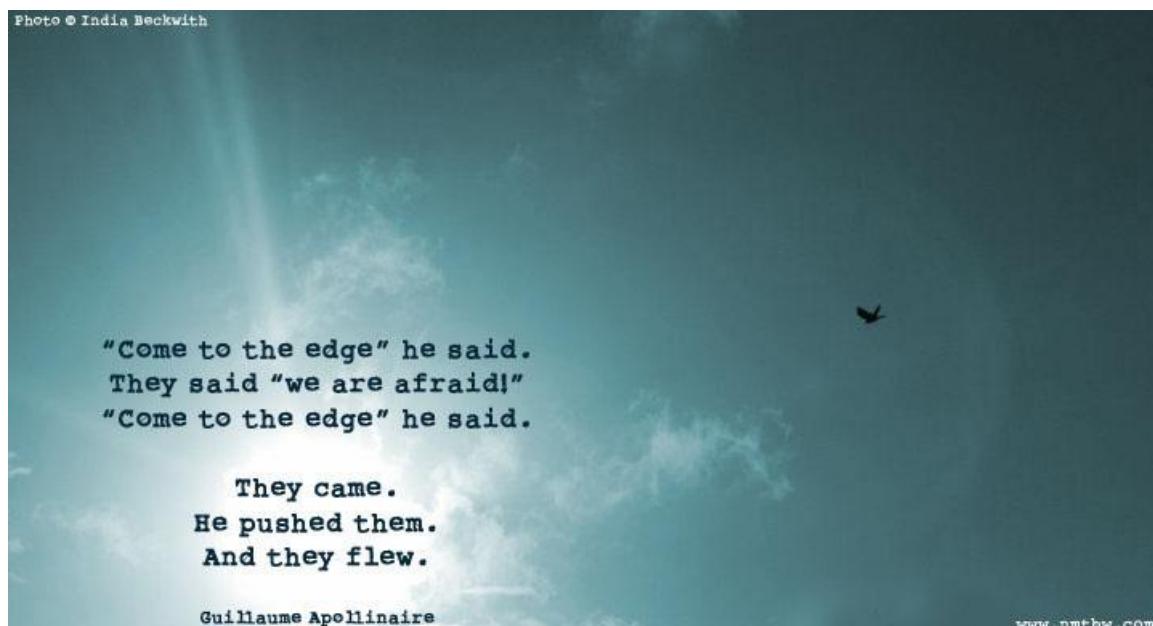
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# 7 Go for it!



With this short chapter – more of a post-script really – the clue really is in the title. I'm sure you've heard it said that if you fail to plan, you plan to fail...and that's been the reason behind this e-book.

By now, you'll have a notebook full of goals, ideas, plans, observations of your strengths and development areas, a note of people whose help you could use, and lists of tasks to accomplish.

You'll have set yourself SMART goals that relate directly to your goals, and which are the blueprint that will enable you to achieve them.

And of course, you've got this e-book and the questions in it to refocus at any point as you journey towards your goal.

I'm already on my journey towards my life and career goals. I'd be delighted if you'd join me, right now. There's nothing stopping you...is there?

Ask yourself:

- ***What will I do first?***
- ***When?***
- ***How will I track my progress?***
- ***...what will I do...NOW??***

Don't wait any longer – it's time to fly now.

I wish you every possible success.

**GOAL MINDSET #15**  
**DO SOMETHING. TAKE A STEP FORWARD EVERY SINGLE DAY**



.....

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needs to be "The Shift".



# 8 Appendix – 15 Goal Mindsets

## **GOAL MINDSET #1**

YOU DO NOT NEED ANYONE ELSE'S PERMISSION TO CHOOSE  
YOUR OWN GOAL YOU DO NOT NEED ANYONE ELSE'S PERMISSION  
TO SUCCEED IT REALLY IS UP TO YOU...AND ONLY YOU

## **GOAL MINDSET # 2**

THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT, AND NOT ABOUT  
WHAT OTHER PEOPLE EXPECT YOU TO WANT

## **GOAL MINDSET #3**

START WITH AN OVERALL PICTURE OF YOUR GOAL  
AND THE POSITIVE IMPACT IT WILL HAVE

## **GOAL MINDSET #4**

MAKE SURE YOU'RE FOCUSED ON A GOAL AND NOT A FANTASY

## **GOAL MINDSET #5**

BE PREPARED TO REALLY FOCUS ON YOUR GOAL, AND THINK DEEPLY ABOUT IT.

## **GOAL MINDSET #6**

BREAK YOUR OVERALL GOALS DOWN INTO SMALLER GOALS.  
BREAK THESE DOWN INTO EVEN SMALLER GOALS  
UNTIL YOU HAVE A DAILY 'TO DO' LIST.

## **GOAL MINDSET # 7**

BE CLEAR IN YOU OWN MIND: WHAT CONSTITUTES FULL SUCCESS,  
WHAT'S ACCEPTABLE, AND WHAT'S UNACCEPTABLE

## **GOAL MINDSET #8**

PLAN. DON'T JUST DIVE IN.

## **GOAL MINDSET # 9**

IF IT'S NOT A SMART GOAL, IT'S NOT A GOAL

## **GOAL MINDSET # 10**

LEARN TO PROBLEM SOLVE. BECOME RESOURCEFUL.  
DEVELOP YOUR ABILITY TO STOP AND THINK TO OVERCOME A CHALLENGE

**GOAL MINDSET #11**  
**TALK TO YOURSELF IN A GOOD WAY.**

**GOAL MINDSET # 12**  
REMEMBER THAT ALL SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE STARTED OUT AS YOU ARE STARTING OUT – WITH HOPE AND WITH AN IDEA. IF THEY CAN DO IT, SO CAN YOU.

**GOAL MINDSET #13**  
RECOGNISE THAT YOU NEED TO LEARN

**GOAL MINDSET # 14**  
DEVELOP RESILIENCE FOR THE LONG HAUL

**GOAL MINDSET #15**  
DO SOMETHING. TAKE A STEP FORWARD EVERY SINGLE DAY

And finally...

