

NEITHER SNOW NOR RAIN NOR HEAT

How to Get What You Want
Through the
Power of Persistence

Tom Terrific

Browitt and Coffman Publishing
Copyright © 2008
The Tom Terrific Company LLC

www.lettercarrier.us

Neither Snow - Nor Rain - Nor Heat

How to Get What You Want
Through the Power of Persistence

Copyright © 2008
The Tom Terrific Company LLC

Published by
Browitt and Coffman Publishing

<http://www.lettercarrier.us>

All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system now known or hereafter invented, without written permission from the publisher, Browitt and Coffman Publishing, except for the inclusion of brief quotations in a review.

ISBN 978-0-9725970-2-9

To order this book visit the website at www.lettercarrier.us

Special thanks go to my friends who have helped in the preparation of this book:

Gerry Puglisi and Patricia Corrigan

Introduction

The Postal Service and letter carriers are frequently the subjects of jokes and negative comments. David Letterman once said, "Have you heard that the Postal Service has a new slogan? Nobody moves, nobody gets hurt." Jay Leno said this on his show: "Bugs Bunny has become the first cartoon character ever on a U.S. Postal stamp. You'd think the first cartoon character on a stamp would've been Elmer Fudd, don't you think? He's disgruntled, short-tempered, and carries a gun." There's even a term now, "Going Postal," for anyone who goes wacky and starts shooting people.

The other negative phrase we have to deal with is "snail mail." It's not the U.S. mail anymore. It's "snail mail."

Still, almost everyone admires the carrier for his/her allegiance to the unofficial Carrier Code – "Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor dark of night shall stop this carrier from the completion of his appointed rounds."

Carrier Code

**Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat,
nor dark of night,
shall stop this carrier from the
completion of his appointed rounds.**

Imagine it's 100 degrees outside. The heat index makes it feel like 120 degrees. The tar is bubbling up in the streets. The humidity is so bad, it feels like you stepped into a steam room.

The radio stations are blaring the heat alert. "Don't go outside! Five people have died in the heat this week. Try to find some air-conditioned place to stay during the day."

That sounds plain enough to me. There's no equivocation, no question. It's just too hot to be working outside. Yet, who do you find pounding the sweltering pavement? Who is out there getting the job done? Who is walking up those blast furnace concrete steps to take care of customers? – the letter carrier.

Have you ever been outside when the wind chill is 50 degrees below zero? I have – delivering the mail. It's so cold, you put on every conceivable piece of clothing you can find, including goggles to cover your eyes and glasses. It's so cold, you don't stop all day long for fear you might cool down and freeze. No lunch, no breaks, just move as fast as you can or risk becoming a piece of frozen sculpture on the Johnson's lawn.

Sounds a bit dramatic, doesn't it? I'm sure you realize that on most days it's neither a sizzling 120 degrees nor an arctic -50 degrees. It's somewhere in between. But every single day, whether it's hot, cold or in-between, I'm out there delivering the mail and getting the job done. I'm proud to be a carrier.

What's great about our motto is the dogged determination and perseverance that it demonstrates day after day. A determination to get the job done – no matter what – to do whatever it takes to accomplish our mission.

This is what this book is all about – persistence and determination.

So, if you're ready to take charge,
if you're ready to get the job done, no matter what,
if you're ready to be a carrier and not a bystander,
then say the "Carrier Code" to yourself every day.
Make it your mantra, your belief, your philosophy.

(I've changed it slightly to make it more personal.)

"Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor dark of night, shall
stop this carrier from the completion of my appointed
rounds."

Carrier Code

**Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat,
nor dark of night,
shall stop this carrier from the
completion of my appointed rounds.**

Cut out this card and carry it with you,
or put it in a place where you can
see it every day.

Table of Contents

<i>Chapter 1 – The Letter and Envelope</i>	9
<i>Life is Like a Letter</i>	9
<i>The Envelope</i>	11
<i>Chapter 2 – The Return Address</i>	15
<i>Who Am I and Where Am I Now?</i>	15
<i>Return Address</i>	17
<i>You're Only a Mailman</i>	19
<i>F.E.A.R. – Former Events And Records</i>	21
<i>Get Off the Beaten Path</i>	25
<i>Tell Them What They Want to Hear</i>	27
<i>Que Sera Sera</i>	29
<i>Invictus</i>	31
<i>Chapter 3 – The Address</i>	35
<i>Where Do You Want to Go?</i>	35
<i>There's Just Got to be More Than This</i>	37
<i>You Can't Have It All</i>	41
<i>Focus</i>	45
<i>Kaizen – Secret of the Little Win</i>	47
<i>Is It Realistic?</i>	51
<i>Mission Statement</i>	55
<i>Chapter 4 – The Postage</i>	59
<i>The Price You Pay</i>	59
<i>Key #1 – Motivation</i>	61
<i>Do You Want It Bad?</i>	65
<i>Wanting It is Not Enough</i>	67
<i>The Idea Planner</i>	69
<i>Idea Planner Sections</i>	74
<i>List Making</i>	77
<i>The Sam Walton Technique</i>	81
<i>The 13-Month Year</i>	85
<i>Calendar Planning</i> 101	89
<i>Turn Off the TV</i>	97
<i>You Don't Have To Be Everyone's Friend</i>	99
<i>It's Okay to LIE, Sometimes!</i>	103
<i>Just Say "No"</i>	107

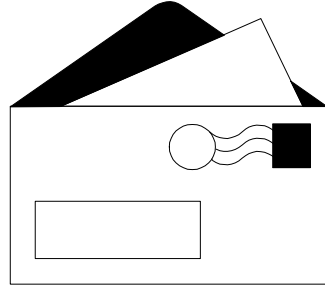
<i>The 6-P Rule</i>	109
<i>JUNTO</i>	115
<i>One Step at a Time</i>	119
<i>The Follow Through</i>	121
<i>No Free Lunch</i>	123
<i>It's Not My Fault</i>	127
<i>Roadblocks and Detours</i>	131
<i>Help Wanted</i>	133
 Chapter 5 – When Do You Start and Arrive?	135
<i>Actions Speak Louder Than Words</i>	137
<i>Do It Now!</i>	141
<i>How Long Do You Keep Trying?</i>	147
<i>It's Never Too Late</i>	151
 Chapter 6 – Letters Delivered	153
<i>Don't Say No – Say Maybe</i>	155
<i>Private Otis Williams Jr.</i>	163
<i>World Champion of Public Speaking</i>	165
<i>I Wanna Peanut</i>	169
<i>Lessons from the Bunny Slope</i>	173
<i>Worst Speaker in the World</i>	177
<i>What are the Odds?</i>	181
<i>The Doug Blevins Story</i>	183
<i>When Is Enough – Enough?</i>	189
<i>Five Minutes Per Day</i>	191
 Chapter 7 – After the Letter is Delivered	193
<i>It's the Trip, Not the Destination</i>	193
<i>Making a Difference</i>	197
<i>Parable of the Talents</i>	199

Chapter 1

The Letter & Envelope

Life is Like a Letter

I'd like to start with an exercise. Pretend you're a letter. (I know it sounds silly, but give it a try anyway). Visualize yourself as a letter and repeat, "I am a letter, I am a letter."



First, Second or Third Class

First you have to ask the question, "What type of letter am I?"

Am I First Class? – standing proud and tall and on top of the heap.

Am I Second Class? – I'm okay, but certainly nothing special.
Or

Am I Third Class? – the dreaded junk mail.

Usually most of us rate ourselves in the Second or Third Class, never really expecting First Class service. Even if we do get First Class, we know it's just a fluke, because we're really just a 3rd Class person. And we know what happens to 3rd Class; it ends up in the trash can of life.

Oh, we wish that we were First Class. We'd give anything to be First Class, like those other successful people out there but, well, those are just dreams.

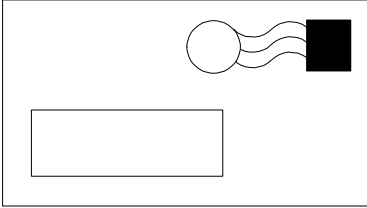
The trick to becoming First Class is to start thinking First Class, start acting First Class and start believing in yourself as a First Class individual.

Repeat it every day, every hour, over and over,
Make it your mantra.

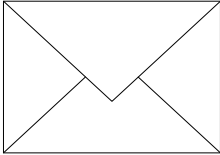
“I am First Class. I am First Class. I am First Class.”

The Envelope

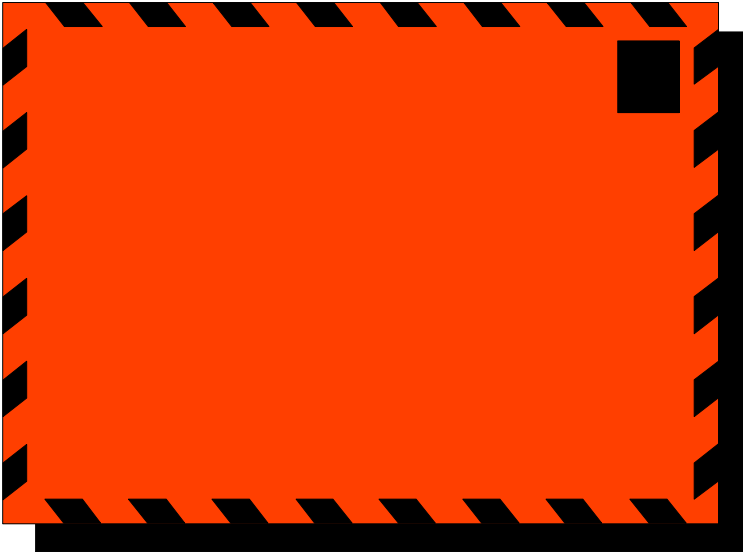
The envelope is your physical body.



You can be a regular #10 business envelope.



You can be a petite party envelope.



You can be a large, bulky, 11 x 16 packing envelope.

I used to think the choice of envelope was up to you. What I've learned over the years, with an ever-increasing waist size, is that no matter how many miles you walk (and I've walked more than 30,000 miles as a mailman), you're somewhat limited in your choice of envelopes.

If your parents were petite party envelopes, chances are you'll never play center in the NBA. If your parents were both 11 x 16's, chances are, you'll never be a ballerina in Swan Lake. And wishing it were so will only make you miserable. But you can celebrate your "envelope" as unique and special to you.

Here's what you can do. Take your envelope and decorate it; spiff it up. Use a little color here and there. Put on some colorful Gucci postage. Pull in the corners, tighten up. Design your own special envelope that is uniquely yours.

As Leo Buscaglia says, "If you've got fat thighs, celebrate your fat thighs and just wait until you find a fat-thigh lover."

I was explaining my theory of body size to a friend. I was telling her how some people got Ford and Chevy bodies. Some of us got small foreign sports car bodies – sleek and fast. And some of us just got pickup truck bodies.

I thought my explanation was encouraging, but then she asked, "But what if you've got an eighteen wheeler!" I answered, "Hey, there are some great looking eighteen wheelers on the road."

The important thing to remember is that you are not your body. You're interconnected. You can't function without it, but "YOU" are not your body. Take care of it, love it, protect it, decorate it, but realize that the envelope is NOT the most important part of a letter.

There are many good books about taking care of your body –

read them. Act on them. Every week try to improve your body's form and function.

If your body is not running well, you won't run well either.

If your envelope gets damaged and torn and worn, then your letter gets even harder to deliver.

Note: As I get older, it becomes increasingly clear to me how important it is to take care of my envelope – my body. I exercise, take vitamins and supplements, and eat healthy food.

See www.WebMD.com for some great health tips and newsletters.

If I knew I was going to live this long,
I'd have taken better care of myself.

– *Mickey Mantle*

Chapter 2

The Return Address

Who Am I and Where Am I Now?

**Tom Terrific
401 Maple Lane Apt #22
San Antonio TX 78239-3452**

**My Specific Goal
That "I" Want to Accomplish
By a Certain Date**

Throughout my life I've asked the question, "Who am I?" many times. I've seen myself as a professional basketball player, scientist, priest, monk, stock market analyst, soldier, accountant, Scout leader, musician and other things.

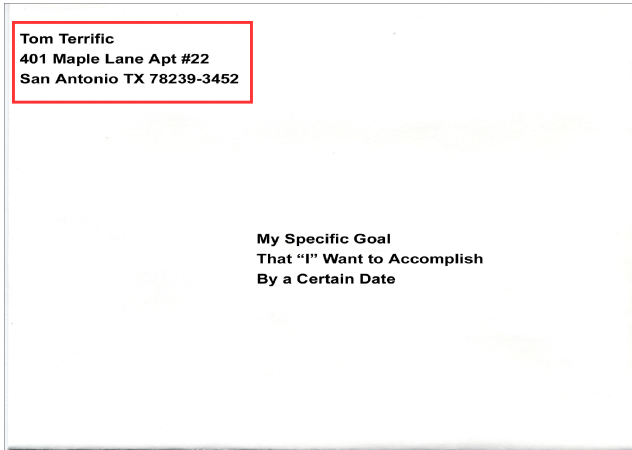
When I was in Vietnam in 1970, I was a forward observer. As an artillery officer I went out with an infantry platoon and whenever they needed artillery support, I would call on my radio and get the artillery to fire.

What's extremely important in this situation is first to know where you are, because you certainly didn't want to make a mistake and have your own artillery fire on your position. (That happened once to me.)

So when we were flown into a new position in helicopters, you would know generally where you should be landing, but not exactly. And the moment we landed, my job was to figure out precisely where we were. Using a compass, a map and landmarks, I could usually figure out our position.

The trick to getting what you want is to first find out who you are and where you are.

Return Address



In the upper left-hand corner of the envelope is the return address. Many people don't write this down. They don't think it's important. They are more interested in where they're going than where they are right now.

But if you run into problems, you need to know how to get back home, and where home is in the first place.

Sometimes in mail processing, the "send to" address gets smudged or torn off and although it's not your fault, things don't work out. Your envelope may even get mutilated and torn one day. Then the return address becomes very important.

If there's not one on the envelope, the letter goes to the "dead letter" department.

When there are problems, you've got to know how to get back home.

Your return address in a short and quick way defines who and what you are, your beliefs, your character, and how to get back home. It could be your own special spiritual self, but you've got to stay in touch with "IT," to know how to handle tough times.

Just as I needed to know where I was when I landed in the Vietnam jungles, so you need to know where you are, right here and right now.

Whole books have been written about this process of discovery, so I won't try to redo their work.

Sometimes it takes a lifetime to discovery who and where you are. Whatever your answer may be, accept it, understand it, but also realize that it's just a starting point and you can go almost anywhere you can imagine.

You're Only a Mailman

One day I was having lunch with one of the top advertising men in America. This man has worked with all the big clients: Anheuser-Busch, Ralston Purina, Westinghouse, Red Lobster, Southwestern Bell, etc. I talked to him for two and a half hours. I showed him my newsletter and one of my business cards and he looked at the name of my company, which at the time I called "Speaking Of Success," and he said, "Success? How can you talk about success?"

You're only a mailman."



Speaking of
Success

To hear that comment could be disconcerting. Nobody wants to be only a mailman or only a housewife or only a waiter. And it would have bothered me, except that I know something that he's forgotten.

My personal success has little to do with money or position or status. My success has to do with how I feel about myself.

Some of the most unhappy and insecure people are those in the entertainment industry. People like Elvis Presley, Marilyn Monroe, John Belushi, were all very talented, all with big bank accounts. They all had adoring fans and they all dead of drug overdoses. They were very successful in the worldly sense, but sadly unsuccessful in finding personal fulfillment.

You can make \$1 million dollars a year and be a failure, or you can make \$10 thousand a year and be a success. Now I'm not knocking money. As the old joke says, "I've been rich and I've been poor, and rich is definitely better." Financial security may even be one of your goals, but money doesn't buy happiness. In fact, it may not even buy security. One of Murphy's Laws is, "The more you make, the more you spend."

My definition of success is this:

Success is the progressive achievement of a goal you have set for yourself. It's not a goal that's set by your parents or friends or next door neighbors. It's a goal you want to achieve.

Many people spend their life climbing the ladder of success, only to find out that when they when get to the top, the ladder is leaning against the wrong building. People climb the corporate ladder, but find it's lonely up there by themselves. Make sure you're climbing the right ladder before you start your ascent. Make sure you are the one who defines where you're going.

Success can be many things. It can be building self-esteem and self-confidence. Success can be making new friends or raising a family. Success can be leading a Scout Troop. Success requires a personal definition.

Please don't play the "comparison game," because you'll always lose. Success is not what you do compared to what somebody else does. Success is what you do compared to what you want to do. Comparison can be a deadly no-win game, because there's always someone out there who is more talented, has more money and is better looking than you. Only compare yourself with yourself. Are you doing better this week? Are you making some progress? That's all that counts.

Success for Tom Terrific has nothing to do with status or power or money. My success is in fulfilling my personal mission statement “LIGHTS – Life/Love, Insight, Growth, Health, Truth/Time and Sharing.”

I am a success at achieving those goals.

Let me ask you.

Are you a success?

How do you define success?

F.E.A.R.

Former Events And Records

As a Toastmaster with more than twenty years speaking experience, on some of my days off, I help individuals and corporations with presentation skills. One day, I helped train ten account reps and product engineers, (salesmen for those of you uninitiated into the jargon).

The class was a one-day format, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.. Lunch and breaks totaled one and a half hours, so that left only five and a half hours to work with the group. One and a half hours of that time was spent in video taping their speeches and evaluating performances. That left only four hours to teach them presentation skills.

What's ironic is they were all excellent at "private" speaking, talking one to one. We did several communication exercises in the class in which each person practiced speaking to a partner. They were marvelous talking one-on-one. They were moving their arms, smiling, gesturing, using vocal variety.

Yet when each student gave their "formal" presentation, standing up in front of the other members of the class, they were all stiff and unsmiling, and as a result, boring and ineffective.

Fear had changed their natural openness and talent into a stiff and bland response.

Then finally the light bulb lit up!

It came to me that what I needed to do, was not teach them how to communicate, they already knew how to do that. My job was to help them overcome their fear; the barrier that stifled their natural communication.

Unfortunately, that's impossible to do in one day. We've been conditioned over years and it takes time to overcome that

fear response. What it means, on their part, is a real commitment to change and continual working to improve their attitude and performance over an extended period of time.

Corporate America's philosophy seems to be the, "McCorporate" Instant Gratification – Quick Fix. Make it, mend it, master it, this afternoon.

That may explain why so many one-day seminars are so popular. I received one Presentation Skills brochure which proudly stated, "No person will be embarrassed by having to stand in front of the group and speak."

How in the world are you going to improve then?
Speaking is not an intellectual exercise.
Speaking is a natural process only limited by fear.

My acronym for FEAR is this:
Former Events And Records.

We've accumulated years of Former Events And Records, years of rejection, ridicule and negative self-talk that are the basis of our present behavior.

I can still remember a speech I gave in high school. It was a social studies report that I had worked on for hours. When I finished giving the speech, one of the popular girls said that she had counted my ahs. There were 156 ahs in the speech. I was mortified.

Do you think I will ever forget that experience? I'm almost sixty years old and it's still with me! I'll never forget it. It will always be there.

So why then am I a successful speaker? Because I have reprogrammed my brain, with success, optimistic thoughts, and a positive record of achievement over a long period. I do have that one small record of failure, but I've overwhelmed it

with hundreds of records of achievement.

One analogy is to compare your mind to a computer. It can compute, calculate, and store data. The brain has a super fast microprocessor and a hard disk of gigantic proportions. The trick is to fill that hard disk with programs of success and accomplishment. Failures of the past are still on the hard disk, you can't delete them, but they can be minimized and overwhelmed with the new success programs.

When my son Joel was young, I used to take him swimming at the local pool. He enjoyed playing in the baby pool, but somehow developed a fear of the big pool. I could have talked and tried to reason with him for years, but he wouldn't have changed his mind. So I would sit on the steps in the shallow end of the big pool and invite him over. He finally would play on the steps and then, as he became more confident, he would venture one step at a time out into the deeper water. You know the end of the story; he did learn to swim and love the water. After that, he saw the other kids jumping off the diving board, and he knew that this was the next step to take.

What's exciting about your journey is you can reprogram your old computer with new thoughts – one small step at a time. You don't go into the "big" pool until you're comfortable in the baby pool. You don't go into the deep water until you feel comfortable in the shallow water. You don't jump off the board until you can swim. It's all a step-by-step, slow and easy process that will take you as far as you want to go.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt said, "We have nothing to fear, but fear itself." That statement is only partially true if we allow ourselves to be paralyzed by that fear. If we're willing to acknowledge our fear, but still take one small step on a regular and continuous basis, we will succeed beyond our wildest dreams.

F.E.A.R.

Former Events And Records

What are you afraid of right now?

What's holding you back?
What are your
Former Events And Records?

What small action steps can you take
to conquer your fear?

1.

2.

3.

Get Off the Beaten Path

I was delivering the mail one day and noticed a young woman walking her dog, a cocker spaniel. The dog didn't have a leash attached, and whenever the dog stopped to investigate anything or turn to get off the sidewalk, the young woman yelled, "Get back over here!" and kicked the dog.

Well, you can guess the dog's reaction. The poor spaniel cowered and whimpered and crept back onto the sidewalk. They walked up the street a little more, and the dog once more veered off the path. The woman again yelled and kicked the dog. By this time, I was thinking, "Maybe I should call the Humane Society." Fortunately, it didn't take much longer and the dog was walking up the sidewalk, straight as can be, never daring to get off the beaten path.

Have you ever wondered why they call it the beaten path? Maybe, it's because every time you get off the path, you get beaten. That was certainly true of this dog.

Another problem people have, is in trying to keep their dog in their yard. People spend thousands of dollars on fences and even buy expensive electronic buried cable that will shock the dog if it leaves the yard. It's not necessary! One patron on my route has a dog that never ventures outside the yard. It doesn't have a fence or any special buried electronic cable. Here's what he did. When the dog was young and it tried to leave the yard, the owner hit it with a rolled-up newspaper. Leave the yard – HIT. Leave the yard – HIT. Leave the yard – HIT. Hit, Hit, Hit, Hit. It only took a few beatings to teach that dog not to venture out of the yard.

Unfortunately, you and I might have had quite a few similar situations. We've been down the beaten path, and when we veer off to the right or left, what happens?

We get yelled at, verbally abused, and maybe even hit.

It doesn't take us too long to figure out, that to be accepted by our peer group, teachers, family or business, we must walk down the straight and narrow path, never venturing to the right or the left.

The same holds true for taking chances in life. Often we want to leave our home base, our yard, and try something new. But every time we do, we get hurt; we're made fun of; we get hit, hit, and hit again. We finally learn it's safer to just stay home, and not venture out into new and uncharted territory.

Many of us miss opportunities. We miss new ideas. We even miss living life itself because we're stuck on the beaten path. We're afraid to veer right or left. We're afraid we might get beaten, not physically this time, but verbally and emotionally beaten. We are stuck in our comfort zone, our own back yard and we're scared to leave. Who you are and where you are, may be answered, "I'm stuck on the beaten path."

Note - I recently did a program for women prisoners who train dogs for disabled people. They only use rewards, like food and praise, when they initially train their dogs. There are no corrections for making mistakes when the dogs are exploring or trying new behaviors. Only after a dog is trained into the right behavior will it be corrected for the wrong behavior.

