

CHAPTER 1

Set the Table

*"There is one quality that one must possess to win,
and that is definiteness of purpose, the knowledge of what one wants
and a burning desire to achieve it."*

Napoleon Hill

Before you can determine your “frog” and get on with the job of eating it, you have to decide exactly what it is you want to achieve in each area of your life. **Clarity** is perhaps the most important concept in personal productivity. The number one reason why some people get more work done faster is because they are absolutely clear about their goals and objectives and they don’t deviate from them.

The greater clarity you have regarding what you want and the steps you will have to take to achieve it, the easier it will be for you to overcome procrastination, eat your frog and complete the task before you.

A major reason for procrastination and lack of motivation is vagueness, confusion and fuzzy mindedness about what it is you are trying to do, and in what order and for what reason. You must avoid this common condition with all your strength by striving for ever greater clarity in your major goals and tasks.

Here is a great rule for success: "Think on paper."

Only about 3% of adults have clear, written goals. These people accomplish five and ten times as much as people of equal or better education and ability but who, for whatever reason, have never taken the time to write out exactly what it is they want.

There is a powerful formula for setting and achieving goals that you can use for the rest of your life. It consists of seven simple steps. Any one of these steps can double and triple your productivity if you are not currently using it. Many of my graduates have increased their incomes dramatically in a matter of a few years, or even a few months, with this simple, seven-part method.

Step One: Decide exactly what you want.

Either decide for yourself or sit down with your boss and discuss your goals and objectives until you are absolutely, crystal clear about what is expected of you and in what order of priority. It is amazing how many people are working away, day after day, on low value tasks because they have not had this critical discussion with their manager.

Rule: "One of the very worst uses of time is to do something very well that need not be done at all."

Stephen Covey says that, "Before you begin scrambling up the ladder of success, make sure that it is leaning against the right building."

Step Two: Write it down.

Think on paper. When you write your goal down, you crystallize it and give it tangible form. You create something that you can touch and see. On the other hand, a goal or objective that is not in writing is merely a wish or a fantasy. It has no energy behind it. Unwritten goals lead to confusion, vagueness, misdirection and numerous mistakes.

Step Three: Set a deadline on your goal. Set sub-deadlines if necessary.

A goal or decision without a deadline has no urgency. It has no real beginning or end. Without a definite deadline accompanied by the assignment or acceptance of specific responsibilities for completion, you will naturally procrastinate and get very little done.

Step Four: Make a list of everything that you can think of that you are going to have to do to achieve your goal.

As you think of new activities, add them to your list. Keep building your list until it is complete. A list gives you a visual picture of the larger task or objective. It gives you a track to run on. It dramatically increases the likelihood that you will achieve your goal as you have defined it and on schedule.

Step Five: Organize the list into a plan.

Organize your list by *priority* and *sequence*. Take a few minutes to decide what you need to do first and what you can do later. Decide what has to be done before something else and what needs to be done afterwards. Even better, lay out your plan visually, in the form of a series of boxes and circles on a sheet of paper, with lines and arrows showing the relationship of each task to each other task. You'll be amazed at how much easier it is to achieve your goal when you break it down into individual tasks.

With a written goal and an organized plan of action, you will be far more productive and efficient than someone who is carrying his goals around in his mind.

Step Six: Take action on your plan immediately.

Do something. Do anything. An average plan vigorously executed is far better than a brilliant plan on which nothing is done. For you to achieve any kind of success, execution is everything.

Step Seven: Resolve to do something every single day that moves you toward your major goal.

Build this activity into your daily schedule. You may read a specific number of pages on a key subject. You could call on a specific number of prospects or customers. You can engage in a specific period of physical exercise. You can learn a certain number of new words in a foreign language. Whatever it is, you must never miss a day.

Keep pushing forward. Once you start moving, keep moving. Don't stop. This decision, this discipline alone, can dramatically increase your speed of goal accomplishment and boost your personal productivity.

The Power of Written Goals

Clear written goals have a wonderful effect on your thinking. They motivate you and galvanize you into action. They stimulate your creativity, release your energy and help you to overcome procrastination as much as any other factor.

Goals are the fuel in the furnace of achievement. The bigger your goals and the clearer they are, the more excited you become about achieving them. The more you think about your goals, the greater becomes your inner drive and desire to accomplish them.

Think about your goals and review them daily. Every morning when you begin, take action on the most important task you can accomplish to achieve your most important goal at the moment.

Eat That Frog!

1. Take a clean sheet of paper right now and make out a list of ten goals you want to accomplish in the next year. Write your goals as though a year has already passed and they are now a reality. Use the present tense, positive and personal case so that they are immediately accepted by your subconscious mind.

For example, you would write. "I earn X number of dollars per year." Or "I weigh X number of pounds." Or "I drive such and such a car."

2. Review your list of ten goals and select the one goal that, if you achieved it, would have the greatest positive impact on your life. Whatever that goal is, write it on a separate sheet of paper, set a deadline, make a plan, take action on your plan and then do something every single day that moves you toward that goal. This exercise alone could change your life!