Part of their reasoning is that they don't want the dog to be afraid to try new behaviors and learn new tasks. If the dogs are afraid of being corrected, then they will be less likely to try something new.

If it works for dogs, might it not be a good strategy for people too?

Tell Them What They Want to Hear

My cousin Bob, tells a story of when he was six years old and it was getting time for him to make his first confession. The problem was that his next door neighbor was an old salty dog seaman type, who had taught little Bobby to cuss like seaman. Now in the Catholic church, confession is taken rather seriously, so little Bobby got out his big sheet of paper and pencil and started figuring out, how many times he had used curse words. First, he figured out how many times he cussed in an hour, then how many times in a day, then how many times in a week, a month and a year and then a total for his six years of speech. He finally gets his turn to go into the confessional and says, "Bless me Father for I have sinned, this is my first confession. I have cursed 6,789 times."

The priest goes, "WHAT! Young man confession is a sacrament. Get out of here and don't come back until you're ready to make a proper confession." Little Bobby left the confessional, knees shaking, and upset. He sees all the other kids go in and out without any seeming problem. Finally, he decides to go back in. He says, "Bless me Father for I have sinned, this is my first confession. I cursed three times." The priest says, "That's a great confession. Say two Our Fathers and two Hail Marys."

That's when Bob says he learned his first lesson of adulthood. "Tell them what they want to hear!"

Unfortunately, most of us never unlearn those type of experiences. We go through life, telling EVERYONE what they want to hear. We try to please everyone, try to accommodate everyone, until we don't really know what's true and what's false.

The first trick you need to learn is to listen to yourself, recognize the truth as best you can see it and not be afraid to share the message.

Who you are, is not defined by what other people say.
Who you are, is defined by you.
What do you think? What do you say? What do you believe?
Most of us really don't know.

Irving Wallace says, "To be oneself, and unafraid whether right or wrong, is more admirable than the easy cowardice of surrender to conformity."
Don't surrender yourself, don't surrender your ideas.

To be one's self, and unafraid whether right
or wrong, is more admirable than the easy
cowardice of surrender to conformity

- *Irving Wallace.*

Telling Two Our Fathers and two Hail Marys is easy.
Telling the truth to yourself and others is hard.

Que Sera Sera

Whatever Will be Will be

Let's start off with part of a song by the noted philosopher, Doris Day. Que Sera Sera. Please sing along:

When I was just a little girl, I asked my mother what will I be?

Will I be pretty? Will I be rich? Here's what she said to me.

Que Sera Sera, whatever will be, will be.

The future's not ours to see, Que Sera Sera.

What will be will be.

While some of you may snicker and smirk at the notion that Doris Day is a philosopher, apparently some people, in fact many people have taken this philosophy to heart. They believe in Que Sera Sera. They believe that their lives are controlled by outside factors. There's no use trying to better oneself and in fact you shouldn't even try.

The caste system in India was built on the assumption that who you were born to was infinitely more important than what you did or became in life. The law of Karma said you were born to a certain caste for a reason and you should not only obey the laws of the caste, but shouldn't marry or in some cases even talk to members of another group. They not only said, "What will be, will be," they said, "What should be, should be."

Certainly the slavery of the United States was a Que Sera Sera situation. Slaves were told to "know their place," and were whipped if the owner found out they were trying to learn to read.

The astrology books and newspaper columns tell us that our lives are controlled by the stars and the planets. In our library there are 164 books, tapes and videos that purport to show us that who we are is based on the fact that the moons of Saturn were rising in the east at the moment of our birth.

In the way of current research, I did a “Que Sera Sera Survey” with my Toastmaster friends. Here’s what some of them said.

- “I firmly believe that it really doesn’t matter what I say.”
- “What will be will be.”
- “God causes all things good and bad.”
- “How much of my life do I control? None.”
- “I believe you can appear to prolong life, but if you cheat death, it’s because it wasn’t your time to die after all.”

So it’s obvious that Que Sera Sera is still alive and well, at least with a few individuals.

This Que Sera Sera question became a burning irritation to me because of a couple of conversations I had with friends. One of my friends, Lou, had a heart attack when he was fifty-four and he was off for an extended period of time. When he finally came back, I went over to talk to him and I was kidding him about his new diet. I said, “Well, I guess you’ve really changed your diet haven’t you. No more bacon and eggs, now all you’ll see is fiber, fruit and vegetables.” Lou’s response really floored me. He said, “No, I’m not changing anything about my diet. You know, when it’s your time to go, it’s your time to go.”

(Note – Lou died about two years later.)

Talking to another friend of mine, John, I was kidding him about gaining a few pounds and I said, “It looks like it’s time to get on that Nordic Track and get in shape. You’ve got to take care of that heart you know.” His response was just the same as Lou’s. He said, “I’m not worried about it. When your time’s up, your time’s up.” Again, his response was dumbfounding. I didn’t know what to say.

This is the classic Que Sera Sera philosophy taken to its extreme. They won’t even take care of their health, because they feel they don’t have any control. This whole book is

Chapter 2 – The Return Address

about making decision and choices which will change your life. Hopefully, you've decided that Doris Day and her Que Sera Sera philosophy is not for you.

Invictus

On the opposite side of the spectrum are those individuals who believe that they are in control of everything. Nothing can stop them. Nothing can hurt them.

One motivational speaker says, "No one can hurt you without your consent."

William Ernest Henley wrote a poem titled *Invictus* which espouses this philosophy.

*Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be,
For my unconquerable soul.*

*In the fell clutch of circumstance,
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance,
My head is bloody, but unbowed.*

*Beyond this place of wrath and tears,
Looms but the horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years,
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.*

*It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul.*

This person sounds like one tough cookie. You not only don't cry out, you don't even wince. This may have been original idea for the Rambo movies, the tough but silent type.

One noted cartoonist believes that he has so much control that by just using the power of affirmations he can change the future, and pick winning stocks.

Probably most of you, like me, are somewhere in between the two extremes. We realize that while we can't control everything, but we can control SOME things.

(You can hum “We Shall Overcome” while you read this part.)

When I grew up in the early sixties, our generation just knew that we could change the world. As I grew older and wiser, my view narrowed a bit to changing the state of Missouri and if not Missouri, then certainly St. Louis. As I aged, I focused even smaller. I could change my neighborhood, my friends, well, at least I could change my spouse. And then after I'd gone through a divorce, I finally realized that the only person I can change, the only person I have ANY control over is myself.

Just recently this issue of control came up in our local post office. A letter carrier's twenty year old son died in a one-car accident. He was thrown from the car and pinned beneath the wreckage. If he had been in control driving his car and secondly taken control by putting on his seat belt, he would probably be alive today.

I also find it interesting that the only person who lived through the car wreck of Diana, Princess of Wales, was the body guard who was wearing a seat belt. One quote from the newspaper says, “The rear portion of the car's passenger compartment seems to have survived so nearly intact that the accident might have been survivable for rear seat passengers wearing seat belts.” Diana might be alive today if she had just taken this small measure of control and buckled her seat belt.

I realize that some accidents are unavoidable, but you can take some control by driving defensively and buckling your seat belt.

The question you need to ask yourself now is this:
Who's in control of my life?

Your answer should be, "I am – at least partially."

I take control of the things under my power.

I take control of my body.

I take control of my career.

I take control of my free time.

I take control of my life.

I do what I can, when I can, and

I accept responsibility for my life.

I said I was the greatest
before I knew it was true.

– *Muhammad Ali*

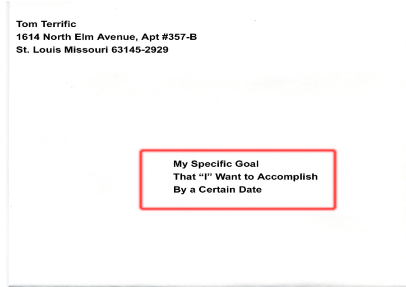
Chapter 3

The Address

Where Do You Want to Go?

Once you've decided to start the letter writing process, you need to consider where exactly you want to go.

Mark Victor Hansen says, "Most people don't know what they want, but they're pretty sure they haven't got it."



Unfortunately, this is the way many of us live. We're like Alice in Wonderland. Alice comes to a fork in the road. She looks up in the tree and there's the Cheshire cat. Alice asks, "Which road should I take?" He says, "Where are you going?" Alice answers, "I don't know." He says, "Then it makes no difference which road you take."

A lot of times, we're like Alice, wandering from one path to the next. We go wherever the next bend in the road takes us. When we end up in a dead end, or a place where the scenery is dull and boring, we wonder how we got there in the first place.

They're living a life, but they don't seem to be living "THE LIFE," that they would like to live.

When you finally do come up with an address, you need to be very careful. You need to take your time.

Is your address typed out clearly and distinctly, or is it just hastily scrawled down, almost as if you didn't care?

If the Post Office can't decipher your mailing address, then the odds are you won't achieve your destination.

You also need to be as specific as possible, when you address your letter. It's not good enough to just say Elm Ave. You need to specify, 1614 North Elm Avenue, Apartment #357-B, St. Louis Missouri, 63145-2929. You need to be as detailed as possible for you to reach your destination.

Zig Ziglar says, "Don't be a Wandering Generality, be a Meaningful Specific."

Don't be a wandering generality, be
a meaningful specific.

- Zig Ziglar

If you
have a goal, an address, make it as accurate and definitive as possible.

You can start with a general goal, like becoming more educated, but then you need to make it more specific. I'm going to take English 101 at the local Junior College this coming semester.

Have a general goal of building self-confidence, but then have the specific goal of joining a local Toastmaster's club this week.

You get the idea.

You can't go anywhere, unless you have somewhere specific you want to go.

What's the specific address you want to reach?
Don't use general terms, be as precise as possible.

Chapter 3–The Address

There's Just Got to be More Than This

One day as I stood by the time clock waiting to punch out, Frank, a young twenty-five years old carrier, made the comment, "There's just got to be more than this."

I immediately knew what he meant.

There's got to be more to life than just delivering the mail.

There's got to be more to life than earning a paycheck.

There's got to be more to life than punching in at 7:00 a.m. and out at 3:30 p.m.

Frank is a young, single, unattached bachelor with time on his hands. Living in an apartment with no one to answer to, he can do almost anything he wants. He has a lifestyle many might envy, yet for him it's a personal hell. He has no goal, no direction and no clue which way to look.

I, of course, tried to lend him my wisdom, but it did no good.

I realized then that I couldn't give Frank his answer.

I realized that I couldn't even point him in the right direction. He had to find both his direction and his final goal – not an easy task.

Ben Franklin has a great quote about advice. He says, "Never give advice. Wise men don't need it and fools won't heed it." It certainly seems to be true in this case.

I've got a different mailman friend who's close to fifty years young. He's successful in life, with a nice family and a good job. He recently started playing basketball again after many years. The people he plays with are usually twenty or more years younger than him, so it's quite challenging to keep up athletically. Talking to his wife about the experience, she said, "John changed after playing basketball. It's all he talks

about for days after the game. He's positively energized by the experience.

He's started a training program and is running with ankle weights to get into shape." She says, "He has a reason to be."

The difference in my two mailman friends is striking. One is morose, sullen and never has a good word to say. My basketball-driven friend is positive, smiling and always there with a kind word. The difference is having a goal, having a reason to get up every morning, something to look forward to.

In basketball, there is never any question about what you're trying to do – put the ball in the net. Your goal is to swish the net as many times as possible and get a high score.

Wouldn't the game be different though, if they took away the net? How much fun would there be in playing the game? Just imagine--you go to the gymnasium, put on your gym clothes, get a basketball and dribble out to the floor, but there's no net! You could throw the ball up and pretend that there was a net, but you wouldn't know how you were doing. You couldn't keep score. How long would you be willing to play that game? Probably not for very long.

I think that same scenario is how most of us live. We get up, put on our uniform, go out onto the playing floor, with our basketball, but we don't see the net. We either never put one up or we're blinded and can't see it. As a result we get bored, lazy and find life a little dull. There's no way to keep score.

I'm not suggesting that "basketball" is the answer to all of life's problems. But I will suggest that having a goal, any goal, can keep you going even under the toughest circumstances.

In the movie “City Slickers,” Billy Crystal is getting advice from Jack Palance.

Jack Palance: “Do you know what the secret of life is?”

“No, what?” says Billy.

Jack holds up his index finger. “This.”

Billy questions, “Your finger?”

Jack answers, “One thing. Just one thing.”

“You stick to that and everything else don't mean shit.”

Billy replies, “but what's the one thing?”

Jack says, “That's what you've got to figure out.”

That's what you've got to figure out also.

I was reading the paper recently and I noticed an article about men who collect vacuum cleaners.

My mind wanted to scoff and ridicule such an absurd idea, except that I'm sure they'd do the same for some of my interests. It really doesn't matter what you're interested in – just as long as you've got something to hold your interest. For some people it's a vacuum cleaner, for others it's gardening.

Dr. Victor Frankl was a prisoner in the concentration camps during World War II. He tells of his experiences in the book, *Man's Search for Meaning*. He noticed that those men, who did survive the starvation and torture, did so when they had a purpose for their existence. The survivors who lived through Dachau and Auschwitz, about one in twenty, all had something they wanted to do; a family member they wanted to see again, a goal they had to achieve. Even wanting to bring their captors to justice drove them on. Their purpose, their goal, kept them alive, kept them going.

What goal are you shooting for?

What's your secret “one thing?”

You Can't Have It All

Two business articles I've read talked about two very rich men. One is the late Sam Walton, whose Wal-Mart stores are now the largest retailer in America and in 1990 had sales of \$26 billion. The other person is Kim Woo-Choong, whose Daewoo conglomerate of Korea had sales of \$25 billion in 1993.

Both men had very similar philosophies, at least in one respect. They were both workaholics.

Kim says, "Daewoo workers don't work from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.. They work from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m." That's twice as many hours as the average workday!

Sam Walton was famous for his Saturday morning meetings with executives and associates. These meetings were not optional. Sure, your son or daughter has a baseball game, but sorry, Wal-Mart is more important.

Sam Walton, in his book, *Made in America*, finally starts to question this all-consuming work ethic. He wonders if he was right leaving his family so many times and requiring other people to work on Wal-Mart projects, rather than being with their families.

I have another friend, a mailman, who's willing to pay the price to be rich. He's so tight that, in winter, he only heats one room of the house and he heats that with a kerosene heater. In summer, after working outside all day in the ferocious heat, when he goes home, he won't turn on the air conditioner. I'm sure his bank account is a lot larger than mine, but I also know he's experienced a lot more discomfort than I have. He's made the choice of being rich versus being comfortable.

The point is, You Can't Have It All!
You can have some of what you want.
You can have this or you can have that, but

YOU CAN'T HAVE IT ALL.

Twenty years ago I abandoned the corporate world. Although I had a B.S. in Finance and had invested two years of my life in accounting, I deserted my ideas of making it rich in the stock market. I looked for a simpler, easier and less complicated line of work. I became a mailman.

As a mailman, I was off at 2:30 p.m. and able to take care of my son when he got out of school. I was also able to be a Den Leader in Cub Scouts and later a Cub Master, and Scoutmaster in Boy Scouts. In other words, I had time to be involved with my son in the activities that he enjoyed. I was able to explore my other creative outlets like guitar, gardening and public speaking. I made a choice more than twenty years ago, that my lifestyle was more important to me than becoming rich.

As Tom Peters, the author of *In Search of Excellence*, says,

**You can't have it all. Somewhere,
somehow, something has got to give.**
— *Tom Peters*

ave it all. Somewhere, somehow, something has got to give."

David Ogilvy, an advertising guru, wrote in his book, *Confessions of an Ad Man*, "If you stay home and tend your gardens and spend time with your children, I will love you

more as a human being. Don't expect, however, to be the first person promoted in your group."

And if what I've said is true of men, multiply it by a factor of five for the modern woman. She's trying to be Super Mom, Super Parent, Super Lover, Super Wife and Super Friend. And then when she watches Martha Stewart decorate her home-grown tree with ornaments she handmade from bits and bobs found around the home, she almost goes over the edge. One of my favorite cartoons shows a mother dressed in a "SUPER MOM" costume and she has a smaller version she's trying to hand to her daughter. The daughter is looking up at the mother and saying, "No way, Mom."

At one time, when my wife was single, she was a partner in an advertising firm. While it sounds very glamorous and exciting it also had its downside. While she made great money, she never had any time to spend it. She worked fourteen or more hours a day, seven days a week. There were no vacations. She was always going from one deadline to another. Finally, after two years, she said, "I've had enough. I'm getting out." She sold her share of the partnership and got a regular eight to five job. While she took a big pay cut, she also got her life back and was finally able to enjoy herself once again.

My son during his first year of life was very demanding. He never slept through the night and my wife and I were constantly taking turns with childcare and work. What I learned about the experience was that during that first year of life, don't expect to get much else done in your life. Don't expect to finish the work on that car restoration or spend a lot of time in the garden. Concentrate on your son or daughter and take care of yourself and spouse as best you can.

The question for you is this: What's most important in your life? If you can't have it all, what would you pick as most important to have? Are the corporate business world and the

opportunity to become rich your passion, or are you more concerned with your personal life, your spouse and your kids? Are you most concerned with having lots of money or would you rather have more free time?

You can't have it all
and
You can't be it all
so
Stop trying.

A weakness of all human beings is trying to do too many things at once. That scatters effort and destroys direction.

- *Henry Ford*

Focus

Around January 1, most people start thinking about making New Year's resolutions. The list generally starts with losing weight, exercising more, but easily grows to a list of ten to fifteen items. We make gigantic check sheets, sign up at the local gym, and buy new alarm clocks to get us up early. But, usually after week number one or maybe week number two, if we're really dedicated, it all seems so overwhelming and we just give up on all our resolutions. It's too overwhelming.

The trick to getting what you want, is to not have a list of ten new goals, but just one goal, one main item to work on during the year.

That's the secret of Focus – one thing. Concentrate on one goal, one mission, one thing you want to accomplish and make everything else secondary.

While you could certainly address your envelope with four or five different addresses, the post office wouldn't know where to send it and you'd probably get your letter returned.

In one of my speeches, I do a juggling demonstration. I start with three balls then go on to juggle four and then five balls. I then get a volunteer from the audience and give them all five balls and tell them to start juggling. Usually the results are comical and balls are flying all over the place. The point that I make is, when you start working on a goal, you have to start with the basics. You focus on juggling one ball to start. Ideally, the new juggler will learn to make consistent and correct throws with one ball first, before he/she tries to juggles two balls.

Unfortunately, most of us, in our goal setting, are trying to juggle five balls right at the start. While anyone can make that initial five ball toss, we can't keep everything in balance and we end up having to stop.

I've got a friend who is very artistically talented. She can literally do just about any arts and craft type project. The joke among our friends though is that she has never completed a project. She starts working on a painting, but then gets diverted by some crocheting, then a stain glass window takes her time, etc. In the end she never completes any one project before she off and working on another. If she could focus on the one project to its completion, she could have many pieces of art to show her friends.

Even businesses are not immune from this principle. While they may start out as being successful doing one particular thing, many times they start to branch out, growing and moving into other areas that take their focus away from their main business.

Al Dunlap says in his book, *Mean Business*, that there are two questions you should always be asking yourself. “What business are we in anyhow? What business should we be in? When you have the answers, sell everything else and focus on the core business.”

Al Ries, in his book *Focus*, says, “A successful company usually starts out highly focused on an individual product, service or market. Over time the company becomes unfocused. It offers too many products and services for too many markets at too many different prices levels. It loses its sense of direction. It doesn't know where it's going or why.”

Does it sound a little familiar? Does it sound like your life? What are you doing in your life? What do you want to be doing?

It's better to accomplish one goal than to attempt fifteen and accomplish none.

Kaizen

Secret of the Little Win

Kaizen is a Japanese business concept that means continual incremental improvement. Japanese workers are always being encouraged to make suggestions for improvement. Even if the idea is to move box "A" over to spot "B," a distance of just two feet, those types of suggestions are both welcomed and rewarded. By accumulating a thousand different miniature wins, the product or service becomes vastly superior to anything else on the market. In the book *KAIZEN* by Masaki Imai, he stated that Toyota chairman Eiji Toyoda once said, "One of the features of the Japanese workers is that they use their brains as well as their hands. Our workers provide 1.5 million suggestions a year, and 95 percent of them are put to practical use."

This is certainly against the American tradition of "all or nothing." In football we like to go for the "bomb," the long pass, trying to score a touchdown in just one play. In baseball, our dream is to step up to the plate and hit a home run. But the Kaizen principle is to move the football forward just a few yards every down or it's to hit a single every time you go to bat. If you achieve those goals on every play, you will ultimately win the game.

In high school, I took a typing class during the summer. If you've ever been through that experience, you know how klutzy it makes you feel. It's terrible trying to get those fingers to hit the right keys, especially those little pinkies. And you don't start out trying to type thirty words a minute, you start typing certain combinations of letters. You try to type the key combination A-F. You work on those two letters and slowly, very slowly you master those two letters, then you move onto another combination. At each step you are graded and get a reward for mastering each small step. And with drill and repetition every day, you get better and better until finally you don't even have to think about hitting certain keys, you just do it. In a few weeks time you're so

confident you're ready to challenge your secretary friend to a contest.

The trick is to make small incremental improvement over an extended period of time.

I'm working on this book section on December 31, traditionally the day to make a list of our goals and New Year's Resolutions. The trick with any goal is to start out slow, start out easy and go for the little win. Instead of having a goal to become the President of the company, make the smaller goal of becoming the best accountant you can be. Instead of having a goal to run a marathon, have a goal of running a quarter mile. Instead of having a goal of losing fifty pounds this year, have a goal of only eating meat twice a week. Go for the easy win first. Then when you're celebrating your first victory, you up the ante and go for your next level of achievement.

There's an old saying that, "You can eat an elephant, one bite at a time." That's how most goals seem to be, like an elephant, a monstrous pachyderm that you could never tame. But if you take that goal and break it down into hundreds of minnie goals, it becomes manageable.

John Erskine, a writer with seven books to his credit, suggests that in writing or practicing the piano or any worthwhile task that you work in small five minute chunks. We usually don't have two or three hours of free time during the day, but we almost always have five or ten few minutes to work on a project. John Erskine wrote novels using this technique.

Tom Peters, the management trainer, suggests creating a doable goal. He says, "Make a hurdle of one-half inch that a person can jump over, so they can say that 'I jumped over a hurdle.' The first task of a manager is to get the momentum going and to teach people that they are the winners that I happen to believe they are 99 percent of the time.

Commitment is best kept when you've got some wins behind you."

Ken Blanchard, the author of *The One Minute Manager*, suggests the same thing. He gives the example of Shamu, the killer whale that you see in Sea World. The question is, "How do you get a killer whale to jump up in the air over a rope?" Now this is an impossible task if you keep yelling at the whale, "Jump Shamu, Jump!" In a million years, Shamu will never jump over that rope. But if you put the rope in the water and then reward Shamu with a fish every time he swims over the rope, the process becomes easier and easier. Very slowly you raise the rope, you make small incremental steps until finally the rope is out of the water and Shamu has accomplished the goal you set.

President Elliott of Harvard University once made a speech on, "The Habit of Success." He said, "Many failures in elementary schools are caused by the fact that beginning students are not given a sufficient amount of work at which they could succeed. Consequently they never got a chance to develop the atmosphere of success or the winning feeling. These small successes would arouse the student's enthusiasm, and give them the feel of success, which would be a valuable ally in any future undertaking." What we all need are a lot of little wins to help build our self-confidence and self-esteem.

I used the same idea with my son. His birthday is October 13. He's very close to the cutoff age at school, where they decide if you can start school or wait another year. My wife and I decided at the time that it was more important to keep my son back a year, than to force him to try and compete with kids who were almost a year older than he was. This way he was one of the oldest kids in his class and had a series of many small wins in school which helped him develop into the

winner that he is today. Getting an "A" on a paper may seem like a small thing, but when you keep getting "A's" time after time, you start to think of yourself as "A" material. That's what is called as good self-esteem.

There's a quote that, "Nothing succeeds like success." If you feel like a winner, you'll be a winner. If you see yourself as a loser, you will lose. The trick is to start out with a number of small wins on your way to a big win.

Use the Kaizen principle in your life. Go for the little win and you will become a winner and accomplish your goals.

There's a quote which says it all, "Inch by inch, life's a cinch, but by the yard, life is hard."

Is It Realistic?

Jay Leno did this joke one night on the Tonight show.
“This is a transcript of an actual radio exchange released by the Chief of Naval Operations. Message number one. Please divert your course fifteen degrees to the North to avoid a collision. That's from the ship. Message two. – Recommend you divert your course fifteen degrees.
Number one – Sir, this is the Captain of a US Navy ship, I say, DIVERT YOUR COURSE.
No, I say you divert your course.
Finally – This is the aircraft carrier USS Enterprise, we are a large warship of the United States Navy. Divert your course now immediately.
Answer – This is a lighthouse.”

While it's not quite as funny in print, it makes a good point. All of us, no matter what our size, position or authority still need to be realistic about what we can accomplish.

When I was in grade school and high school, I had a dream – a dream to play in the NBA, the National Basketball Association. Maybe, you had a similar dream. I kept a scrapbook of all my favorite players, Bob Cousery, Cliff Hagan, Bob Petit. I listened to all the games of the St. Louis Hawks basketball team on the radio. I watched every basketball game that was on TV. I practiced basketball for thousands of hours, shooting free throws, doing left-hand layups, working on my jump shot, hook shot and behind the back moves. I thought I was hot!

I only had three little problems:

- #1. I was a bit too small – only 5'8".
- #2. I couldn't jump very well.
- #3. I wasn't very quick.

Other than that, I was one heck of a player. While I made the high school team, I was never the basketball success of my dreams.

What could I have done differently to become the first slow moving, poor jumping, smallest basketball player in the NBA?

What could I have done? Nothing!

There was nothing I could do to realize those dreams because they were based upon physical characteristics that I did not possess.

If you're 5'8", you'll never be 6'6".

If you're slow, you'll never win the Olympic gold medal for the hundred meter dash.

If you can't jump, you'll never dunk a basketball.

If you're all three, like me, you'll never play in the NBA.

These unrealistic dreams only bring you heartache and frustration and may waste valuable time.

The Serenity Prayer says it best:

God, grant me the serenity

To accept the things I cannot change;

The courage to change the things I can;

And the wisdom to know the difference.

The problem is, most of us aren't that wise and the solution to the question, "Is It Realistic," isn't a black and white answer.

However, I've come up with a few guidelines:

1. A realistic goal involves changing yourself first and not the outside world. Don't plan on changing your spouse. Don't plan on changing your parents. They're set in their ways. Don't even plan on changing your friends, who may politely listen to you, but will go their own merry way.

Work on yourself and you'll have a good chance of success.

2. A realistic goal involves making small incremental changes rather than making gigantic leaps all at one time. Instead of a goal to become the World's Figure Skating Champion, focus on the goal to learn three new skating tricks this year. Instead of a goal to become the World Champion of Public Speaking, work on the goal of winning a club's "Best Speaker" award. Work on small steps, which will eventually take you to higher levels.
3. A realistic goal says, become the best you can be, whatever that is. We all have some sort of physical and mental limitations, but within those limitations, we can improve, grow and enhance our native abilities.
4. Get some honest feedback from professionals - not your parents or friends. It's always amusing to watch American Idol and watch contestants who are 100% convinced that they have a great voice and end up screeching and yelping like they're in pain. Then they become indignant when Randy, Simon and even Paula, the sweet one, shakes their head and say, "That was terrible - don't even think about having a singing career." One woman said, "does that mean my parents have been lying to me?" The answer is "Yes." Parents and friends have to be kind to you and won't give you an honest evaluation.

Being realistic, however, does not mean giving up.

I have seen a one arm teenager become a great juggler.

I have seen a young man without feet, who could beat me in a race.

I have seen a man with a terrible speech impediment become a great speaker on television.

Being realistic means taking what you have, accepting it, and doing the very best you can. Realistic goals mean realistic for you. Where that will take you, no one knows. How far you will travel is hard to say. But being realistic, means taking the journey, enjoying the trip and seeing what happens.

If I was a little more realistic as a teenager, if I was a little more wise, maybe I could have enjoyed my basketball journey a little bit more and worried less about reaching the NBA.

I'd ask you to check your goals and see if they're realistic. If not, reevaluate them. Change them. It will make the journey much more enjoyable.

I never did anything worth doing by accident,
nor did any of my inventions come by
accident. They came by work.

- *Thomas Edison*

Mission Statement

Once you're thinking about your goals in life, it's time to think about writing a mission statement. Goals are short-term and transitory. They have a beginning and an end. They can be here today and gone tomorrow. The purpose behind your life, what you are trying to accomplish is your mission statement. It's your reason for existence. It's your long term values and the overall picture to your life.

Most corporations have a mission statement. It's a set of guiding principles, and purposes for the company. Usually, you'll find it in the personnel folder or the annual report. It's usually about two or three pages long, and no one ever reads it and certainly no one can ever remember it.

You also need to have a mission statement, except you need to make it short and succinct. No more than a paragraph or two, so it's easy to read, easy to understand and easy to remember.

Most times your mission statement will have to be discovered. You start out with one idea, then as you get older and wiser, your mission statement changes and evolves.

A good example of this is Alfred Nobel. In 1888, he had an opportunity to read his own obituary. Actually his brother Ludvig, had died, but one French paper made a mistake and thought that Alfred Nobel had died. At that time, Alfred was well known and wealthy from his invention of dynamite. The obituary said that Alfred was a "merchant of death" who had built a fortune by discovering new ways to "mutilate and kill." Alfred was so upset by what he read that he changed his will, so that he would be remembered as a great humanitarian. Thus, today we have the Nobel Prizes. His mission statement in life went from accumulating wealth to sharing that wealth with others.

Also, be careful that your goals don't conflict with your mission statement. I find it hypocritical that many professional speakers talk about the importance of family in their life, yet leave their family day after day, to travel out of town speaking to various groups.

I remember one speaker in particular who was talking to a group on Father's Day. He talked about the importance of dads getting involved with their kids. His kids were a thousand miles away at the time.

There is even a poem called "*Lament of the Speaker's Wife.*" In the poem, the wife hangs a picture of her husband up by the door, so if a stranger comes to the door, the kids will know if it's their father or not. While this is a slight exaggeration, it makes a valid point.

Your values and mission statement must be reflected in your daily actions and goals. Otherwise, you're a hypocrite.

Goals are great, just make sure they run parallel and are secondary to your mission statement.

Chapter 3–The Address

Here's my Mission Statement.

I've put it together in the form of an acrostic. – LIGHTS

Life - Love	Living and Loving as fully as possible.
Insight	Gaining wisdom about myself, others and the world. Searching for the truth, rather than just accepting what others believe.
Integrity	Being as truthful and trustworthy as possible
Growth	Challenging myself to become more and to learn more.
Health	Taking care of my body both physically and nutritionally.
Time	Living in the Now. Realizing that I only have one life to live, and I'd better not waste my time. The time for JOY is Now.
Sharing	Giving to others, things I have learned.

Chapter 3–The Address

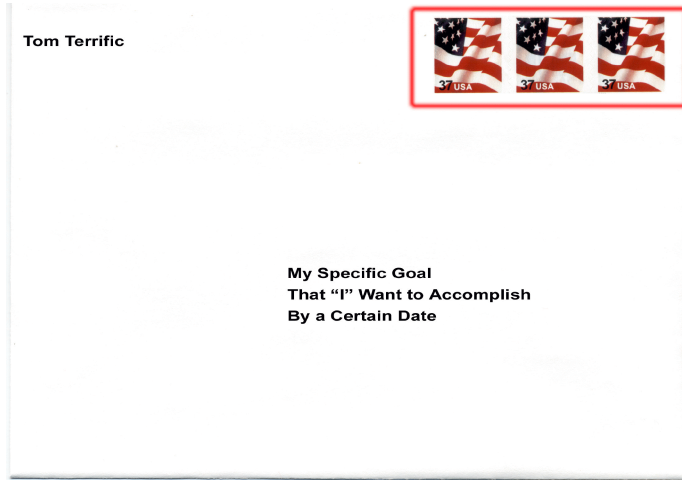
It's time for you to start working on your mission statement. Here are a few guidelines.

- Keep it short. You need to be able to remember it.
- Take it slow. Think about it and let it evolve over time.
- Post it where you can see it every day – your bathroom mirror, etc.
- Read it aloud every day, until it becomes part of you.

What's your mission statement?

Chapter 4 – The Postage

The Price You Pay



Even if an envelope has an address, and a return address, it won't go anywhere unless you've got the required postage. At least once a week I return envelopes to customers who didn't put on a stamp. You've got to pay the price to get where you want to go.

The trick to being a first class letter is in the postage. How much postage is on your envelope? If it's 41 cents, you're First Class. If it's 25 cents your 2nd Class and if it's only 14 cents then you're 3rd Class. Here's a simple question. If you've only got 14 cents attached to your envelope and are definitely a 3rd Class person, how do you get to be First Class?

The Answer - You go out and get another 27 cents postage and attach it to your envelope. $14 + 27 = 41$ cents.

This is a lot harder than going to the Post Office and just buying another stamp. Usually extra postage in the game of life only comes in one penny denominations and you can only

buy one stamp at a time.

But over time, by adding a penny here and a penny there, you can reach that First Class status.

This chapter deals with how to keep adding postage to your envelope, and the steps to take.

(Note - Postal rates are always changing so be lenient with me if the numbers are not exactly correct.)

Key #1 – Motivation

There's an old saying, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink."

I might add that you cannot only lead him to water, but you can show him the water, tell him how good it tastes, show others drinking the water, explain all the benefits, even force his mouth open and dunk his head in the trough, but unless he's motivated to drink, he won't drink.



And what's true of the horse is doubly true for you and me. For us to accomplish anything, we must be motivated. What's sad is that we as human beings have reasoning powers. We can understand the benefits; we can know what we should do, but our motivation is so low, that we just don't do it.

Bob Greene, the personal trainer of Oprah Winfrey, says in his book, *Make the Connection*, "I have never met a client who could not build exercise into his day. But I've met plenty of people who didn't want to. I have a rule when meeting new clients; If they give me three objections to working out, I tell them I can't help them." YOU must have the motivation. No one can give it to you.

I find it hard to understand, but some people will even risk excruciating pain rather than do what should be done. Here are three dramatic examples.

Example #1

A patron on the route has a herniated disc. He's gone through two operations and weeks of physical rehabilitation. Unfortunately with this type of injury you have to keep

stretching and exercising or you back will start hurting again.

I've tried to talk him into joining the YMCA to get the benefits of exercise. It's got a steam room, sauna, whirlpool, nautilus and every type of exercise equipment available. It's exactly what he needs to keep his back in shape, but he refuses to join. He refuses to make the small investment to keep himself from excruciating pain. He's not motivated.

Example #2

A fellow letter carrier has developed diabetes within the last four months. He actually was hospitalized for a few days until they found out what the trouble was. Now he has to take insulin shots and watch his diet very closely. I had just read an article indicating that exercise was supposed to help with diabetes and I told him so. He remarked that, "Oh yeah, exercise is a very good treatment for diabetes, but now that it's cold and dark outside, I can't walk." I said, "Well, why don't you get yourself a treadmill?" He answered, "Oh, I've got a treadmill. It's just too boring." I get emotional and say, "You know this is not a disease to mess around with. It can cause blindness and with the poor circulation, some people even have to have their feet cut off!" He says, "I know, but I just can't make myself get on that treadmill."

Note – he passed away within five years of his diagnosis.

Example #3

A fellow letter carrier was talking about his mother-in-law. She's a smoker and has had a mastectomy and one lung removed. You would think that type of pain and these medical operations, where they actually cut off parts of your body would be a real clue that now it's time, to quit smoking. However, she keeps smoking as much as ever. She's not motivated.

Even Jay Leno makes fun of people who are poorly motivated. On one show on January 2, he's interviewing people in parking lots of the large mega-stores like Sam's. As

they are loading up their cars he asks, “Have you made any New Year’s resolutions?” Everyone answers, “Yes. I’m going to lose some weight this year.”

Then Jay asks if he can see what they bought in the store. They open up their bags and boxes and you know what he finds: the fifteen pound wedge of cheese, five pounds of cookies and three gallons of ice cream.

I wish I had a magic pill to help my friends with their motivation, but I don't.

I wish that people would do what's best for them, but they won't.

Motivation is key #1. Without it, nothing is possible. Your letter won't be addressed and it will never be delivered.

Whether you think you can or think you
can't -- you're right.

- *Henry Ford*

Do You Want It Bad?

Did you ever want something in life? Sure I did.
Do you want something now? You bet.

But do you want it bad?

In 1990, my wife and I built our dream house. We were totally involved from the very beginning. We picked the lot, designed the house and came by every day to see what the progress.

One of our biggest problems in building the house was with the sewer line. In case you ever build a house, here are the progression of events.

1. The sewer lines in the house are installed and are put under twelve inches of dirt and gravel in the basement. In our case, the plumber didn't run the lines outside the house, but ran them just as far as the foundation wall.
2. A five foot deep trench is dug outside to run the sewer lines from the street to the house.
3. Theoretically, both lines should meet up and be connected.

In our case, the plumber was having trouble finding the house sewer line so that he could connect to the outside line.

Admittedly, it's not an easy job.

You not only have to dig the regular five foot trench outside the house, but in our case, you have to dig down under the foundation to where the house pipe should be. If there's any rain at all, it's a muddy, sloppy, gunky mess.

The plumber worked on the job for several hours, trying to find where the house pipes ran out, but he finally just quit. He said that he just couldn't find the house sewer lines and was giving up.

As I talked to my builder that night, I asked him a question. I said, "Do you think if I had \$50,000, right here in my hand, which I would give as an incentive, do you think that the plumber could find the sewer pipe?" My builder said, "Why sure! Of course he could." Then I said, "So then it's not a question of IF he can do the job, now it's a question of motivation. Is he motivated enough to do the job?"

Ultimately my contractor himself got down in the hole, dug some more and found where the pipe was. You see, he was motivated. He wanted to sell the house! He wanted to sell it bad!

Ted Monaghan, the man who started Dominos Pizza, once had a special employee and friend. Ted was always admonishing this guy to take better care of himself; lose some weight, get some exercise. The friend, like most of us, never did much in the way of exercise or healthy living. He just wasn't motivated to do what he should have done – take care of his body.

Finally, Ted offered his friend \$50,000 if, at the end of a year, he would run, not walk, run a marathon, twenty-six miles. In one year, his friend lost one hundred pounds and did run the marathon. Ted Monaghan had the check waiting for him at the end of the race. Now his friend was motivated. He had \$50,000 worth of motivation and he wanted that bad.

That's one of the key questions to ask yourself when you say, "I want this or I want that!"

Sure you want it, but **DO YOU WANT IT BAD?**

Wanting It is Not Enough

This story I share with you is true, only the names have been changed to protect the innocent and guilty.

We have a friend of ours who is rich. Not close enough of a friend, mind you, to take us on yearly trips to the Bahamas (all expenses paid of course), but close enough for us to keep tabs on his activities. Did I say he's rich? Boy, this guy has big bucks - millions, in fact. I might add he did make on his own. He didn't inherit this money.

Robert, the millionaire, is also a kindhearted soul. He gives away thousands of dollars to many charities. One day he was talking to John who works in the shipping room of Robert's company. John started talking about a dream he has – a dream to go to college and make something of himself.

Robert, the kindhearted soul, tells John, “If that's truly what you want to do, go ahead and fill out the paper work. I'll pay your way through college.” All John had to do was to fill out the applications, do the paper work and turn them into the school.

Let's do a little figuring. A college education costs at least \$12,000 per year, times 4 years, that equals \$48,000

The Census Bureau tells us that college graduates make \$10,000 more per year over the high school graduate; times 40 years that equals \$400,000

That's a total of: \$448,000

That's a large amount of money!
And these figures are very conservative. The amount could easily be double that figure or even closer to a million dollars when you take inflation into account.

So what does John, the shipping clerk do?

Chapter 4 – The Postage

John can't find the time to fill out the paper work to turn into college, and as a result, never gets accepted. It's almost inconceivable, but true. This young man missed an opportunity for a million dollars in his life.

Unfortunately this scenario is all too common. We all have dreams. We all have desires, but most of us aren't willing to ACT.

There's an old saying that "Actions speak louder than words," and it's true.

John is like an envelope wishing that he could be sent to Disney World, but unwilling to apply the postage, even when someone is standing next to him, postage in outstretched hand.

Are you willing to ACT?

Wanting it is not enough.

You must take action on a regular, consistent and persistent basis.

What actions can you take right now
to achieve your goals?

The Idea Planner

A \$25,000 Idea

How would you like to be more productive, get more done in less time, and be able to keep on track with the goals which are important in your life, all in just five minutes a day?

If you answered “yes,” the Idea Planner is your solution.

Actually the Idea Planner is very simple concept and here’s why I call it a \$25,000 idea.



Charles Schwab, a past-president of Bethlehem Steel, was trying to figure out how he could be more productive at work. He called in a consultant, and said, "Show me a way I can get more things done, and I'll pay you any reasonable fee." The consultant gave Mr. Schwab a piece of paper and said, "Write down the six most important things you want to get done tomorrow. Then rank them one through six in the order that you want them done. Tomorrow morning, take out your list and start working on number one and stick with it until it's accomplished. Then start working on number two, then number three, etc."

Charles Schwab tried out this system, shared it with his managers and was so impressed that he sent the consultant a check for \$25,000.

Not bad for two minutes work.

(By the way, anyone who feels the moral obligation to send me \$25,000 for the same advice, please feel free to send me a check.)

That simple advice is what the Idea Planner is all about. Now I can already hear some of you saying to yourself, "I don't need an Idea Planner. If something's important enough, I'll just remember it." Well good luck; you're going to need it. I've found that most people have very poor memories especially

when you consider what they go through on a daily basis.

Most of us lead hectic lives. We wake up as late as possible in the morning and rush through the day as if we were in some Olympic decathlon, one event after another. We're distracted by our kids, our co-workers, the boss, the TV, the radio, the newspaper, the latest magazine, the phone, the Internet, and even our own mind, which keeps jumping from one idea to the other. We go from one crisis, one distraction, to the next and at the end of the day wonder why we haven't accomplished anything. No wonder we can't seem to do the things that are really important, when there are so many distractions vying for our attention.

One of the reasons I exercise at the YMCA after work is that it's too easy to get distracted if I just go home. Even if I make a commitment to exercise as soon as I get home, the distractions start demanding attention.

The mail in the mailbox says, "You ought to check your mail."
The kitchen says, "Come on in and have a snack."
The unread paper says, "Did you read the daily news?"
The answering machine is blinking, "I've got three messages for you."
The computer says, "Better check your email."
Distractions abound in our daily life and it's amazing we get anything done.

That's why we all need an Idea Planner.
Now there are a lot of other different systems to basically accomplish the same goal.
Some people use 3 x 5 cards.
Some people buy digital recorders to record their ideas.
Some people take the \$200 Franklin-Covey Day Planner course.

I prefer my very simple system.
You don't need a big fancy leather binder.
You don't need refills that cost an arm and a leg.
All you need is just one 5-cent copy per day.

Chapter 4 – The Postage

Mission Statement:

TODAY	DAY OFF	BUY
Notes:		

Here's the system I use for my Idea Planner.

On one sheet of paper I list:

1. Things I want to get done today.
2. Things I want to get done on my day off.
3. Items to buy.
4. A journal/note area to write down ideas.
5. Up at the top, I print my mission statement, which I use as a reminder.

I use the computer to generate my Idea Planner. Then, it's easy to delete, add and rearrange items daily. However, you don't need to own a \$1000 computer to use this system. All you need is to take out the Idea Planner I've printed in this book, enlarge it and copy it for your use, one sheet per day.

I call this an Idea Planner, rather than a To-Do list or a Daily Planner, because it's just as important to use this one sheet of paper to record new ideas during the day, as it is to plan your activities that day.

"When you think it, ink it," is a good motto to follow. Many great ideas are lost because you don't take time to write them down.

In Toastmaster's I've heard many new speakers say, "I'm not good at telling jokes, I can never remember them." Of course they can't remember them, they never write them down.

When you hear a joke that you want to tell later, what do you have to do? Write it down in the Idea Planner.

When you get an idea for a new company product, what do you do? Write it down in the Idea Planner.

When you hear about an interesting book that a friend recommends, what do you do? Write it down in the Idea Planner.

Are you getting the idea?

When you get any idea that you want to keep for future reference, write it down in the Idea Planner.

The Idea Planner sheet can also be a great resource later on. If you keep these sheets and go through them once a month, you can review how well you're achieving your goals and what new ideas came your way.

Idea Planner Guidelines

Here are the specifics for using the Idea Planner:

- Every day, first thing in the morning, take five minutes to plan your activities and daily goals. You can do this early in the morning or late in the evening. The important thing is to do it every day. Check your calendar and enter appointments.
- Keep your Idea Planner with you at all times. Make the sheet small enough so you can put it in your pocket and carry it with you all day. I fold up a standard size piece of paper, 8½ X 11, into quarters and carry it in my breast pocket along with a pen.
- Your “Today” and “Day Off” areas can include all sorts of activities. Don't limit your list to just the latest crisis. Include goals that are important to you.
- Keep your sheets for review at the end of the month. This helps you to see what you're accomplishing and if you're keeping on track.
- Remember, start with the first thing on your list and work down, one item at a time. Try to finish one task before starting another.
- News ideas that you capture on your Idea Planner need to be transferred to an appropriate file or setup as a goal to achieve in the future. My “IDEA FILE” has 146 pages of ideas that I've captured from my Idea Planner.

Idea Planner Sections

Today

Write down the activities you want to accomplish in the next 16 hours in the "TODAY" column. List the tasks in the order you want to accomplish them. Some people say to rank them in order of importance, but I feel it's better to plan your day and see where each task can be best accomplished. If you're going to jog after you get home from work, it doesn't make sense to list it as item #1. Put it toward the bottom.

Don't list too many items or you may get discouraged. On your TODAY list, be practical. Write down four or five items or possibly six or seven items if you're really energetic, but don't put down too many or you'll be overwhelmed. The next day, add new items, delete items accomplished and carry over items that were not done the previous day.

Day Off

These activities need to get done, but not necessarily TODAY. They might include calling a friend, writing a letter, paying bills etc. Items that might take an extended period of time can go in this area.

Buy

This a convenient area to keep track of items that you need to purchase. It could include gifts, groceries or hardware items. Instead of shopping every day for individual items, wait until they accumulate and get them all in one trip. I like to wait until my day off, so I can get all my shopping done in one day.

Mission Statement

I also type my Mission Statement on my Idea Planner. It's a good reminder of what's important in my life. It helps to keep me on track.

Notes

This is a good area to write down new ideas.

For Experts Only

After a period of time, (you decide the length), some of the items on your To-Do List may become daily habits, so you can stop writing them down. You do need to write them down initially to get you into the routine of doing them.

Here's an example:

Every day I do my stretching exercises and then go to my office to write for an hour. Since I'm motivated, it's not a question of if I feel like doing it, I just do it. As a consequence, I don't write down these activities anymore.

Chapter 4 – The Postage

Mission Statement: _____

TODAY	DAY OFF	BUY

Notes:

List Making

One favorite phrase of a friend of mine is, “Well you know, this isn’t exactly rocket science.” He says it to emphasize just how easy and elementary the BASICS are.

I say this up front, because what I’d like to share with you, isn’t exactly rocket science. In fact, it’s so easy and basic that I feel stupid even writing about it.

Here it is: Make a List!
 Become a Compulsive List Maker.

Make a list of: Things to Do (sound familiar?)
 Ideas you get during the day.
 Creative thoughts you can explore later.
 People to contact.
 Books to read, tapes to listen to.

On a recent camp out with 36 people, adults and children, I felt like the only adult with 35 kids.

- Adults forgot to bring matches to start their fires.
- They forgot to bring charcoal to cook their meat.
- They forgot to bring band-aids for their cuts.
- They forgot to bring aspirin for their headache.
- They forgot to bring rope to tie their cooler in the canoe.
- They forgot to bring propane for their stove, aluminum foil, and even salt, pepper etc.

You might be asking, “Tom, are your friends all stupid or what.” No, they’re not stupid, in fact they’re very intelligent people in most respects. They just don’t have a list.

The trick to having a good camping experience is to have a Camping List. Have a list, and things are fun. If you don’t have a list, camping can be miserable. During the four-day camp out it rained twice – very hard at times! Yet it wasn’t as bad as it could have been, because I brought large tarps and

umbrellas. The rain became more of a nuisance than a terrible event. When we go camping, we also go on a six-mile float trip. If you forget to bring your SPF 30 sun tan lotion, you will be in agony for days to come. If you put sun tan lotion on your camping list, you'll have a great time.

“So,” you’re saying to yourself, “Big deal! This is just a stupid camp out. I don’t even go camping. You couldn’t pay me to go camping.”

Well, the camping analogy also applies to all your goals.

- If you’re looking for a new job, make a list of possible alternatives. Who are you going to call? What companies are looking for new employees? What books should you read?
- If you’re interested in exercise, list the exercises you want to do each day.
- If you want to become a success, make a list of other successful people and the books that they’ve written.
- If you’re having a meeting, have a list, a printed agenda.
- If you’re working on a goal, have a list of things you want to accomplish today and in the future.

In Toastmasters, we have lists for everything. We have lists for the General Evaluator, lists for the Time Keeper, lists for the Vote Tabulator and most important, we have a list for the Toastmaster. He/She is the Master of Ceremony’s for the meeting. The Toastmaster has a list of eleven people he/she has to call the previous week, plus a list of eighteen duties that must be accomplished during a two-hour meeting. With the list, the meeting runs smoothly and the club can get a lot accomplished in two hours. Without the list, things are a mess.

Harvey Mackay in his books, *Swim with the Sharks Without Being Eaten Alive* and *Beware the Naked Man Who Offers You His Shirt*, has lists for all sorts of business activities:

- A Competitor profile list.
- A list of questions to find out about the customer.

- A customer survey list.
- A list of questions to answer about each employee.

I have an Idea List on my computer that's 120 pages long. All of the interesting thoughts, songs, jokes, puzzles, speech ideas that I hear or read about, I put into Idea List. Later I put them away in the appropriate file.

The process is never ending. Once you've got your list, you start refining it. What works, what doesn't work. What needs to be added, what needs to be deleted? Keep changing the list as you learn more. After every camp out, I usually add one or two new things to my old list to bring on the next camp out.

Again, this isn't exactly rocket science, but it is important. Make a list, and you can get where you want to go and do what you want to do. Without a list, it's much harder.

The only place success comes before work
is in the dictionary.

- *Vince Lombardi*

The Sam Walton Technique To Be a Success – Steal

When I think of Sam Walton the entrepreneur and richest man in America (at least at one time), I think of a John Wayne type, strong, macho, driving his pickup truck, probably with a gun rack in the back, never needing any help, and always able to make it on his own.

That's the idyllic view we have of our leaders. But in reality, Sam was a pilferer, a pirate, a hijacker, but please, don't assume anything bad by the use of those words.

One of the great techniques Sam used, was to steal ideas from the competition. He always was looking for a new and better way of doing things, even if that meant stealing them from the store across town.

In his book, *Made in America*, he talks about that process. He would go into K-Marts and interrogate the clerks on how they did things. "Well, how frequently do you order? If you order on a Tuesday, when does the merchandise come in? ' He's writing everything she says down in a blue spiral notebook. Then Sam gets down on his hands and knees and he's looking under this stack table and he opens the sliding doors and says, 'How do you know how much you've got under here when you're placing that order? " In the book he says, "Oh, this is just part of the educational process."

I'm sure you've heard of the SAMS warehouse clubs. Sam stole the idea of a warehouse club from Sol Price. Sol had originally started the wholesale club concept as Price Club stores in 1976. Sam says this in his book, "Just like discounting, I'm sorry to say we can't take any of the credit for inventing the wholesale club concept. Put yourself in our position for a moment, though, and you can see why we had to steal the idea from those who did roll it out." Sam had dinner with Sol Price and his wife one night and says, "I admit it. I didn't tell him at the time that I was going to copy his

program, but that's what I did."

He even would go into the Price Club stores with a tape recorder and make verbal notes to himself about prices and merchandising ideas.

Sam even traveled the globe looking for new ideas. He went to Germany, France, Italy, South America, Great Britain, and Australia. He even got his idea for Hypermarts, which are in Dallas-Fortworth, Topeka and Kansas City, from giant stores in Brazil and Europe.

Here are a few other stealing examples:

Clay Sherman, a management consultant, notes the difference between American and Japanese businessmen is this. When he makes a presentation to an American group, the businessmen are very attentive, they listen, and now and then they may scribble down an idea or two that appeals to them. In contrast, the Japanese bring every sort of recording device known to man. The room is filled with tape recorders, video recorders, cameras etc, taking down every word, idea and picture to save for later use. What's taken him years to put together, they steal in a matter of minutes. The Japanese know a good thing when they see it.

As I re-re-re-edit this section, my wife's company is planning to open a new book store. But before they open it, before they stock it, before they even finalize the plans, they're out there doing their research. (I hate to use the word steal when it comes to my wife.) They're not only visiting every bookstore in the area, but are going to Chicago and other cities to see what they can learn from other stores. In all they'll visit forty other book stores doing research. If another store has a great idea, why not incorporate it into your business.

Tom Monaghan, the founder of Dominos pizza, says this on the topic of stealing. "After Labor Day 1965, when the colleges were back in session. I began to get strung out from working such long hours. I had to have a breather. So I started closing

the stores on Monday nights. Those nights off were the opportunity I'd been looking for to visit other pizza places in the Mid-West. Margie and I would get in the car with the babies, early on a Monday morning and take off in whatever direction struck our fancy. We'd drive until we came to a town that looked interesting and check the yellow pages for pizzerias. Then we'd visit the places and I'd talk to the owners about their business. “ His one day off and he's out there talking to the competition, trying to learn from them, and stealing every good idea in the process.

Zig Ziglar, one of the leading motivational speakers, says this about stealing other people's material. "The way you use other people's material is this:

Now the next three times you say, 'As my good friend Dan Johnson always says.'

Then the next three times say, 'I heard this fellow say.'

Then finally you will say, 'I've always felt that.'

As you utilize other peoples material, steal a little from one person, a little from that person. Don't get all of one persons material. That's not nice. Get material from a lot of different people.”

Here's the point – don't reinvent the wheel.

No matter what goal you've set for yourself, it's not original! Someone else, probably hundreds of other people, have had the same type of goal.

Don't knock yourself out trying to figure out everything on your own – STEAL! Do your research.

When I teach public speaking, there's a saying that I use. “If you take all your material from one person, it's called plagiarism, that's bad. If you take all your material from a hundred people, it's called research, that's good.”

Get out there and do your research!

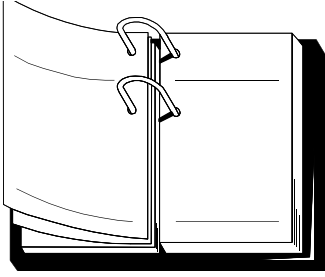
Remember the Sam Walton Technique.

To be a success – STEAL!

Chapter 4 – The Postage

Note: I don't mean to belittle the notion of creativity and innovation, but for most goals, it's 1% inspirations and 99% perspiration.

The 13 Month Year

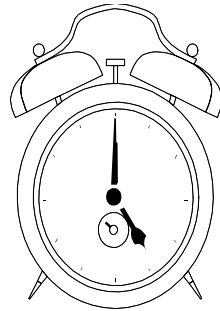


Do you need more time in your day to get things done? Are you always doing chores for others, but never have time for yourself? Would you like to have 13 months per year instead of 12? Here's how to do it. Get up an hour early.

I know it sounds terrible, but here's how I do it.

As a mailman, I've been forced to adopt the "early bird" habit. When I started in the Post Office, my starting time was 6:00 a.m. Today I start at 7:30 a.m., but I still get up earlier than I need, usually around 5:00 a.m. It's a regime that I would recommend to everyone. Benjamin Franklin was right when he said, "Early to bed, and early to rise, makes a man (or a woman) healthy, wealthy and wise."

Even my next door neighbors have adopted this schedule. Tony, a terrific salesman, is usually seen driving down the street to his first call around 6:00 a.m.. Patrick, a bank executive, is leaving early, to work out at the gym, and Steve, a lawyer, is doing his early morning walk. Their beautiful homes and material success seem to be the payoffs for their early morning habits.



I start at 5:00 a.m. with stretching for about forty minutes. I've found that my body is like a vintage car that can run pretty well, but it needs a little warmup period in the morning.

For another sixty minutes I work on special projects that need consistent work over an extended period of time. This

book, is such a project. This time might also be spent meditating, reading self-help books or any activity that will help you get started.

Do Not Turn on The Television or Read the Paper!

We're looking for positive programming, not negative thoughts. This can also be a great time for parents with young kids. Imagine, peace and quiet, even if it's for only an hour.

The last thing I do before entering the everyday world is to review my calendar and "Idea Planner."

Even the richest and hardest working woman in the world has adopted this regime. Oprah Winfrey in her book, *Make the Connection*, says that the only way she can make it through her hectic schedule is to rise and shine at 5:00 a.m. And she says that she's proud to say that she's done it almost every day, without fail, for three consecutive years. She says, "I get at least forty minutes out of the way so I can more fully enjoy the rest of the day." Now, I'm not that fanatic. I almost always sleep in on my day off and Sunday, just to catch up on my sleep. But five days of the week I am consistent with my 5:00 a.m. schedule.

You must find the time to get the things done you need to do. Getting up early is an easy way to accomplish those goals.

**Finding the time and making your
workout the priority in taking care of
yourself will determine whether you win
in the long run.**

– Oprah Winfrey

By this time, your eyes are probably rolling back in your head and you're saying to yourself, "Yeah, sure, that's great for you, but I'm a night person. I'll just do this stuff at night." Well, good luck!

The problem with working on these projects at night is that when you come home, you usually celebrate with a big dinner meal, a drink or two and all the blood and oxygen goes straight to the stomach to work on that chicken-fried steak. The recliner starts calling your name and the television has Monday Night Football or some other program you love. It becomes a very tough proposition to get anything done.

The real trick is this – to get up an hour earlier in the morning, you have to go to bed an hour earlier. If your usual bedtime is 11:00 p.m., go to bed at 10:00 p.m.

That does mean that you may miss your favorite TV show, but that's why they made VCR's and Tivo. I always Tivo David Letterman and watch it the next day.

If you add up the benefits, you'll see that you have just added another month of living, growing and producing to your schedule by getting up just an hour earlier. And I'm only talking about getting up early five days a week, not seven.

Follow this logic.

1 hour X 5 days/week X 52 weeks = 260 hours
260 hours divided by 8 hours in a work day = **32½ days.**

Not a bad return on a small investment!
Get up an hour early, and you'll gain an extra month per year.

If you're frazzled or burnt out and need a little time, just for you, try this idea for a month, it just may make the difference.

Don't say you don't have enough time. You have exactly the same number of hours per day that were given to Helen Keller, Pasteur, Michelangelo, Mother Teresea, Leonardo da Vinci, Thomas Jefferson, and Albert Einstein.

- *H. Jackson Brown, Jr.*

Calendar Planning 101

As I start on this section, today is January 1. A day which is traditionally one of football, snacking, more football, lunch, football, dinner and finally we end it off with one more football game – or at least that’s how I used to spend the day. These days, January 1 is the traditional day to work on the calendar for the coming year.



Let me ask you, “Do you use a calendar on a regular daily basis?”

Probably you’ll answer, “Sure, I’ve got a calendar. Everyone does.” But the question is, “Do you use it on a regular daily basis?” The answer this time will be more like, “No, I glance at it once in a while, that’s about it.”

I decided to add this section to the book, because of a growing irritation I’ve felt at some Toastmaster club members, because of their lack of planning. In our weekly meeting we have 22 jobs assigned to club members. There’s a monthly schedule that is either handed out to members ahead of time or emailed to them. Members know weeks ahead of time what their assignment is. Yet many times the response I get when I call to remind one of the speakers of their assignment goes something like this. “Hi John, this is Tom Terrific. I’m just calling to remind you that you’re scheduled to speak this coming Wednesday.” Their response more often than not is, “I am? Thanks for reminding me. I completely forgot. I sure hope I can find time to put something together.”

I feel like grabbing their lapels, shaking them and yelling, “Didn’t you mark your calendar with your assignments for the month?” Their answer would probably be, “NO, I put the schedule somewhere on my desk, probably underneath that stack of bills.”

While I do get upset with these people, I guess I understand their problem. The reason most of us don't use a calendar properly is because few of us have ever been taught how to use one. There is no *Calendar Planning 101* taught in schools and dad was probably a poor example.

You may be asking yourself at this point, "What does using a calendar have to do with persistence and achieving your goals?"

The answer is that your calendar is a tool you can use to keep on track with the goals you feel are important. It's a gentle prodding reminder of what you need to be doing on a daily basis and even when you need to be doing it.

As adults, one of the greatest liberties we have is the opportunity to pick and choose what we're going to do each waking moment of the day.

If you want to lay on the couch and eat a gallon of Hagen Dass Butter Pecan Supreme, you can do it. Mom and Dad aren't around to yell any more about getting your homework done or eating your broccoli. You are now the final judge as to what is right for you at each particular moment.

Unfortunately, this can also be our greatest weaknesses if we don't plan. While there is a lot to be said for "going with the flow" and "living in the moment," we all need frequent reminders about our goals, our mission, and our plans for the future. This is what a calendar is all about. Use the calendar to set daily action steps to achieve your goals. Use the calendar to remind yourself about goals that you want to achieve. Use the calendar to stay on track and not get behind.

There are many different ways to set up a calendar.

Computer Calendar

Since this is the 21st century and almost everyone has a computer, you could use a calendar program to keep track of your dates and appointments. There are many different programs available that basically all do the same thing. Their main advantage is that the calendar program not only prints out a nice looking calendar, but it also keeps track of recurring events. If you're forty-nine this year, it will notify you that you'll be fifty next year. (Time to plan a party!)

The advantage is you never have to re-enter events. If one of your goals is to exercise three times a week, all you need to do is type in "Exercise at Gym" on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and the calendar will remind you for the rest of the year.

Another advantage of a computer-generated calendar is that you can print multiple copies to share with your family.

Online Calendar

There are also online web-based calendars which will keep track of your dates and even email you reminders. If you always have internet access, this option might work for you. Yahoo.com has a nice, free calendar area.

Paper Calendar

You could also use the old fashioned, but still useful paper calendar. This has the advantage that it's cheap and in fact you might even get one for free in the mail. The disadvantage is that they usually have very little space for writing down appointments and they will look messy in short order. The other disadvantage of a paper calendar is that at the end of each year you need to get out the new calendar, open up the old calendar and reenter special events, birthdays, anniversaries, goals, etc.

Chapter 4 – The Postage

I checked my recent calendar and I have listed 303 events that are recurring on the calendar. I write in things like Toastmaster meetings, dance lessons, oil changes, household chores and the usual birthdays and anniversaries.

Another paper option is go to a business supply store and buy a special “Day Planner” calendar. These come in many formats and will generally keep things a little neater, but again you have to re-enter the information every year.

Computer Version #2

Today, instead of buying a specific calendar program I’ve created my own version that works well, doesn’t crash and doesn’t demand an update every couple of years.

It’s a simple table I’ve created with my word processor
Here’s what it looks like.

September - 2005'			
Thu	01	Notify TM of conflicts	FCGS-10AM
Fri	02		Trash \$\$\$\$
Sat	03		Japanese Festival ~ GELAT Slates - 9:00am - 5:00pm BOB & Kathy Ann
Sun	04		Record 90.7 - 10-7pm Murphys AM breakfast Tina's - Sunday afternoon ~ 3pm
Mon	05	Holiday - Labor Day	Putluck Here - Karen BD - 5 PM bring pictures - slides
Tue	06	Karen Schneider BD 1948	Jean Turney - School BG program 10 AM
Wed	07	Treadmill Warranty over in ten days !!!!	Dr. Zalewski 8:15 am - 6 mo check + 1/2 of 1/2
Thu	08		9:30 AM - 11:30 AM - 11/11/11 - 1/2 of 1/2
Fri	09	Call about Treadmill free maintenance extended to 2010	Trash - when is it coming? 13611 - 11/11/11 - 1/2 of 1/2
Sat	10		Neon RABBIT CITIZENS
Sun	11		Record 90.7 - 10-7pm 12:40
Mon	12		Landscape and nursery BG program Pietros bring laptop proj and screen
Tue	13		JACKIE
Wed	14		CPH awards banquet 8:30 - Dr. Wehner
Thu	15	Gerrys Life Ins due 9/28	Eds - Mys - 10
Fri	16	Bob Shay BD 1950	Trash - \$\$\$\$\$ - 11/11/11 - 12:00
Sat	17	Treadmill Warranty is OVER	Neon RABBIT

The table only has four columns.

Day of the week - Date - Recurring Events - Non-recurring events.

December 2005

Thu	01		
Fri	02		
Sat	03		
Sun	04		
Mon	05		
Tue	06		
We d	07		
		Recurring	New
ETC.			

Every day I look at the calendar and transfer any tasks over from my calendar to my Idea Planner and then I highlight the date with a blue marker. This tells me that this date's tasks were done or transferred. It's then also easy to see the next day and where I should start.

Calendar Guidelines

- **Have only one calendar if at all possible.**

One calendar is best, so you can keep track of all your activities in one location. This way you don't run the risk of writing down an activity in one calendar, but not in another. My wife just recently told me about a party we were hosting at our house. I answered, "Party, I don't know anything about a party." She said, "It's on the calendar." I went over and looked at our family calendar and said, "No, it's not sweetie pie." She said, "Well then it's on one of the other four or five calendars I keep." We got a chuckle out of the situation, but it just goes to show the problem of having multiple calendars. If you have a lot of appointments at work then you can add a special calendar or appointment planner just for work, but in general, try to keep it to one calendar. If both you and your spouse keep separate calendars, coordinate your activities once a month. Usually on the first of each month I pull both calendars together and add my wife's activities onto my computer calendar.

- **Keep your calendar where you'll see it on a regular daily basis.**

I keep mine on my desk underneath a plastic desk cover and look at it every day. It takes less than thirty seconds to glance at it, and it helps me to plan not only today's activities, but events later in the week. Don't put it underneath a stack of bills over in the corner. You want it close by so you'll notice it every day. For you, it might be convenient to keep it on the refrigerator or by the phone, it really doesn't matter. The key is to keep it in a place where you'll see it every day, preferably in the morning.

- **Review your calendar on a weekly basis.**

On every Sunday, I like to take a look and see what's scheduled for the coming week. Do I have birthday cards that I need to send out? What am I scheduled for in Toastmasters? Do I need to let my wife know about a

meeting I'm going to? At least weekly, do an overview.

- **Your memory is not getting better.**

When you plan a new date or activity, write it down in your calendar immediately.

Don't set it aside and hope to remember it. Write it down now. When your boss just happens to mention that his birthday is March 13, write it down. When you decide to change the oil in your car every six months, write it down. Keep up this process for every goal and date you want to remember. In a survey I did of fellow Toastmasters, I found that while almost everyone looked at their calendar on a regular basis, only 50% wrote down their Toastmaster assignments in the calendar. No wonder many didn't remember their assignment when they got their reminder call.

- **Copy your calendar appointments, tasks and goals into your Daily Idea Planner.**

Again, your memory's not that good, so we now need to keep reminding ourselves during the day. If you've got a doctor's appointment at 11:15, take it from your calendar and write it in your Daily Idea Planner. If you're supposed to go to the gym at 4:00 p.m., mark it down in your Idea Planner. You need to transfer information from your calendar to your Idea Planner on a daily basis. What you're doing is taking a planned event and turning it into an action item.

- **Try to use the “month at a glance” format.**

If you've been to the office supply store lately, you'll see many different formats to choose from. Daily, weekly, monthly, and even yearly calendars are available. I prefer the “month at a glance” since it allows me to get an overview of the month. Using this format allows you to not only plan activities for the month, but also to NOT PLAN activities for the month. If you're busy for four nights in a row, you may want to plan some R&R time, rest and relaxation. Go ahead and mark R&R on your

calendar. The monthly format gives you a great overview of how busy you'll be for the month.

If you're very busy, most computer programs allow you to print your monthly calendar over two pages so that you can enter more events.

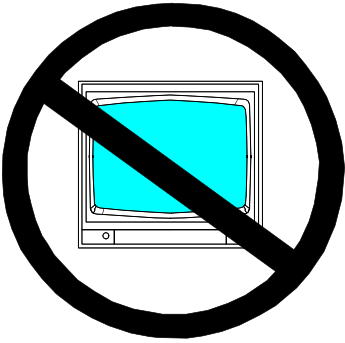
Summary

Let me again emphasize that the calendar is a great tool you can use to achieve your goals. It keeps you on track and forces you to think about not only what you want to achieve, but how and when you are going to do it. It's a gentle voice reminding us of what's important on a daily basis.

My table calender is online and is a free download. Please feel free to use it and share it with others.

<http://www.lettercarrier.tomterrific.com/docs/calendar.doc>

Turn Off the TV



I realize the title of this section, "Turn Off the TV," is a rather controversial statement. It's certainly contrary to all natural law and possibly grounds for criminal indictment. But before you start the fire to burn this book and me at the stake, let me explain.

For you to be a success in achieving your goal, you're going to need some TIME – time to read, time to think and time to act. One way we just discussed was getting up an hour early in the morning. Another way to find even more time in your busy life is to turn off the television.

Turning off the TV is a drastic approach I grant you. You may have to be weaned from its entertainment nipple; you may have withdrawal symptoms, nausea and nervousness; but it's a great way to become an achiever.

The book, *On An Average Day*, by Tom Heymann, says the normal adult American spends an average of four hours a day watching TV. Now, that seems a bit much. Yet, I'm sure we could find a show or two that we watch each night, not because of its educational or entertainment value, but only because of force of habit.

In contrast, George Gallop Jr., in his book, *The Great American Success Story*, says the "successful" people interviewed in one poll only watched TV an average of 1½ hours per day. It doesn't take a genius to see the difference between the two groups and make the leap in logic. To be successful, you need to turn off the TV and invest that extra 2½ hours per day in the goal of your choice. Just think, what could you accomplish with an extra 2 ½ hours a day. What

could you accomplish with an extra 17 ½ hours per week or an extra 910 hours per year.

910 hours equals approximately 114 - eight hour days or close to four months of productive time.

You can even have your cake and eat it, too.

When I sit on the couch, paying homage to the gods of Cable TV, I always try to have something else to do. I'm either looking through a magazine, skimming through a book or even practicing my juggling. Since it takes the mind of a slug to watch TV, I find that even I, can do two things at once. I give the TV about 5% of my brain and concentrate the other 95% on another more important task.

This way I accomplish a couple of my goals at the same time. I'm with my wife, so we can talk and share ideas as we gather around the glow of the television. I'm also learning more by reading magazines and books that relate to one of my goals.

Use the Tivo/VCR

Instead of watching an eight-hour long mini-series, tape it on your Tivo/VCR. Later watch the show at your convenience and save time by zipping through the commercials. Almost every night I tape the David Letterman show and watch it at my convenience.

One program you should always miss is the late night news (usually around 10:00 p.m.). Filling your mind with the latest rapes, muggings and killings just before bed time is a sure prescription for a poor nights' rest and possibly the cause of a negative attitude the next day. My wife and I even limit our day time news quota, frequently changing channels to something a little lighter after reaching our limit of killings in one day. Instead of watching the late night news, read something, humorous or inspirational to set your mind up for a peaceful nights' rest.

You Don't Have To Be Everyone's Friend

I'm sure you've heard the saying, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me."
It's not true! Don't believe it!

I heard two Sticks and Stones examples that show how wrong that line can be. The first case was a young college student I was talking to. He was excited about a term paper he had presented in class. I asked him to show it to me. He brought it out and gave it to me with the proviso,

"I guess your laughter can't hurt any more than my parent's laughter." I was shocked to hear that his parents had made fun of this young student's attempt. They probably didn't even realize how hurt he felt from their remarks.

The second story comes from the newspaper. A young nine year-old girl, Amy, has cerebral palsy. She sent a letter to Santa in care of the local radio station. When I initially heard the story, I guessed that she probably wanted relief from her disease. Instead she wrote to Santa: "I have a problem at school. Kids laugh at me because of the way I walk and run. I have cerebral palsy. I just want one day where no one laughs at me or makes fun of me."

I really feel sorry for both of these kids because they have learned that words can hurt, especially if they are mean spiteful words.

Some people are just mean-mouthed and are always looking for the bad in every situation. So everything they say, has to be discounted for their poor attitude. You have to believe in yourself, enough to trust your judgment more than anyone else, especially the doomsayers. A friend of mine has a great line. She says, "I like me, more than I like you." Another way of saying it is, "My opinion of myself, is more important than your opinion of me."

Unfortunately, the rational mind has only limited power when it comes to the onslaught of waves of negative statements. While you can discount a few critical remarks, even the best of us would be worn down if all we heard were disapproving statements.

One night I watched a nature show, about how wild elephants were trained in Southeast Asia. The men would first capture a four year old wild elephant. They would tie it up so tightly between some trees, so it could hardly move. Then over a period of days and weeks they would take turns beating it, 24 hours a day. They wouldn't allow it to sleep. They'd deprive it of food and water and basically, torture the poor creature until they break its spirit.

Don't let the naysayers do that to you!
Don't let them beat you down.

My rule is: Trust yourself first and other people second. 99% of the time, the person saying negative things about you, is saying more about him/herself than they are saying about us. Believe in yourself first and what you're doing, then listen to what other people say. Unfortunately, usually just the opposite is true.

Another example comes from the post office. A young woman named Patty made the comment, "I don't think I have what it takes to be a carrier." I tried to talk her out of that statement, but she was adamant. I think one reason she made that assertion was because the carriers (at least some) tease her unmercifully. For some reason, "put-down" humor is a very popular pastime with some letter carriers and these of course tend to be the loudest.

Here are some typical comments that I heard in the Post Office about Patty:

- “She finally gets a route and now she can't handle it.”
- Carrier #1 says, “Have a good day.” Carrier #2 says, “If you want to have a good day, just make sure you don't look in a mirror.”
- “A girl from the Missouri School of the Blind would have had that route up by now.”

While anyone could take one comment like that, when you hear a dozen comments like that day after day, it starts to bother you and you start to think, “What's wrong with me?”

What you have to realize is that there are some real nasty people out there in the game of life. They are so uncaring and mean spirited, you certainly don't want to call them "your friend."

The trick is to realize, that you don't have to be everyone's friend. First, it's physically impossible. You only have a finite amount of free time to be with people. Why not spend what time you have with loving caring people rather than the negative and mean-spirited types.

Secondly, you wouldn't want to be friends with some of the jerks out there anyway. And don't think that you can change them, because you can't! Anyone who's been married more than thirty days knows the aggravation of trying to mold that other person into your image. It just doesn't work.

One in a hundred award

I make a point of trying to find the one in a hundred, type of friend. Try looking for a person who will support you and your goals. Find the friend who will help to lift you up when you've fallen and celebrate with you when you're on top.

There's an old saying that "Birds of a feather flock together." Make sure that you're out there soaring with the eagles and not squabbling with the turkeys. Don't hang around with negative, mean spirited, put down artists. They will only pull you down and bring you to their level. Don't even associate with them if possible. This is a very important point, since it could possibly ruin your life. One excellent saying sums it up this way, "Good friends give joy and divide sorrow."

If you want to be a goal achiever, DON'T

- Don't give credibility to the statements of jerks.
- Don't talk to the turkeys when you want to fly with eagles.
- Don't tell anyone, but trusted, supportive friends about your goals.
- Don't add anyone to your list of friends, who is not on your side.
- Don't expect to be everyone's friend. It can't be done.

It's Okay to LIE, Sometimes!

Especially to Yourself

Have you ever told a lie? Sure you have. We all have. While we want to be truthful most of the time, I doubt that anyone is 100% truthful, nor do you want to be. Let me give you three examples.

President Jimmy Carter's mother was being interviewed by a rather pesky reporter. And the reporter was trying to get some dirt on the president. The reporter asked Mrs. Carter if Jimmy had ever told a lie. Mrs. Carter replied, that no, Jimmy was a very honest boy. The reporter pushed, "Are you sure, he's NEVER told a lie?" And Jimmy's mother said, "Well, maybe a little white lie, now and then." The reporter immediately jumped on that comment, "What do you mean a little white lie? What sort of lies does he tell?" And Mrs. Carter said, "Sort of like the little white lie I just told you when you walked into the room and I told you how nice you looked."

Your wife comes home from the beauty parlor with a new hairdo. She's beaming, she's radiant with a smile that goes from ear to ear. She asks the question, "Do you like my new hairdo?" What are you going to say,? "Dear, that is the ugliest permanent you have ever received. You look terrible!" The next day, when you wake up in the hospital, from a frying pan injury, you'll probably consider stretching the truth the next time and say, "Oh honey, you look beautiful."

We even lie in Toastmasters. It's true. I still remember the first Toastmaster meeting I ever attended. The meeting was fairly typical, except they had one speaker who was terrible. I figured that when the evaluator got up to critique the speech that he would rip this guy apart.

I didn't know much about speaking at the time, but I did know that this speaker was the worst I'd ever heard. Yet, when the evaluator got up, it was as if he had heard a different speech than I. He was praising the speaker, talking about the good

job he had done. I wanted to jump up and say, "I object. Wake up! Didn't you see what was going on? That guy was terrible." Is the evaluator deaf and blind? With a few years experience in Toastmasters however, I now realize the answer is no. The evaluator had seen the same speech as everyone else. He was just stretching the truth a little. Instead of emphasizing the negative, he was accentuating the positive.

So while we can all probably agree that we want to be truthful 99% of the time, there are occasions when we want to stretch the truth.

One important time you want to stretch the truth is when you think, and talk about yourself. You want to see things that might be, and not just what is. You want to see yourself with the qualities you want, not just the qualities you have. A friend of mine says, "I never say anything about myself, that I don't want to be true."

Zig Ziglar says, "A positive statement about yourself, is just the truth told in advance. You're really not lying, you're just telling the truth in advance."

Frequently when people have a goal, they will encounter the "truth" barrier. It's like a gigantic brick wall that you have to scale.

Instead of concentrating on the "truth," concentrate on the possible and desirable. The placebo effect works because people believe that it will work. It's okay to stretch the truth, if it will lead you in the right direction.

When I was Cubmaster of Pack 303, I had a slogan,
"The best Pack in St. Louis."

When I was Scoutmaster of Troop 303, I had a slogan,
"The best Troop in St. Louis."

When I was President of South County Toastmasters, I had a slogan,
"The best darn club in the galaxy!"

Now that I'm a professional speaker, I have a slogan
"The best speaker in St. Louis."

As a speaker, sometimes I'll have the person who is introducing me use that line, "The best speaker in St. Louis." I know that some people might get miffed about that introduction. One introducer even refused to say it. He said, "Oh I can't say that. It's not the truth."

But I use that introduction in some of my speeches to emphasize the importance of looking at the positive and the possible for yourself. If I don't believe in myself, if I don't visualize myself as a winner, if I don't see myself as the best speaker in St. Louis, then how can I become that way?

I'm sure some people might say, "Tom, come on now, lets be realistic. Are you really the best speaker in St. Louis?" My answer is, "Well, maybe not." But what I'm doing is just stretching the truth a little bit. I'm just telling the truth in advance. It's really not that important that I be the best. It is absolutely important that I see myself as the best.

One of the other truth-stretching techniques I've used, is to change my name. Not legally of course, but practically.

Since I've got about 300 postal customers, I try to make personal contact with each of them. I want them to remember me and my name. So I decided to have a name tag made that says, "Tom Terrific." It's an attention grabber, brings a smile to everyone's face and a usually solicits some sort of reaction. "Is your name really TERRIFIC?"

And if they question me any further, I pull out one my business card that I had made and it also says, "Tom Terrific." Besides helping on the route, the name reminds me to act Terrific, think Terrific and believe in myself as one Terrific individual.

Here's a poem about stretching the truth that I wrote.

*It's Okay to lie, sometimes,
It's Okay to stretch the truth.
It's Okay to see yourself, as a young and supple youth.*

*It's Okay to visualize, and see things that might be.
It's Okay to tell yourself, I'm loving, strong and free.*

*It's Okay, go ahead right now, say it to yourself.
I'm the greatest, I'm the best, and I don't have any doubt.*

Part of the postage you pay to reach your goal is to work on improving your own attitude, beliefs and convictions.

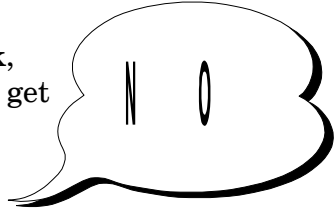
Henry Ford once said, “Whether you think you can or think you can’t – you’re right.”

There are many good books, tapes and CD’s on this subject. One of the classics is *The Power of Positive Thinking* by Dr. Norman Vincent Peale.

Take time every day to improve your attitude and outlook. It may take a while, but it’s definitely worth the effort.

Just Say "No"

In the process of writing this book, I've been tempted many times to get involved in other activities.



I've been asked to join a speech contest, emcee a Toastmaster event, speak to outside groups, and coach a new speaker. All of these activities, while worthwhile, would have taken time away from my primary goal of writing this book. My mind would have been diverted and I would have found it harder to find the time and energy to focus on my goal.

My recommendation to you, when people ask you to do just one more little thing, is "Just say NO."

For many of us, it's hard to do. It's a little uncomfortable saying "NO" to friends, but you have to or you'll never get where you want to be.

One of the tricks to saying "NO" is to schedule YOUR time first on the calendar. If your goal is to get into shape, schedule time to go to the gym first. If your goal is to get an education, schedule your college classes first. If your goal is to become a better speaker, schedule your Toastmaster meeting on the calendar first.

This way when a friend asks you to do something, you can truthfully say, "Let me check my calendar. Oh, too bad. I've already got something scheduled for that time."

As many modern parents have found, there are only so many hours in the day and so much energy you can muster up. Superman and Superwoman are only found in comics and television.

Another friend was given the choice of working four, ten-hour days instead of five, eight-hour days. I advised her to just say

no.

While it would be nice to have a three-day weekend every week, the price she would have to pay would be too hard. She's got a new husband, a new baby and a new house that all demand attention on a daily basis. She also needs to take care of herself physically, by exercising and eating the right foods. It's just too hard when work demands an extra two hours per day.

Let's do a little practice

Friend: Can you come over and watch a movie with me?
NO, I'm busy tonight.

Friend: Will you watch the kids for a couple of hours?
NO, I've already got something on my calendar.

Friend: Are you free for lunch on Tuesday?
NO, sorry. Maybe another time.

Friend: Can you work on the church committee?
NO, I'm too busy at this time.

Hopefully, I don't sound too negative, writing about this topic. If the truth be known, I say YES to a lot of opportunities. But I don't say YES to every opportunity.

There are many times when I've turned down speaking jobs, that would have taken too much of my time. The trick is balance. Say YES to yourself first and then when you have time and energy, you can say YES to other people.

The 6-P Rule

Prior-Preparation-Prevents-Pitiful-Poor-Performance

Back in the late 60's, one of the few things I remember from my Army summer camp training was a sergeant yelling the 6-P Rule at us raw recruits. Prior-Preparation-Prevents- Pitiful-Poor-Performance. In a combat situation you need to be prepared for every contingency.

Even the Boy Scouts have the motto of “Be Prepared.” If you’re not prepared on a camp out, you may get cold if you don’t bring enough warm clothes; wet if you forget your poncho; and very hungry if you don’t bring enough food along. If you’re prepared, you can make the best of even a bad situation.

In Toastmasters we have a similar guideline, I call it the Rule of Sixty. For every minute that you will be speaking in front of an audience, you need to prepare sixty minutes. So if you’ve got a five minute speech to give, you need to work on it for 300 minutes. It’s really a shame to see some speakers stumble around in front of the audience, scared to death, all because they’re not prepared.

Even as a mailman, preparation is critical. Here’s a note I wrote from the winter of 93'.

“As I go out to load my mail truck, I notice that it’s 33 degrees and raining cats and dogs. No right-thinking, rational, reasoning human being would go out and walk in this bitter slop. I say to myself, ‘Damn, it’s gonna be a tough day today.’ I then catch myself saying those words and I laugh out loud. ‘Man, why are you talking like that? That’s negative thinking if I ever heard it. Zig Ziglar would kick you out of the positive thinker’s club in a minute with ideas like that.’”

For a mailman this really is the worst. This is as bad as it gets. At thirty-three degrees, it's too warm for snow, but just right for the coldest, freezing, bone chilling rain known to

man.

Yet today, I know for a fact, that I will have a good, learning, fun-filled day because I am prepared.

If you look inside my postal truck, it looks like a Sanford and Son's pickup, with all the stuff I carry!

I have my radio, a tape player, a small pocket recorder, and ten audio cassettes to listen to. I've got my portable computer, briefcase, my plug-in water heater with hot chocolate and mug. I've got my high top boots, my low top galoshes, my rain hat, a Gortex raincoat, four sets of gloves, lunch box, thermos for hot soup, soda for lunch and of course books to read on my lunch break. I look like I'm preparing for World War III, with all the stuff I carry.

Being prepared makes all the difference on those nasty, funky, walk in the mud days. When I strap on my galoshes, Gortex raincoat, gloves, hat and portable radio; after eating a bowl of homemade soup, I'm ready for action. I can go out in some of the nastiest weather around and still enjoy myself.

My goal as a mailman is to not only deliver the mail, but to enjoy myself in the process. Being prepared makes all the difference.

The question is, "Are You Prepared?" And how can you "Be Prepared" to accomplish your goals?

Here are a number of ways you can implement the 6-P Rule and "Be Prepared."

1. Read every book in the library related to your goal.

That doesn't mean reading one book, that means reading ALL forty-nine books on that topic. Take notes on everything that seems important to you. Start a file, a notebook, and keep your material together. If your library has computer access,

search by topic, by key notes, by author and by title. It's amazing how many books you can find to help reach your goal.

Here's what Thomas Edison says, "When I want to discover something, I begin by reading up everything that has been done along that line in the past. That's what all these books in library are for. I see what has been accomplished at great expense in the past. I gather the data of many thousands of experiments as a starting point"

If Thomas Edison, the greatest inventor the U.S. has ever seen, needed to use the library, you should too.

2. Listen to all the tapes and CD's on the subject.

This is a great way to spend driving time or resting time at home. Again, your library is a great resource. If your city library is small, pay to join one that has the necessary resources. Invest in a player with headphones. This way you can do chores around the house and still be learning.

3. Watch all the videos available on your goal.

Again, the library is a great source, but also check out your local video rental store. Many great educational videos are available in both places.

4. Read all the magazines on your topic.

Having that monthly support reinforces your own commitment and shows you how others have succeeded in the past. One of my goals is to be as healthy and vibrant as possible. To support my goal, I read Prevention magazine. Monthly it reinforces the importance of exercise, diet and a positive mental attitude. Whatever your goal, I bet there are magazines available that support it. If dollars are tight, use the library. I regularly read or skim through twenty different library magazines.

5. Go to seminars, presentations and training.

Seminars are getting cheaper all the time and many have a money-back guarantee, so you can't lose. Read the newspaper

and your mail to find out about local presentations.

6. Go back to school.

Many areas have adult education classes close to your home. You can choose from a variety of subjects and they're usually inexpensive. Also, consider community colleges. They also have great classes for reasonable prices.

7. Talk to the experts in the field.

It's not as hard as you suspect. Give them a call, explain your project and then invite them to lunch. (You buy of course and remember to take along your recorder.)

8. Keep your eyes and ears open.

If you're listening to the radio or watching TV, reading a book or newspaper, or even just talking to a friend, keep your antennae up. Listen for information that might help you in the accomplishment of your goal.

9. Buy the current books.

If the books you need are too recent to be in the library, invest a few dollars and buy the books. Current books may have information that you need. My library will buy most books I suggest – see if your library has that option.

10. Search the Internet.

The Internet literally links you to the rest of the world. There are thousands of links, web pages and tons of information on just about any topic. Use a “search” to find your area of interest and then research as much as possible. You don't even have to have a computer these days to get onto the Net. Usually the local library has an Internet access you can use for free, although your time will be limited.

11. Join clubs that help support your ideas and goals.

These can be social clubs like singles groups; clubs to help improve your confidence and self-image, like Toastmasters; or specific groups that meet for one particular interest. I'm sure that there's a club around that supports your goal.

If this seems like a lot of work – it is.

If this seems like you are constantly learning and growing and always improving yourself – you are.

If this seems like you'll be using the library a lot – you will be.

But when you finally reach your goal and destination, you will realize that all this preparation was worthwhile.

Men give me some credit for genius. All the genius I have lies in this: when I have a subject in hand, I study it profoundly. Day and night it is before me. I explore it in all its bearings. My mind becomes pervaded with it. then the effort which I make the people are pleased to call the fruit of genius. It is the fruit of labor and thought.

- *Alexander Hamilton*

JUNTO

One of the games which trainers use to teach teamwork is to give a puzzle to a group. Initially, each person has to work separately in coming up with the answer.

When the time is up, the trainer asks for a show of hands on how many people solved the entire puzzle. Usually, no one raises their hand. The puzzle is too tough. Some people have figured out part "A," some people have figured out another section, but no one person solves the entire puzzle. Then the trainer allows the entire group to work on the puzzle together. The group starts talking, exchanging ideas, sharing theories and before you know it, the puzzle is solved.

This basically is the idea behind the Junto – a group of people working together, thinking and sharing ideas. The group can help you see solutions and possibilities you may have never thought of before. The group can also be supportive, caring and encouraging of your individual goals.

The name Junto comes from Benjamin Franklin. In his autobiography, he says, "I had formed most of my ingenious (clever) acquaintances into a club for mutual improvement. Our club, the Junto, was found so useful and afforded such satisfaction to the members, that several were desirous of introducing their friends." His Junto helped start the first library system in the United States. He also presented a paper to the Junto on the necessity of starting a fire company to handle the fires in the community. From this start in the Junto, one of the first volunteer fire companies in America was established.

One of the interesting "rules" of Benjamin Franklin's Junto was that members were "forbid the use of every word or expression in the language that imported a fixed opinion, such as certainly, undoubtedly, etc." One of the tenants of the club is "you don't know it all" and that you can see more clearly by using the eyes, ears and minds of many people.

There are a number of stories that illustrate how important it is to be open to the ideas of others. One story says that the search for truth is like standing at a nine-foot high, solid wooden fence. It's too long to get around and too high to climb, so our only option is to find some little knothole in the fence, poke our eyeball in and see what we can see. On the other side of the fence is a cow. Some people look through the hole and see a horn and they say, "Ah, the horn is the truth." Others look through and see the beautiful brown skin and say, "Ah, Brown must be the way." Then others look through and see the tail swishing back and forth and are convinced that the ever moving tail is their belief. While they all see part of the picture, no one person can see it all.

Benjamin Franklin tells a similar story. He says, "It's like a man traveling in foggy weather. Those at a distance, he sees wrapped up in the fog, as well as those behind him and also the people in the fields on each side are enveloped by the fog also. But near him all appears clear, though in truth he is as much in the fog as any of them."

To be wise, you need to be aware that you too are in the fog, that there are many options, many truths out there and the more knotholes we can see through, the more eyes we can see with, the more people we can listen to, then the wiser we become.

The Junto idea has even been taken up by a couple of the top speakers and leaders in America.

- Tom Peters, the current management guru, in his book, *In Search of Excellence*, uses the term "skunk works" to describe essentially the same idea. A small group of people gets together to work on a project and the results are usually greater than the sum of the parts.
- Zig Ziglar has an appropriate saying. He says, "You can get everything in life you want, if you'll just help enough other people get what they want." By working together with others you can accomplish much more.
- Pat Riley, former NBA coach, says "Teamwork is the essence of life. Great teamwork is the only way to reach our ultimate moments, to create the breakthroughs that define our careers, to fulfill our lives with a sense of lasting significance."

It's interesting that the word Junto has evolved into the word Junta. Junta is defined as a group of people who have taken power. In a sense, that's what a Junto is. It's a group of people who have decided to take control of their lives and have taken power back to themselves.

Here's how one of our typical meetings is run. We usually get together for dinner at someone's house. We try to make it a social occasion as well as a meeting. After dinner we sit around the table and, one-by-one we take turns talking about what's happened in the last month or so, what we're working on and what challenges we have in the future. Other members are free to jump in with support and positive ideas for the person who's talking. No criticism is allowed. In one meeting, I asked for some advice on how to handle a sensitive issue. One of our members had been through the experience twice and shared her insight. One person was questioning his ability to handle a new project. We all gave him our support and encouragement. Another person wanted to know how to handle a particular situation. We all shared our thoughts. It's a very positive, loving experience.

Here's How to Get Started

- Start with a small group – four to six people whom you respect.
- Everyone invited to join the group must be absolutely trustworthy; a person of unquestionable integrity.
- Meet once every month or so, usually for two hours.
- Start the first meeting with a discussion of goals. What does each person want to accomplish? How can we help each other? Goals should be written down.
- Keep a notebook with you at all times so you can write down your successes, failures and things you've learned. Then share those with the group at your next meeting.
- Use the group to help you think smarter, brainstorm ideas, solve problems, encourage creativity and support your efforts.

Hillary Clinton once said, “No one ever became a success without the help of other people.” I believe it. You need others to help and support you.

The Junto is a great way to get that support.

One Step at a Time

I was considering visiting my younger brother Mark, about visiting him in California during the summer. He said, "That's not a good time. I'm going to bike across the United States." I was impressed. For me, driving a car from California to the east coast seems like quite a feat, but to bicycle that distance is terrific. I envisioned the towering mountains of Colorado and was glad he hadn't invited me along.

THEN – I read a book by Elena Hanuse, *One Step At A Time*. She went across America, but she didn't bike, she walked. She walked the entire distance, from San Francisco to the Statue of Liberty. That's over 3000 miles or 9,240,000 steps according to her estimate. Now that's some hike, even for a mailman! And she didn't do it as a kid, but as a true middle-ager in her 50's. When she started thinking about her dream to walk across America, she could barely walk around the block, much less walk 3000 miles. But she made it, one step at a time. This was a feat which would be hard to beat.

THEN – I listened to a tape about Rick Hansen. Rick was in a bad truck accident and lost the use of his legs. March 21, 1985 he started a trip in his wheel chair that would take him not across the U.S., but around the world! He traveled through thirty-four countries and went a total distance of 24,900 miles in his wheelchair. This was an unbeatable feat. I was inspired.

THEN – I found out about Bob Wieland. Bob lost both of his legs to a land mine in Vietnam. Devastating! But for Bob it was just another challenge. After his accident, Bob became a champion weight lifter. He went from 87 pounds after the accident to 122 pounds of pure muscle. When he was competing, he bench pressed 303 pounds, a world record for his weight class. Then Bob decided to hike across the U.S. on his hands. He had to wear padded gloves on his knuckles, lifted himself off the pavement and then swung his lower body underneath him. This trip took three and a half years to

finish. Unbelievable!

Chapter 4 – The Postage

As these people have shown, you can achieve almost anything in your life, if you just take it, one step at a time.

Take one step today, one step tomorrow, and then before you know it, you'll have reached your destination.

As the Chinese quote says, "A journey of a thousand miles, begins with a single step." Take that single step today, then keep it up, day after day, and you'll reach your objective.

Ask yourself the question:

What's the one step I can take today?

The Follow Through

Have you ever had instruction in tennis, golf, baseball or basketball? Sure you have, even if it's just mom or dad, out there with you in the back yard teaching you the fundamentals. One of the key elements in all these sports is the follow through. When you hit the baseball, you follow through with the bat and you also follow through with your body.

You can do everything else right – have the right stance, keep your eye on the ball, practice a million hours, but unless you follow through properly, the ball won't go where you want it to go. It won't have the power and you won't achieve your goal.

Outside of sports, the same principle applies. Here's an example.

My fireplace screen fell apart this year into a dozen pieces, and I wanted to replace it with one we could pull back and forth, rather than a free standing model. I noticed a large, conspicuous ad in the newspaper from the "Fireplace Shop" and then a couple days later, I noticed they had a commercial on TV. By this time they had my attention, so I gave them a call. I told them what I needed – 40" wide by 28" tall, black – nothing fancy. This was at 9:00 a.m. and the sales person promised to call back. By 5:00 p.m., no one had returned my call, so I called the store again, but this time I asked to speak to the manager. He was on the other line, but they took my phone number again and promised to call back. It's now three days later and still no one has returned my two phone calls.

Today, I called a different fireplace company, right out of the yellow pages. I told them what I needed. She promised to call right back, and five minutes later, she did. She gave me a price and I ordered my fireplace screen from her.

The lesson is dramatic. You can spend thousands of dollars on

achieving a goal. (In this case advertising in the newspaper and on television). You can get very close to achieving the goal. (The customer calls you!)

But unless you Follow Through, (Call the customer back.)

You won't achieve your goal. (The customer goes elsewhere and you don't make the sale.)

In contrast, my next door neighbor, Tony, who's a salesman, checks his answering machine once every hour. He's on the road most of the time, but he takes the time to call in and see if anyone has left a message. He wants to make sure that he gets back to his customers as quickly as possible.

Zig Ziglar tells a story about his first sales presentation. He was demonstrating his cookware to a group of families. He cooked the food, showed them how to use the cookware, and two families were ready to buy, but Zig said, "Ladies I'm sorry, I'd love to take your order, but I've got another appointment in five minutes and unless I leave right now, I'm going to be very late." He left two customers who were ready and willing to buy. Zig, as a beginning salesman, didn't follow through and he could have very easily lost the sale.

The same day that I wrote this article we had a presentation at work. The Salvation Army brought in a speaker, as part of the United Way campaign. She talked to us about the Salvation Army and all the good work they did and she closed her speech with this line, "Thank you very much." It was a nice short presentation, but she made the same mistake that Zig Ziglar did when he was first starting out. She didn't ask for the order. She didn't Follow Through. She didn't ask us to contribute or make a donation on behalf of the Salvation Army.

Whatever your goal is, no matter how diligent and persistent you've been, you will at one point be at that critical stage that makes all the difference.

Make sure that you call back – ASAP!

Make sure you take care of the last possible detail.
Make sure that you ask for the order.
Make sure that you follow through.

No Free Lunch

In Parade Magazine I read an article about the number of Americans who have been taken in by telephone and mail scams. You know the type.

"Congratulations, you have just won one of the following prizes:

- #1. A brand new Cadillac Seville,
- #2. \$5000 in cash or
- #3. A brand new bass boat.

Please call the number below to discover which prize is yours."

When you do call, you discover that you have won the bass boat, but that it will cost \$49.95 to process and send to you. You figure that \$49.95 is nothing compared to the prize you've won, so you gladly give the person your credit card number. Ten days later the UPS man pulls up in front of your house with a small box. In it is your bass boat, a small inflatable two man boat. You've been had.

What's hard to believe, is that 53 million adults have responded to such ads and tactics. And these aren't young, wide-eyed, new to the world 20-year-olds, but many are the seasoned veterans who have been around. Why are so many people ready, willing, and always looking for that free lunch, that opportunity of a lifetime?

I think the answer is that many have not learned the lesson of persistence. You can have anything in life you want "if" you're willing to work at it on a regular, daily, consistent, never give up basis. We would much rather "win" the prize rather than earn it. There is *No Free Lunch*, but many people are still looking for it.

Similarly, have you ever wondered at the millions of dollars that are lost on gambling, the lottery and even at church bingo? I was recently talking to my barber and he was telling about one bingo parlor here in St. Louis. One woman spends a thousand dollars every week at this bingo parlor. Can you imagine the good that could be done with this type of money?

Even if you're not spending a thousand dollars a week, you might very easily be spending ten dollars a week on lottery tickets. One of my favorite sayings is, "The odds of winning the lottery are the same whether you play or not." While that is obviously an overstatement, it's not much of an overstatement. The odds are so astronomically high, that it just doesn't make much sense. Why not take that \$40.00 per month and invest it in yourself. Buy a good motivational book, tape or video or use it for a college course.

When my son was growing up, he loved to look at the mail. Whenever we would get one of those "congratulations" letter he would go bananas. He'd say, "Look dad, we've won a million dollars." Then he would bug me continually trying to get me to send in the application. Finally he would use the tactic, "Well if you're not going to send it in, could I?" Now that he's in college, he finally wised up to the *No Free Lunch* philosophy.

However, age doesn't seem to inoculate us from that terrible "pot of gold" disease. A couple of years ago another scam artist went after some of the largest not-for-profit agencies in the United States. He promised them that by investing a small amount with him that he could turn it around and make them a gigantic return. When they invested a small amount, sure enough, he gave them a healthy profit in quick order. When he asked for a large sum, almost all gladly gave him large amounts of money. He took their money and ran.

In Missouri we had an opportunity to vote on whether or not the state should have a lottery. I voted against it, because I didn't think that the state should be in the gambling business.

It's not that I feel that gambling is immoral, but it sends the wrong message to people. "Get rich quick with us, it's the way to happiness." Unfortunately for some, it's also the way to bankruptcy, marital problems and even suicide.

Many people are always looking for that short cut to success. There isn't any. Many people are always looking for that Free Lunch, but it doesn't exist.

Remember, if it sounds too good to be true – it is!

There is *No Free Lunch*.

Persistence and determination alone seem
always to prevail.

It's Not My Fault

Can I share with you, one of the things that bugs me? Every now and then I hear people blame their lack of success on genetics, or their parents, or even the rest of the world, rather than on the true culprit – themselves.

It's Not My Fault – My parents weren't Einstein you know.
It's Not My Fault – I just wasn't born with the gift, like some people.
It's Not My Fault – I'm a perceiver, not an achiever.

When these "faultless" people, see someone achieving success, they give all the credit to his/her gift.
"Oh, he's so lucky to be talented."
"If I just had her gift, I could accomplish anything."
Rarely do they acknowledge the true base of success – determination, practice and sheer persistence.

I'm not saying that there aren't gifts and talents and predispositions, but 95% of the time, it's not the naturally talented people who make it to the top, it's the average person with a passion and drive and persistence to achieve.

In one of my Presentation Skills classes, I do a segment called "Speaking is like Juggling." I give a short juggling demonstration with music and then get a volunteer from the audience to try and do the same routine. Naturally the person drops the balls and doesn't juggle very well. One of my volunteers was John. John's first attempt at juggling was pretty pathetic, which is natural. When I showed John the proper way to juggle, he did a little better, but still not very well. I then asked him, if he would practice, and at the end of the six-week class give the group a demonstration? The theory is that you can accomplish just about anything if you're willing to work at it.

Six weeks later, the class is winding down and John gets up to do his juggling demonstration. But instead of being better,

John is worse. He's using the wrong technique. The balls are colliding in midair. He's dropping balls all over the floor. Here's what he says, "To juggle, you need three things. You need persistence, you need knowledge and you need physical dexterity. I've only got two of those three qualities. I just don't have the physical dexterity to juggle." So what he's saying in essence is – I don't have the gift, "It's Not My Fault."

I take a deep breath and say, "Listen here, I've been practicing juggling for ten years and I still don't have it down. Don't give up so quickly!" He's only practiced for six weeks and he's ready to give up. (I would bet too, that he hasn't put in much time practicing.) Another reason John can't juggle is that he's using the wrong technique. Instead of throwing the balls to the inside, he's throwing them to the outside. The balls are colliding in midair. No wonder he's not doing well. John does have the physical dexterity, he just doesn't have the knowledge and persistence that he needs. When John says, "It's not my fault," my answer is "Yes it is."

Finally, as I'm writing this segment, I experience an incident that dramatically emphasizes my point.

One morning I deliver a letter to a customer marked, "Return to Sender – No Such Address." The customer looks at me and says, "What is wrong with the Post Office? I've been mailing letters to this address for years!" I look at the address and notice that the zip code says 63129. I say, "Here's your problem; you've got the wrong zip code. You've got 63129; I think it should be 63126." He says, "That's not a nine, that's a six." Then he starts using language that would make a drill sergeant blush. "Those &^%#! Those @#\$\$%& ! They're just trying to cheat me out of another thirty-seven cents, those @#%&*!."

At this point I realize this is one fight I can't win, so I beat a hasty retreat out the door.

But isn't it sad, that some people can't even accept responsibility for even their own penmanship. They would rather blame anyone else than take responsibility for even their minor actions. I did notice however, the next day he readdressed the letter and his penmanship was much improved.

I don't expect you to accept blame and responsibility for EVERYTHING that occurs in your life. Accidents do occur and you can only control so many factors.

I do expect however, that you take responsibility for your actions, ideas and choices and when things don't work out, and you hear those words forming on your lips, "It's not my fault," that you shut up. You accept responsibility and learn from your mistakes. And you silently say to yourself, "Yes, it is my fault."

If it's never our fault, we can't take
responsibility for it.
If we can't take responsibility for it, we'll
always be its victim.

- *Richard Bach*

Roadblocks and Detours



As a mailman, there are times when you're driving down the street and you come across a problem: the road is blocked, there's an accident, part of the street is being repaved, or

possibly there's a downed tree. You could just sit there and whine and complain and then call the supervisor, but you don't. The solution is obvious. You find away around the obstacle. The roadblock becomes a detour. It may slow you down, but it doesn't stop the accomplishment of your goal.

When you go on vacation and drive from Washington, D.C. to San Francisco, you would probably be exactly on course only about 1% of the time. The road veers to the left or right. There are roadblocks, detours, stops you have to make, cities you want to avoid. There are unforeseen circumstances that force your car to change course. In fact, the course is almost never directly straight to San Francisco. You are always going a little north or a little south, always a little off course. A computer mapping program I have, shows it takes thirty-three course changes to get to San Francisco from Washington D.C.. There is no one direct route. You must be willing to adjust.

What happens if you run into a roadblock or run into a detour? Do you just sit there and give up? Of course not. You back up, turn around and try to get around the obstacle. In 1993 we had some terrible floods in the St. Louis area. Interstate highways were closed because of water on the roads, but did the people give up? Did they stay home from work? No, they just found another route, another way to get where they wanted to go.

In your quest to achieve your goal, your plan, you must always

be willing to change your course. Don't be permanently stymied by roadblocks and detours. Make the necessary corrections and then keep on moving.

In the course of writing this book I've had many roadblocks and detours. Friends and family have died. The herniated disc in my back has demanded constant attention and the internet is a never ending source for distraction, but I have always managed to eventually get back on course.

That's the real trick in accomplishing any goal or plan in your life. Know that at times you may be stopped and stymied. It's just part of life. The trick is to get back on course as soon as possible and continue your journey.

If you've hit a roadblock recently, recognize it; pay attention to it; do what's necessary, but then get back in the car and continue your journey.

Help Wanted

At this point in the book, hopefully you have identified a goal or two that you want to accomplish. You've started working on that goal in a persistent way, but nothing seems to be happening. Don't get too discouraged. Let me share with you another step you need to take.

One of my goals in 1993 was to juggle four balls. A lot of people can juggle three balls, but very few can juggle four. It's not easy, but certainly possible. I started working on this goal in January and practiced through June – a good six months.



I finally figured out it was physically impossible to juggle four balls the way I'd been trying. I needed some help. I met someone, an expert juggler, and he showed me in just thirty seconds what I was doing wrong. He taught me the correct way to juggle four balls and in just more two months I could do it. It was still hard, but I could juggle four balls for short periods of time.

The whole point is this: when you're trying to reach a goal, don't try to do it alone. Get some expert help. If you just charge out, assuming you know best, you could be wasting a lot of valuable time.

There's an old saying, "practice makes perfect," don't believe it, it's not true. Bad golf practice makes you a bad golfer. Bad speaking practice, makes you a bad speaker. Practicing anything badly, just makes you bad at it, no matter how long you practice.

In the song *Help* by the Beatles, they teach a similar lesson although they say it a little differently.

*When I was young, oh so much younger than today
I never needed anybody's help in any way.
But now these days have gone and I'm not so self-assured
And now I find, I need you like, I've never done before*

*Help me if you can, I'm feeling down
And I do appreciate your being 'round
Help me get my feet, back on the ground
Won't you please, please, help me?*

We all need help. We can't do it alone. While some of us are obviously stronger, both physically and emotionally, than others, for any of us to attain our goal, we need the help and support of other people.

Harvey Mackay wrote an entire book on how to get and give help to other people. It's called, *Dig Your Well Before You're Thirsty*. It's a book about networking and staying in touch with people that can help you in your career and life. I highly recommend it. He says that you need more than talent, training, and dedication, to save you in today's economy. You need a network. Harvey says, "If I had to name the single characteristic shared by all the truly successful people I've met over a lifetime, I'd say it is the ability to create and nurture a network of contacts."

There's an old saying, "It isn't what you know, it's who you know." I've met a number of people who have joined Kiwanis or the local Optimist club, not because they wanted to do good in the neighborhood, but because they realized they had to make contacts in the community that could help them later on.

If this all sounds a little self-serving, it is. You need help – admit it. There's nothing wrong with going out to find it. That doesn't mean you just take, take, take and never give back in return. It does mean that you recognize your limitations and find the people who can help you.

Chapter 5

When Do You Start and When Do You Arrive?

Each of us has the best of intentions.
We really do want to reach that goal.
We really do want to write that letter.
We really are sincere, but –

Things happen – we get distracted – we lose our focus – we procrastinate. “I’ll do it tomorrow,” but tomorrow never comes.

When do you start? Why not today!

There’s also the question of, “When will the letters arrive?”

Just because it’s written and addressed with proper postage
doesn’t mean that
it will be delivered
on time.
When will I get there?



It's the fear of failure that kills you, that kills artists. You've got to go down that alley and take those chances.

- *Jack Lemmon*

Actions Speak Louder Than Words

Thomas J. Watson, the founder of IBM, had a sign posted all around his buildings and factories. It read, "THINK." He said, "Thought has been the father of every advance since time began." In 1994, the new president of IBM, Lou Gerstner, considered surrounding the "THINK" with the word "DO." Thinking is fine, thinking is imperative, but then you must finally and quickly ACT to achieve results.

Ihink o

One day I asked a business friend about the Japanese and their alleged workaholic habits. He said it was true that many worked late, had dinner with business clients and then went back to work and possibly slept at the job. He said, "In my indoctrination on how to deal with the Japanese, I was told that it was okay to inquire about the Japanese businessman's family, but if you were told that his son was on a baseball team, don't ask what position he played. He wouldn't know and would be embarrassed. Saving face is critical in Japanese culture."

I then asked my friend how it was possible for the U.S. to compete with a nation that worked twelve and sixteen hour days. He said their major failing is they are a very hierarchical society and no one makes a decision on their own. Everything must be okayed by your boss and probably his boss and most decisions are made by committee. To finally make a decision was a very time-consuming process. They were doing a lot of thinking but very little acting.

Tom Peters, the author of many fine management books, says that most businesses use the philosophy of Ready, Aim, Aim, Aim, Aim, and then when it's too late, actually get to Fire. He

suggests that you should try, “Ready, Fire, Aim.” You take action, see the results and then adjust and fire again. This doesn’t mean taking stupid risks or making decisions that will bankrupt the company, but it does mean experimenting on a small scale with new products and new ideas. See what works and keep that. What doesn’t work, either change or junk it.

The Postal Service seems to have an anti-action bias. Our slogan is, Ready, Aim, Committee, Talk, Committee, Aim, Report, Talk, Aim, Report, Talk, Committee, and then send it to the next level. Then the process starts all over again. You notice we never really get to the fire stage. I’m part of one postal committee. We’ve had four meetings to discuss one problem. Approximately six people were at each meeting. Admittedly, they were short meetings, only fifteen minutes long, (wouldn’t want to spend too much time on a problem), but we have taken no action. We’ve spent a month working on one problem and have accomplished nothing. Actually, I am a little bit too hard on the Postal Service. In 1997 we started to accept credit cards, only about thirty years behind everyone else.

Theodore Roosevelt, our 26th president, explained it succinctly when he said, “There is nothing brilliant nor outstanding in my record, except perhaps this one thing: I do the things that I believe ought to be done. And when I make up my mind to do a thing, I act.”

The other slogan Tom Watson had on his wall was, “We Forgive Thoughtful Mistakes.” You’ve got to be willing to take a chance, make mistakes, learn and adapt.

Unfortunately, fear can paralyze us. In taking action, we might make a mistake, a visible mistake, and thus be open to criticism or rejection. I guess this is why committees are so popular. If the committee makes a decision, then no one, particular person can be blamed.

Chapter 5 – When Do You Start and Arrive?

When I was in the Army, during training they had a saying, “Don’t just stand there, DO SOMETHING!” The drill instructor would yell it in my face. He wanted me to make a decision and take action, even if it was the wrong thing to do, even if I made a mistake. The Army was emphasizing action over a thoughtful committee process. In combat you can’t form a committee and meet at lunch, you’ve got to make a decision NOW!

One saying talks about three kinds of people:

The Immovable – These are people so set in their ways they’ll never change, never move from where they’re at.

The Movable – These people are always being led by someone else. They are the followers.

The Moving – These people are the leaders, the ones on the move, taking action. “Follow Me!” Is their motto.

Here’s the question to ask yourself: Which category do you belong to?

There’s only one answer for a persistent goal setter

The Moving.

Take Action NOW!

Get Moving!

Ready Fire Aim!

There is nothing brilliant nor outstanding
in my record, except perhaps this one
thing: I do the things that I believe ought
to be done. And when I make up my mind
to do a thing, I act.

- *Theodore Roosevelt*

Do It Now!

Are you planning to live to a ripe old age?
Are you planning to always stay in good shape and be in good health?

Are you planning, when you retire, to really start to enjoy life and do the things you've always wanted to do?

Well, I hope that all your plans come true, but there's a famous quote by the Scottish poet Robert Burns which says: "The best laid plans of mice and men often go awry
An' leave us nought but grief an' pain, for promised joy."

Planning is great, but sometimes plans just don't work out and you might consider doing it now, rather than later.

Let me tell you a story.

I was delivering the mail one day, and I said to myself, "Sally is sure getting a lot of personal mail today." The mail wasn't addressed to the family, it wasn't addressed to Mr. and Mrs., but it was specifically addressed to Sally. I'd seen this before. I was afraid there was a problem, a death or eminent divorce in the family, and so I knocked on the door to find out what was going on. (You won't find this procedure in the Post Office Manual. Don't expect your mailman to be checking on you all the time, but I do care about the people on my route and so I knocked.) Sally slowly came to the door in a bathrobe. She looked pale and a little sad, and I asked her, "Sally, is there something wrong?" She said, "Yes, I'm afraid so, Tom." She had just had a mastectomy and was home recovering. Next week she was starting chemotherapy and was scared about all the side effects. I offered my sympathy to her as best anyone can in those circumstances. I mentioned Norman Cousins and his book, *Anatomy of an Illness*, and how he'd used humor to help heal himself. She said, yes, she agreed with that type of therapy and was even going to get cable TV just to watch the humor channel.

She also said she was becoming introspective. She was questioning her life and her goals and was even blaming the cancer on her Type “A” personality. She was always pushing herself at work, always trying to do more and she thought that might have contributed to her cancer. She was rethinking her whole lifestyle.

Later on, the thought occurred to me: Isn't it too bad that many of us have to go through some personal tragedy to become a wiser person? She had to lose a breast to cancer to question her lifestyle.

But, instead of waiting for some personal tragedy to strike, why not start becoming that healthier and wiser person today. Why not start living in the NOW, instead of always putting it off until the future. Why not stop and smell the roses, today.

My thinking is this:

The time to get stronger is now when we're strong.

The time to improve yourself intellectually is now, when we are intellectually sharp.

The time to grow healthier is now, when we're already healthy.

The time to do all these things is not in the future, the time is now.

The problem is, when you're sick, or emotionally distraught, or injured, then it's almost impossible to rise and do the things you've always wanted to do, things you've always planned to do, but just couldn't seem to find time for.

You can't draw on resources you just don't have.

You need to *Do It Now*.

I remember one Toastmaster meeting when a new person came to visit and told us that while he didn't have any trouble talking to people one on one, he was supposed to make a

presentation to a hundred people in two weeks. He was terrified and needed help. I thought to myself, “Buddy, two weeks? It’s too little.

It’s too late. It’s too bad you weren’t here six months ago. Don’t put things off until the last minute. Do it now.

One day I was talking to Linda, one of the patrons/friends on my route, about exercise. I asked her what type of exercise she does. She answered, “Oh, I don’t really do any exercise. I just want to stay the same.” I said, “Stay the same! We’re never staying the same. We’re either climbing the mountain, or we’re falling back.” What she didn’t realize is that we are never, just staying the same. “Use it or lose it!” is just as true today as it ever was. If you don’t use your muscles they’ll atrophy. If you don’t stretch, you’ll tighten up. You’re either climbing the mountain or you’re tumbling back down. There is no “just staying the same.” Especially as you get older you need to do more, do it every day and Do It Now.

You and I both know that we’re going to face problems in our lives. Right? Instead of waiting until the last minute when the crisis is upon you, why not become that healthier, stronger person today? Why not start working on your goals right now?

The other reason to start living in the now, is because we just don’t know how long we’re going to live. While we might hope that we’ll live to a ripe old age of ninety, and always be in great health, nothing, is guaranteed.

In fact, I would bet that many people, already in their lives, have had some debilitating injury or disease or even a brush with death. Those of you who haven’t been touched by the tough side of life, probably know a friend or family member who has. I lost my best friend last year. My mother died of brain cancer and my father has already had colon cancer and heart disease.

I also know at least six other people who have had some sort of cancer in the last year. You’d better do it now, while you can.

PBS had a show called *Healing and The Mind*. It demonstrated a number of alternative ways to treat disease. It concentrated on the power of the mind to help fight the battle. These were not minor, wimpy diseases like colds or muscle aches.

These were killer diseases like cancer. A major part of the show dealt with the support groups that were formed by cancer patients and how they helped each other deal with their disease. In one group, the prognosis was bad and the members were expected to die in the near future. One woman shared a poem with the group, which included this line: “A person can't die until they're ready – that's a rule.”

She shares this message with us, because it's one that we all believe to a certain extent. The belief is that we're immortal that we have plenty of time, we can't die until we're ready – that's a rule.

The truth is that we can be taken at any time. I'm sure you know lots of people and friends and children who died before they were ready. I know I do.

I also think that some people have listened to the Aesop's fable of the Ant and the Grasshopper, a few too many times. I'm all for having a reasonable savings account, but some people take it way too far. I've got a mailman friend who will work all day in the 100 degrees boiling summer heat and then when he takes his forty-five minute drive home, he refuses to turn on the car air conditioner. He says that it lowers his miles per gallon. He's nuts! Enjoy yourself now while you can!

In the book, *The Millionaire Next Door*, by Thomas J. Stanley and William D. Danko, they talk about one man who is worth \$1.4 million. Yet he and his family live on only \$38,000 per year. What's the point of accumulating all this wealth if you can't enjoy it?

I've got a B.S. degree in Finance. Yes, I'm a former bean counter. You might think that any person with a finance

background, would have tons of money invested in the stock market, but I don't. You might think that I would have large sums tucked away in the bank, but I don't. You might think that I have planned expertly for my golden retirement years, but I haven't. I know that nothing is guaranteed.

Unfortunately, many people are always putting off the good things in life.

Just wait till we have a little bit more money saved up, and we'll buy that new house, then we'll enjoy ourselves.

Just wait till the kids get out of college, then we'll enjoy ourselves.

Just wait till I retire, then we're going to travel and see the world, then we'll enjoy ourselves.

Just wait till we get the house fixed up and we get a new roof, then we'll enjoy ourselves.

Just wait, just wait, just wait, then we'll enjoy ourselves.

But they wait so long; they spend their whole life waiting and life passes them by.

I try to live 100% of the time, right here and right now. Rather than saving large sums of money for a future which I might not have, I choose to enjoy it, I choose to spend it now.

I've already lost too many close personal friends who died at an early age. I know that each day is a gift that I can savor and enjoy or put aside for the future.

The book of Ecclesiastes says, "The race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favor to the skillful, but time and chance happen to us all." And, "I commend the enjoyment of life, because nothing is better for a man under the sun than to eat and drink and be merry."

DO IT NOW

How Long Do You Keep Trying?

Often people quit working on their goal after what they consider a “reasonable” number of tries, usually two or three. What they don't understand is a “reasonable” number of failures is often way too few.

In advertising, P.T. Barnum once said, “The reader of a newspaper doesn't see the first insertion of an ordinary advertisement. The second insertion he sees, but doesn't read. The third insertion he reads. The fourth insertion, he looks at the price. The fifth insertion, he speaks of it to his wife. The sixth insertion, he's ready to purchase. And the seventh insertion, he purchases.”

In marketing you have to sell, sell, sell, sell, sell, sell, sell, sell, sell, to finally make that one single sale. Each failure brings you one step closer to making the sale.

In the last few years I've entered the world of selling. To make money as a professional speaker/trainer, customers want to know a lot about you; who you are, your qualifications and most important, how you can help them solve a problem or fill a need. It can be a frustrating process. While I haven't met anyone who's been downright nasty, I've been rejected as a speaker many times. I've read all the right sales books, listened to all the selling tapes, and yet it's still hard to make a sale the first time you meet someone. The key to selling is to not give up after the 1st, 2nd, 3rd or even 200th try.

I have a friend who is vice-president of a large travel company. He told me, on average, it takes one full year to get a client to use his firm. In one recent victory, he devoted over two years of constant work to convince the client to give his firm the job. He introduced the client to previously satisfied customers. He sent them updated information on a regular basis. He flew the client to St. Louis to look at his operation. He always found a way to stay in contact. Finally, after two years he got the account. What if my friend had given up after

a year or 18 months?

The same philosophy applies to you.

If businesses are willing to invest two years to accomplish a goal, why put yourself down after you've only been working toward your goal for just a week or two? Don't give up!

Unfortunately, many of us have been taught the philosophy, "If you can't do it right, don't do it at all." If you mess up once – you're out! Maybe you've had a boss who was like Sam Goldwyn, who said, "When I want your opinion – I'll give it to you."

We're so afraid of making a mistake, with these type of people, that we never take a chance, we never risk failure and we only do what we're told.

Hopefully those ideas are on the way out. If you've got some of that old programming in your brain, remember the slogan of Tom Watson, founder of IBM. He said, "We forgive thoughtful mistakes." One of the stories told about Watson is about a marketing employee who made a 10 million dollar mistake. Figuring this was the end of his career, he went into Mr. Watson's office and offered to turn in his resignation. Tom Watson said, "Resign, you'd better not resign. We just spent ten million dollars educating you!" Mr. Watson knew the value of learning from failure.

To be a success you've got to fail, fail, fail, fail and fail some more, until you finally succeed. George Bernard Shaw once said, "When I was a young man, I observed that nine out of ten things I did were failures. I didn't want to be a failure, so I did ten times more work."

Art Linkletter in his book *"Yes You Can,"* has a chapter he called, "The Rule of Ten." He says, "If anything is worth trying at all, it's worth trying at least ten times. Then, if you're not succeeding on the eleventh try, reevaluate your techniques or drop the project altogether." He goes on to explain that the

rule of ten, “may have to become the rule of one hundred or one thousand, depending on the kind of work you’re doing.”

Many people will also tell you to set a specific target date to accomplish your goal. In some cases, that’s appropriate, but don’t let it set you up to be a quitter. If you don’t make the date, either set another date in the future, or just keep plugging away. People are always asking me when my book will be finished. I reply, “I don’t know. It will be finished when it’s finished.” I’ll keep working on it until it’s done. I’m enjoying the process of writing and thinking probably more than I’ll enjoy getting it in print.

Step two for a writer, when the manuscript is finished, is to find a publisher. Many of the most famous writers have been rejected numerous times.

– Richard Bach's, *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, had his book rejected eighteen times.

– Richard Hooker spent seven years writing MASH. Twenty-one publishers rejected his book.

– Mark Victor Hansen, coauthor of *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, sent his manuscript to thirty different publishers before he got it accepted.

Even Dr. Norman Vincent Peale and Dale Carnegie admit to many "dumb things" in their lives. Dr. Peale in a conversation with Dale Carnegie related a dumb thing he had done and how much it bothered him. Dale said, "Oh, don't let that worry you, I sometimes have the idea that I might one day write a book entitled, 'Dumb Things I Have Done,' by Dale Carnegie and it would be a big book." Dr. Peale replied, "Well, Dale if I were to write on the same subject, 'Dumb Things I Have Done' by Norman Vincent Peale, it would fill several volumes."

Most actors and actresses, before they were famous, had to

keep plugging away doing bit parts and commercials, and many have even been told to get a different career.

- Fred Astaire when he made his first screen test had a memo which was sent to the top about him. It read, "Fred Astaire– Can't act. Slightly bald. Can dance a little." Fred Astaire eventually got hold of that memo, framed it and put it above his fireplace.
- Harrison Ford, in 1994 was named actor of the century. However, in one of his first movies, he wasn't such a big shot. In the movie "Dead Heat," his role as a bellhop was to walk through a hotel lobby saying, "Paging Mr. Ellis. Paging Mr. Ellis." One day he was asked to see the producer, who said, "I saw the dailies of what you did yesterday. You ain't got it. You better think of something else to do." Thank goodness Harrison Ford didn't take his advice, but kept on trying.

The question, "How long do you keep trying?" can only be answered, "Until I accomplish my goal."

If the goal is worthwhile – time is not an issue.

It's Never Too Late

Going home one night, I saw two mail trucks just leaving the Post Office. Understand that it was 5:00 p.m. and most of the letter carriers had gone home, but the Post Office was still sending out mail for delivery, even though it was quite late.

That same night I watched Jack Lalanne on TV. He's the exercise expert who's been teaching and preaching physical fitness for years. When Jack was 65, he swam one mile towing 65 boats with 6500 pounds inside the boats. When he was 70, he towed 70 boats with 70 people inside the boats.

I put the two thoughts together: late mail delivery and Jack Lalanne, and the thought came to me: It's never too late to get the job done.

Whether you're out delivering the mail past 5:00 p.m. and you have to use a flashlight to see the names on the apartment boxes (as I have had to do at times) or you're starting an exercise program at 50 or 60 or 70 years of age, it's never too late to get started.

Of course you realize when I say never, I'm exaggerating just a little bit. For the people who are 85, it's too late to participate in the Olympics. But at 85, they could participate in the Senior Olympics. There's a man on my route who I see walking every day. No, he's not a busy executive or an athlete in training, he's a man born in 1898. He's 96 years young, and he's out in the fresh air doing what everyone should be doing – exercising!

For those of you concerned about being too old, consider these examples:

Chapter 5 – When Do You Start and Arrive?

- Michelangelo, one of the world's greatest painters, was painting frescoes in the Vatican at the age of 75. At the time of his death, at 89, he was still working on a sculpture of the Pieta.
- Grandma Moses, the famous primitive painter, didn't begin to paint seriously until she was in her seventies.
- George Bernard Shaw fractured his leg at 96. He was pruning a tree.
- George Burns, at 98 years young, was still performing in Las Vegas and on TV.

You may counter that these are extraordinary men and women, and you're just an ordinary person. What can you do?

I have lots of newspaper clippings of ordinary people like yourself, who are living life to the fullest.

- Hulda Crooks is 91 and still climbing mountains.
- Katherine Crooks is 87 and still works as a book buyer, English tutor, teacher, guide and designer of a course on the Amazon rain forests and furniture saleswoman.
- Ruby Harper is 90 and likes to hike, and white-water raft.
- At the age of 87, E.T. "Pappy" Rider is the nation's oldest letter carrier. His postal career began when he was 61.
- At 91, Jimmy Jones is the happy father of Roger, two years old. The title of the newspaper article about him had the title, "Never Too Late."

That's the truth. It's never too late.
Age is a question of mind over matter.
If you don't mind, it doesn't matter.

Chapter 6

Letters Delivered

The Power of Persistence

President Calvin Coolidge has a famous quote.

*“Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence.
Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful
men with great talent.
Genius will not; the world is full of educated derelicts.
Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.”*

The stories in this chapter are all about letters that have a message and an address. They have been stamped, sealed, postmarked and have reached their destination.

These are real life examples of the power of persistence.

Don't Say No – Say Maybe

When you set a goal for yourself, a goal that seems very tough, if not impossible, your first reaction is usually "NO, it can't be done." But what I learned from my experience with Leo Buscaglia, was, "Don't say no, say maybe."



Leo Buscaglia

My story starts back in 1980. I was watching TV that night, Channel Nine, the PBS educational channel. They were making their usual pitch for money during their annual pledge drive, but in-between phone calls, they presented a new speaker. He was shabbily dressed with a cheap suit and a white short sleeve shirt. He was perspiring profusely and he certainly didn't look like a professional speaker. Yet he had an intensity and excitement about himself that I'd never seen before. He had the audience in the palm of his hand for one whole hour.

This was my first experience with Felice Leonardo Buscaglia. His name is usually mispronounced. They call him Doctor Bus-caag-lia or Dr. Boxcar or even the "Love Doctor," but he prefers Leo.

For those who don't know it, Leo has written many best-selling books, *Love, Personhood, Living, Loving and Learning* and *Freddie the Leaf* to name a few. In fact, at one time Leo had three of the top ten national best sellers.

After I'd watched Leo several times, I was so excited that I just had to write him, but I didn't know where to send the letter. I soon found out that he was scheduled to talk at a college in Illinois, so I wrote the letter in care of the college and just hoped they would pass it along to him when he arrived.

I told him I was concerned about his health. While he was preaching a message of love and caring, he hardly smiled at all. He was so intense, which didn't jive with his message, and I told him so.

When he did come to Illinois to speak at the local college, I gathered a bunch of friends and headed on over to hear him speak. That night was one of the worst imaginable, with a cold, numbing, pounding rain. I really didn't expect too many people to show up, but boy was I wrong. The gymnasium was packed.

Two weeks after the speech, I did receive a handwritten letter from Leo. Of course, I was ecstatic! I immediately got on the phone and called all my friends. Guess who I just got a letter from? Leo, Leo Buscaglia. Yeah that's right! For a full six months the letter hung on my refrigerator like a trophy deer on a hunter's wall. I was so proud.

His letter went like this.

Dear Tom,

Thank you for your beautiful loving letter. No, nothing is wrong. I was a bit tired, that's all. Each day seems to offer more and more challenge and I know that something must give. Since it is all "good," I must figure out how to arrange priorities, that's all truly. But to love is to care and I'm pleased you shared so completely! Thank your friends and you. I send them my love, a hug, and a wish that we shall some day touch. Not so much from need, as from wanting to grow in each other's love.

Warmly, Leo.

It wasn't much longer before I wrote again. I wrote the letter on July 8th and received a reply on July 25th. One of the things that makes Leo so unique is that he's not only a great speaker, but he also believes 100% in his message. He proves it by writing personal letters to his fans and by taking time after each speech to hug everyone. And I'm not talking about ten or twenty people, but crowds that can surge into the thousands.

Leo literally stands around for hours after his speech hugging EVERYONE and he doesn't depart until the last person leaves.

At some point, I learned that Leo was going to do a speech for Channel Nine. My brain immediately jumped into high gear. What can I do to get Leo to come and visit at my house? So I came up with the idea of planning a spectacular dinner, because Leo loves to oink out. Food is his passion.

So I sent Leo a special dinner invitation. I called it:

"Dine a la Buscaglia."

Broccoli Quiche appetizer

Caesar salad

Veal Orloff

Twice-baked potatoes

Home-baked bread

Pouilly fousse wine

Chocolate cheesecake

September 5th, I received a reply from Leo regarding my dinner invitation. It went like this.

Dear Tom,

Thank you for the dinner invitation in February. But whenever I speak somewhere, I am always at the mercy of the sponsoring organization and they invariably have me scheduled from the moment I get off the plane until I get back on. It is a kind offer anyway and I appreciate your thoughtfulness.

Warmly, Leo.

Yes, I was downhearted and discouraged when I got that letter, but I was also realistic. I knew when I sent the letter, that Leo must get hundred's of invitations to go here and there. So when I got my response I was ready with a reply, because in an unusual non-Leo way, Leo was saying "NO" and that's not part of his philosophy. So the next day I sent Leo another letter.

Dear Leo,

I know this is your rational logical answer that you have to give many times to invitations like these. But now, look inside your heart and see the possibilities.

Don't say NO, say MAYBE.

A few days later I got this three-word reply from Leo.

Dear Tom . . . Maybe.

I didn't major in marketing in college, but I know how to make a sale when I have to and the salesman in me took a dozen giant steps forward.

Since Channel Nine was sponsoring Leo, I decided to cover all my bases with them. I knew a woman on my route who worked for Channel Nine, so I made a point to talk to her a number of times about Leo's visit. I ended up joining Channel 9 as a member, just to prove that I was a dyed-in-the-wool fan and even worked on the phones one night when Leo was to give a talk on TV. I volunteered to do whatever I could to help Channel 9 when Leo was in town. "Could I pick him up or return Leo to the airport? How could I help Channel 9?"

Channel Nine did sponsor a \$50.00 per person dinner for Leo the night before his speech, which I could have gone to, but I was inclined to hold out for a more private party. I just didn't want to share Leo with a couple of hundred other people who would all be clamoring for his attention.

I was also letting a few friends know of my plans to have Leo over, but always hedging my statements with the acknowledgment, "I knew he will be extremely busy and this was a very iffy proposition."

During the two months before Leo's visit I started a media blitz that Madison Avenue would have been proud of. I sent Leo cookies, rubber pig stamps, poetry – anything I could think of to keep him aware of Tom, the mailman-philosopher of St. Louis,

MO.

I even got back a couple of replies.

Dear Tom,

Your package of goodies arrived today. Just at the moment I needed them most. I shared them with those I love in the office. We all agree that you are a very special cook or someone is and you are willing to share. If this is a sample of what I have to look forward to in St. Louis, I'll stop eating now in anticipation. Love, Leo.

Dear Tom,

After a fantastic family holiday the stamp you sent looks just like me.

(This is the rubber pig stamp, wearing a bib and holding a knife and fork).

How did you know? Thank you for thinking of me. I loved the poem. See you in St. Louis for the promised hug.

Warmly, Leo.



As the fateful day grew closer, I found out that another woman would be picking Leo up at the airport, but that I could return him to the airport when his visit was over. I was thrilled, but I still had hope in my heart that Leo might come and visit.

I talked to the woman at Channel Nine about Leo coming over to my house to visit and her response was a loud laugh and an indignant, "Are you kidding? Leo Buscaglia visit you, the mailman? At your house? That's ridiculous! He's going to be so busy he won't have time to visit anyone."

Well, I was disappointed with her response, but I wasn't about to give up.

Just four days before Leo would be speaking in St. Louis,

I sent him this telegram.

My God, I'm excited, how happy I'll be,
When you walk through the door to oink out with me.
The dinners all planned, the wine it is chilling.
The veal and the cheesecake will make the night thrilling.

Right now I am planning to serve this royal feast,
With love and with caring right after your speech.
And if that's a problem or another time's better
Just call me collect, no time left for a letter.

February 5th, Leo came into town. I had worked all day and finally came home.
About 4:00 p.m., the phone started ringing.

"Is this Tom? Hi, this is Leo."
(I was so excited. It was like Christmas in February.)
He said, "I want to find a time to get together. After tonight's dinner, I'll try to find time to come over and visit."
(The one Channel Nine was sponsoring for \$50/person)
I said, "That would be great, see you then."

I immediately called four friends of mine and told them to stand by and be ready to come over at a minutes notice. I still wasn't sure he could break away from a crowd of hundreds of adoring fans, who each had paid \$50.00 to talk to him, but I did have my fingers crossed.

Well about 9:30 p.m. that night I got a call from Leo asking if it would be a good time to come over. I said, "Leo, this is a great time, come on over." I called my four friends and had them come to the house. At 10:00 p.m. Leo came to the door and gave each of us one of the longest and strongest hugs on record.

The next two hours were quiet and mellow. We enjoyed chocolate cheesecake and wine and just talked and talked and talked.

For those of you who have seen Leo speak, in private he's not the dynamic fellow that you see on TV, but he is as sincere, and he always talks from his heart.

That weekend was a magical time for me which I will always remember and cherish. I took him to his hotel room that night. The next day I saw him speak at Kiel Opera House and the following morning I picked him up and took him to the airport to a waiting Lear jet. You see he had another speech to give on Sunday evening.

The lesson I learned from my experience with Leo was this: The next time you want something and you want it BAD, but it seems impossible or out of your reach, think of Leo and say to yourself:
Don't say NO, say MAYBE!

P.S. The Channel Nine woman who said, "Are you kidding? Leo Buscaglia visit you, the mailman," she's the one who drove him over to my house!

Private Otis Williams Jr.

Date . . . June 1986

Place . . . Fort Bragg, North Carolina

Event . . . KP Duty (Kitchen Police)

ARMY.
BE ALL YOU CAN BE.



Private Otis Williams Jr. has plenty of time to reminisce as he scrubs his umpteenth pot and pan. He came from a small family in Cincinnati, Ohio. His parents divorced when Otis was seven years old. Otis only periodically saw his dad, a truck driver, between road trips. He and his sister never seemed to have enough money to buy all the things they wanted, but they got by. Otis spent his time in school getting in fights, being suspended, and getting a C+ average. He signed up for vocational classes in high school, specializing in auto mechanics. During his junior year, Otis joined the Army reserve. Graduating in 1982, he had no money for full-time college, so he tried a vocational school in auto mechanics, but dropped out. He finally ended up working in a department store, on the loading dock. When, in 1986, Uncle Sam said, "We Want You!", Otis said, "Okay." He joined the Army full-time.

Otis, like many young men, didn't have all the breaks that many of us have had. His parents weren't named Ozzie and Harriet. He didn't live in the suburbs, wasn't captain of his football team, and with a C+ average, certainly wasn't part of the National Honor Society.

As he scrubs the pots and pans, he wonders, "Why did I do this? Maybe I should have studied more, applied myself in high school. If I'm lucky I can stay in the Army, put in my thirty years and retire. Well, at least I've got a job."

(Continued on the next page – a change of scenery.)

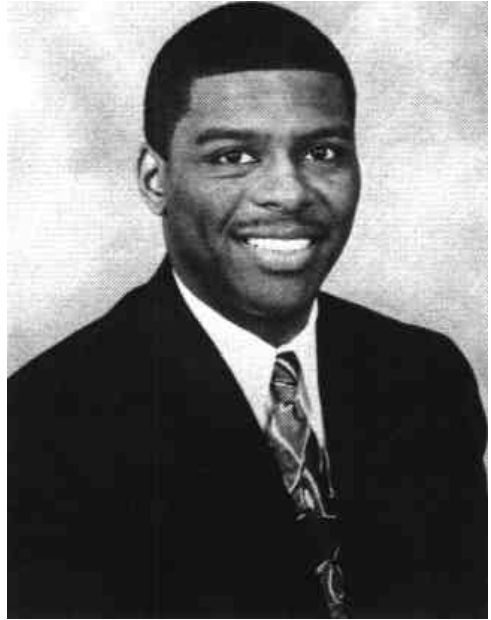
World Champion of Public Speaking

Date . . . August 21, 1993

Place . . . Toronto, Canada.

Event . . . Toastmasters International Speech Contest

Nineteen hundred attentive men and women await the decision of the judges. Nine superb speakers have given their final speeches, and the winner will soon be announced. The finalists had to win five other speech contests to get to this level of competition. Of the 170,000 total members, approximately 8,000 men and women competed, giving speeches at the Club, Area, Division, District and Regional levels. The final nine are here today.



Otis Williams Jr.

The Toastmaster of the evening makes the pronouncement, "The winner and new World Champion of Public Speaking is – Otis Williams Jr."

Otis Williams Jr.?

"Can't be," you say to yourself.

"This must be a different Otis Williams Jr."

You look, clean your glasses, squint a little.

"Well, I'll be. It is Private Williams from the Army."

How did he get here?

How did he become the World Champion of Public Speaking?

The answer in one word – PERSISTENCE.

If we flash back to 1986, Private Williams starts a string of three

small wins that help to build his self-confidence.

1. In record time he is promoted from Private to Sergeant.
2. While in the Army, he earns an Associates Degree in Liberal Arts.
3. After leaving the Army, he gets a job as a loan collector with a bank. From that job he's promoted to his current position of Assistant Branch manager.

These three small wins help to increase his self-esteem and help him see the possibility of a big win.

I'm drawn to this young man because he has done the seemingly impossible. Joining Toastmasters in May 1992, he has gone on to develop not one, but three, award- winning speeches. To get to this level of competition, Otis has had to give three different winning speeches in a short period of time. That is very tough to do. There are professional speakers who make a living giving just one speech their entire career. Otis developed three-award winning speeches in just fifteen months.

I say that Otis did the seemingly impossible because it takes times to develop as a speaker. Otis condensed a process that normally takes at least five years into fifteen months. I've been a speaker for more than twenty years and have never seen anyone develop so quickly.

If we use Otis Williams Jr. as an example, we can see he did many "right" things in the accomplishment of his goal.

1. He had a goal and it was a big one.
His goal – become the "World Champion of Public Speaking."
2. He was motivated. He wanted it bad!
3. Otis was willing to pay the price. In his case he was willing to spend six months of his life working on his speeches. He gave up watching TV, going out to the movies and parties, and reading for pleasure. He even gave up spending time with his

wife. (Something I would not recommend!)

4. He was persistent.

Otis says he practiced his speech at least fifteen times every day.

If you do a little math that works out to 2,700 practice sessions!

He practiced when he woke up. He practiced when he took a shower. He practiced on his thirty minute drive back and forth to work. He gave his speech to each teller as they came into the bank each day. The tellers finally got so tired of hearing the speech that they started arriving in groups so they'd only have to listen to the speech once. He was constantly working on and improving his speech.

5. He got some help.

He not only practiced his speech, but he got it evaluated hundreds of times by fellow Toastmasters and everyone who would listen. Otis not only practiced his speech in front of his own club, but also in front of six other Toastmaster clubs. He was always looking for ways to improve. He also asked advice from fellow workers, his parents, wife, friends, and church members. He took their advice and counsel and incorporated their ideas into his speech.

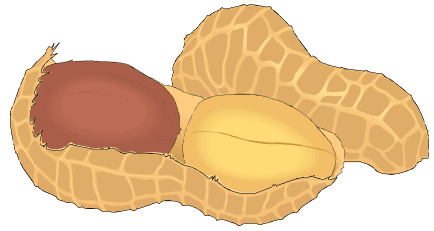
6. He did the little bit extra to reach his goal.

The night before his speech, Otis was walking the streets of Toronto practicing out loud, gesturing and talking to himself. I'm sure people thought that a mad man was loose on the streets. The morning of the speech, he got up at 4:00 a.m. and practiced one last time to an empty hall where the contest was to be held. By the time the contest started, he was ready!

As a student of motivation, persistence and human nature for the past 20 years, I'm still not sure how Otis developed his drive and determination. I'm not sure how he went from a C+ student to an A+ speaker, but his one quote seems to say it all, "When I decide to go after something, nothing can hold me back."

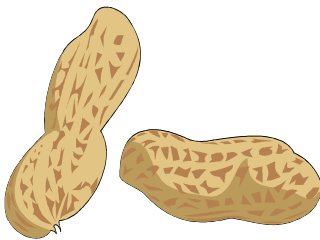
I Wanna Peanut

As a mailman, I usually have peanuts to give to the kids as I walk around my mail route. One day, I got out of my truck and start walking up the block and I hear a kid's voice yell out in a pushy, aggressive way, "I wanna peanut." I turn around, it's Ben. He's three years old, with blond hair and blue eyes. I say, "Excuse me?" He says, "I wanna a peanut," again in that pushy tone of voice.



Well, I like kids, especially small kids, but what I don't like are bratty, obnoxious, pushy kids telling me what I should do! So I said, "Forget it, I'm not going to give you a peanut with that kind of attitude." He answers in a whining tone, "But I wanna peanut." I ignore him and start delivering the mail. Persistent Ben starts to follow and as he trails me, he starts talking to himself. "I wanna peanut, I wanna peanut, I wanna peanut!"

I finally answer back, "Listen here Ben. I'm the adult and you're the child. You're not going to get a peanut today. No Way!" Ben answers back, "I wanna peanut."



By this time, it's starting to get comical. I start to wonder to myself, how many times will Ben say, "I wanna peanut?" As I go up the street and continue delivering the mail. Ben continues to follow me, repeating his mantra, "I wanna peanut."

I yell at him and try to be as negative as I can be, but he always comes back with his stoic, "I wanna peanut." The count starts to rise. Twenty, thirty, forty times he says, "I wanna peanut."

I start to laugh quietly to myself. Ben says, "Your laughing, you're just kidding." I say, "I'm not laughing, I'm just a happy

person.”

He starts saying, “Peas, peas.” I say, “Forget it, you're not getting one.” The count keeps rising. Fifty, sixty times Ben has uttered, “I wanna a peanut,” – over and over, never wavering, never faltering.

Finally, as I get close to the end of the block and the truck, I give him one final blast. “Ben, I am not going to give you a peanut. In fact I don't have any peanuts and even if I did have some I wouldn't give you one. You're not going to get a peanut, no, no, no!” Ben looks me straight in the eye and replies, “Yeah, yeah, yeah. I wanna peanut.”

We finally get back to the mail truck. Ben has followed me delivering the mail for the entire block and repeated, “I wanna peanut,” seventy-four times.

I guess you know the final outcome of the story. Ben did get his peanuts. In fact, I gave him a whole handful of peanuts. I just had to reward such determination.

As an adult, I rarely see this type of determination and persistence anymore. I guess you know why. This never say quit attitude is just drummed out of so many of us. When we try to do something, we're yelled at. People say, “No, no no! You can't do this or don't do that,” and we finally start to believe them.

One of the classic, but stupid, quotes goes,
“If you can't do something right, don't do anything at all.”
No wonder we're afraid of trying anything new. We might not do it right.

Zig Ziglar says that by the time we are eighteen years old we have heard the word "no" about 150,000 times. I guess sooner or later it has to sink in.

So the question is, how do we regain that positive, persistent, never say quit three year old attitude. Well, the answer is, we

follow Ben's prescription and we repeat what we want over and over and over.

About twenty-five years ago I re-learned this concept, it's called a positive affirmation. You repeat an idea over and over and over until it finally starts to sink into your consciousness.

Here's the trick, once you find your phrase, you've got to repeat it at least seventy-four times a day.

If a three year old can do it, you can to.

Say it in the morning when you get up; say it during the day; say it when you drive to and from work. Put it on little cards that you tape on the bathroom mirror.

Repeat it all day long and finally say it just before you go to bed at night.

William James, the psychologist and philosopher, once wrote,
"Sow an action and reap a habit,
Sow a habit and reap a character
Sow a character and reap a destiny."

Your destiny all starts with one little act, repeated over and over and over.

Note:

Ben has now enlisted the help of his brother Sean and next door neighbor David. They all follow me around the block chanting together, "I wanna peanut, I wanna peanut, I wanna peanut." Ben has even added a little twist to his phrase that I think is quite impressive.

His new line is, "I wanna a peanut, **now!**"

What do you want?

What's your phrase, what's your positive affirmation?

What Do You Want?

I wanna: _____

Repeat – seventy four times a day!

Lessons from the Bunny Slope

In 1984, I took my wife, Gerry, skiing in Michigan. I've skied off and on for about twenty years, but for Gerry, this was her first time skiing. Now it's certainly not ideal to learn to ski at age thirty-five, especially when you've worked at a desk job all year long. The best age is probably between six and twelve. That's when kids don't fear falling and even when they do fall, it's just a short distance. So right away, I knew that a non-athletic, thirty-five year old desk jockey, was going to have trouble, but of course, I didn't tell her that.



That first day of skiing for Gerry was a disaster. She took a ski lesson from an instructor and stayed on the bunny hill all day long. For you non-skiers, the Bunny Hill is the easiest slope that the ski lodge has. It's a slight incline, but is still very slippery and slick. Trying to balance yourself on a downhill slope when they've strapped a four-foot piece of slick plastic to each foot is no easy task.

To say that Gerry fell down many times is a classic understatement. She was probably on the ground more that she was upright on her skis. She must have literally fallen down two hundred times. Also, when you think of snow, your mind usually conjures up that soft, white, billowy, pillow like substance. Not on the ski slopes. They pack that snow down, harder and harder, until it forms the consistency of concrete. Just imagine falling down on a slab of concrete two hundred times!

Now hitting the concrete-packed snow two hundred times is bad enough, but what's almost as painful is getting back up. It's a Herculean feat to try and lift yourself off the snow, while

balancing yourself on those skinny and slippery skis.

You're trying to lift your entire body weight up with your poles, while trying to put pressure on your skis. What happens is that one ski usually slips out and you fall down again. It can be very disheartening for the beginner.

At the end of the day Gerry was in tears and she was crying on the slopes. With bruises and bumps all over her body, she looked like one large purple grape. That night she had a main course of aspirin and Tylenol. Her body looked like someone had taken a baseball bat and just beaten her arms and legs. I figured that was the end of her skiing career. She would spend the rest of the vacation in the sauna with a book, a glass of wine and a bottle of aspirin. Who could blame her?

But did she give up? Was she a quitter? Hell No! Day number two came, and she was out there on the slopes again. She fell down, but not a hundred times, not even fifty times; she fell down just three times. What a dramatic improvement. Apparently something finally clicked, and though she still struggled and fought to get down the bunny hill, at least she didn't fall like the previous day. By the end of the week she was going up the chair lift and skiing down one of the long easy runs from the top of the hill and really enjoying herself.

Wouldn't it have been terrible, if she had never experienced the joy and excitement of skiing, if she had given up after that first day? My wife reminded me of a number of lessons which we all need to remember.

Skiing – Go for a week.

If you just ski for one day, you'll end up quitting and hating it. You will fall down that first day, over and over and over. You'll feel like a klutz. You'll say, "This is the worst mistake of my entire life." You'll have aches and bruises all over your body. The trick is don't give up. Go out day number two and day number three and make a commitment to ski for the entire week and you will learn to enjoy the sport.

Life – You’ve got to work on your goal more than just one day. Don’t try something once and give up. Hang in there and keep at it. It will be painful at the start. You’ll feel like a klutz, but it will be worth it later on if you just don’t give up.

Skiing – Start on the “Bunny Hill.”

I’ve seen guys take their former girlfriends up to the top of the mountain, on the first day. When she starts to physically shake and cry, they realize they may have made a mistake. Skiing is a tough sport to learn initially. Make it as easy as possible when you first start.

Life – Start in small chunks.

Subdivide your large goal into many small attainable goals. Don’t aim at being president of the company the first day. Set your sights first at being the best accountant, clerk, or stock boy in the company. Then set your sights a little higher. Start slow and easy and then pick up speed.

Skiing – Take a ski lesson every day.

When you’re starting to learn, you need all the help you can get. You want to learn the proper technique so that you don’t form bad habits.

Life – Get help from the pros.

Don’t try and do it on your own. Find someone who can help you do it right in the first place. If you can’t afford a coach/teacher, read all the books and watch all the videos available and then review them on a regular basis.

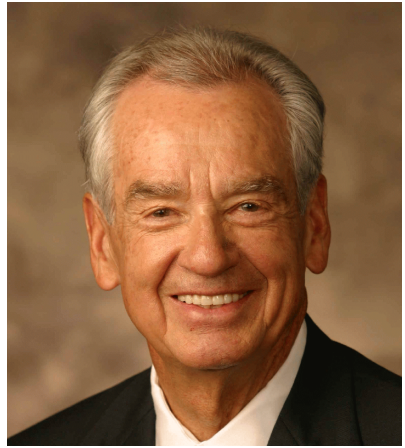
Skiing – Learning with other people, at your level, makes it a lot easier. That week in Michigan, Gerry and I were both part of skiing classes. Seeing other people fall down, makes your own falls a little less painful.

Life – Form or join a goal support group.

There are many support groups available. Join one and your goals will seem a little easier to attain.

Worst Speaker in the World

Have you ever listened to a truly bad speaker? A speaker that talks in a monotone, and never uses any emotion or passion. How about a speaker that uses *ahs, uhs and you knows*, for every fourth word out of his mouth. At the very least you're bored out of your mind, and at the worst you want to run screaming out of the room.



Zig Ziglar

When you think of the title, “Worst Speaker in the World,” who might you think of – Al Gore?

Michael Jackson? A great singer, but a poor public speaker. Maybe even your minister is a candidate for worst speaker. He's got a great message, but lacks the fire and passion to bring it to life.

My candidate for worst speaker in the world is Zig Ziglar. That's true! Believe Me!

Zig Ziglar – worst speaker in the world – at least when he first started out.

For those of you who haven't heard of Zig Ziglar, let me explain a little bit about him. Zig is a professional speaker who specializes in training organizations, businesses and individuals in human potential. He talks about motivation, goal setting, selling and becoming a peak performer. He's written many books and has sold thousands of books, audios and videos.

But Zig didn't start at the top, he started at the bottom. He started his career as a cookware salesman, selling pots and pans. He would buy the groceries and cook a dinner for a hostess and her friends and hopefully convince them they just had to buy the cookware.

Unfortunately, Zig wasn't a very good salesman when he first started out. His presentations just weren't getting the job done and he was barely making a living. He finally convinced his sales trainer to work with him. The trainer brought him into the office and told he to go through his entire presentation in front of him. They recorded the demonstration on a tape recorder and when they listened to it, Zig had used 187 ahs and uhs in just twenty-one minutes! That's nine per minute.

"I ah, would like ah, to show you ah, our new line of ah, cookware. Ah."

In my twenty years in Toastmasters, I have never seen anyone use that many ahs and uhs in such a short period of time. In our two-hour Toastmaster meeting, the entire club of thirty to forty members has never reached 187 ahs and uhs. I know because we count them!

If Zig had joined Toastmasters when he first started speaking, I might have given up on him as too bad to even try and help!

Today, Zig is one of the top five speakers in the country and charges \$25,000 per speech.

How did Zig get better?

How did he go from being the *Worst Speaker in the World* to the *Best Speaker in the World*? He practiced, practiced, and practiced some more.

One of the statements he makes is that he gave three thousand free speeches, before he ever made a dime speaking professionally. That's a lot of practice! That's the equivalent of completing three hundred Toastmaster manuals. While his three thousand presentations included many presentations in his cookware business, he also started speaking as a sales trainer and speaking at Kiwanis, Lions, Rotary and any other organization that would let him visit.

From the time he set the goal to become a professional speaker, it took Zig sixteen years to become a full-time professional. Sixteen years! Are you willing to invest sixteen years to get what you want? Also, notice how he practiced. He practiced with feedback, just like we do in Toastmasters. He got his sales trainer involved. He taped his presentation and listened to it to improve.

Obviously, Zig did improve.

One year, Zig was the number cookware salesman for the company. Two out of seven thousand, quite an accomplishment! However, Zig never led his company in sales during any one month. He never even led his company in sales for any one week, but he was always out there selling, day after day after day. He always sold something every single week. He never gave up.

The type of persistence that Zig showed in his cookware selling and in improving his speaking skills is a great example for us. He worked on his goal every single day. Even if he wasn't taking gigantic strides, he was always taking little steps to get him where he wanted to be.

Today, Zig still speaks and practices almost every day. Even when he's not out in front of an audience, he's speaking. In an interview with him, he mentioned that in a typical day, he writes a couple of hours. When I asked him what was the process that he uses in writing, he answered that he actually doesn't use pen and paper or even sit in front of a computer and type. He writes by speaking into a tape recorder and having a secretary transcribe what he says. In effect, he's giving a two-hour speech every single day.

In summary, each and every one of you is a better speaker than Zig Ziglar – at least when he first started out.

Through hard work, dedication and persistence, Zig has reached the top of his profession.

If Zig can do it, you can too.

What are the Odds?

Have you ever dreamed of being a professional athlete; hitting that home run in the World Series or the three point shot playing for the Chicago Bulls? I know I have.

I decided to figure out what exactly are the odds of actually making a professional team, in this case football. Here's what my research turned up.

- In the National Football League there are thirty teams. There are forty-three active players on each team, so that means there are only 1,290 total professional football players in the entire United States. The U.S. population is close to 300 million people, so that means that the odds of you being a professional football player at this particular moment are one in 230,000.
- It's fairly easy to see that the odds are certainly against us. But, even if we couldn't play in the NFL, we could possibly coach in the NFL. That doesn't take brawn as much as it takes brains. Unfortunately, each NFL team has even less coaches than it has players. Each team has only about sixteen coaches per team. That means that the odds of being a coach in the NFL are approximately one in 600,000.
- If by chance you took up the wrong coaching job – say kicking coach, you'd be in for a shock. There are only two full-time kicking coaches in the entire NFL. That brings down your odds to a horrendous one in 150 million.
- If you wanted to make it even tougher on yourself, let's add on the condition, that you could never actually play football your entire life. You could watch it, but not play football. What then might the odds be of you being a professional football kicking coach? Probably astronomical, something like one in a billion. You have a better chance of winning the lottery.
- Let's make it even tougher and give you a crippling disease at birth, say cerebral palsy. What then would the odds be of you

ever becoming the first non-playing, cerebral palsy, professional football kicking coach?

The word IMPOSSIBLE comes to my mind.

Let me now tell you now about a man who has defied the odds, overcome every obstacle and done the impossible.

His name is Doug Blevins and he was a professional kicking coach with the Miami Dolphins.

Doug was born with cerebral palsy. He's always had to use crutches or a wheelchair to get around. He's never played a minute of football. Yet here he is accomplishing the impossible.

The Doug Blevins Story

Doug was born in 1963 in a small town of seven thousand, Abingdon, Virginia. In those days, “special needs” kids were segregated from the rest of the schools and it wasn’t until 5th grade that Doug was allowed to attend a regular public school. In fact the only reason he got in was because of his mother’s insistence and persistence. He was the only special needs kid in the public school system.

Talking to Doug on the phone, here’s what he says about his interest and love for football.

“I’ve loved football since the time I was four years old. I can remember watching the ‘Ice Bowl’ between Dallas and Green Bay. Ever since that game, the only thing I’ve wanted to do was to work in professional football. I used to put an old football helmet on and then wait til it rained. Then I’d go out an roll in the mud and pretend I was playing football; getting nastier than hell, just pretending I was playing.”



Coach Doug Blevins

“I started working with the Little League program in Abingdon Virginia and I was learning the game from the coaching perspective.

In high school I worked as a student assistant for the high school football team. I graded films, I helped the equipment manager, I’d organize things for coaches, and basically I learned everything I could. Again, it was my goal to make it into professional football as an occupation. But I also realized in high school, that because I had cerebral palsy and because I would never actually play a down, that I’d better develop a specialty and be better than

anyone else in the country at it.

I noticed that while we had a very good high school football team, no one knew much about kicking. They didn't understand it, they didn't know why they could or couldn't hit field goals."

"So I got fascinated by it and as a freshman I contacted the Dallas Cowboys and specifically Ben Agajanian, their kicking coach. I wrote him a letter and I explained to him my situation and what I wanted to do and he responded and sent me a box of materials, films, books, notes, information on camps, and information on kickers. I started reading that and the more I read the more fascinated I became. I started off by experimenting with my cousin. I used him as a guinea pig and then started teaching the techniques to the high school team."

"There were times of discouragement and frustration, but that's the nature of football. But I think that I'm a strong person and handle my handicaps because of football. Everything I know and have learned, that has been the most beneficial was learned on a football field, not in a classroom.

A lot of people who weren't friends would laugh at me and make jokes and tell me I was a dreamer . They'd say, 'People from here, don't do that.'

But their negativism did nothing but inspire me."

Doug's arrival at the Miami Dolphins wasn't a fluke, wasn't a lucky opportunity, but was based upon nineteen years of kicking study, research and practical experience.

Here's what he had to do to get the coaching job with the Dolphins:

- 1978 – Doug writes the Dallas Cowboys, and starts his study of kicking.
- 1982 – Doug earns a scholarship to go to the University of Tennessee as a student coach.
- 1984 – Gets a job as the kicking coach at Emory & Henry College.
- 1986 – Joins the staff at East Tennessee State and serves as a consultant through 1987.
- 1988 to 1992 – Kicking coach at Abingdon high school.
- 1993 – Starts his own kicking consulting company.
- 1994 – Works with the New York Jets as a kicking consultant.
- 1995 – Is named as the kicking coordinator for the World Football League.
- 1996 – The New England Patriots hire Doug to coach their kickers.
- 1997 – The Miami Dolphins name Doug as their head kicking coach.

Doug has a number of traits which I admire:

Passion

Doug's road to professional football has been paved with lots of hard work, dedication and perseverance. I asked Doug if he ever wrote down his goals and he said, "I never had to write anything down, because it was always there. I was consumed by it. It was the only thing I wanted."

Fighter

While today Doug is a very positive, uplifting, and self-confident individual, that wasn't always the case. His mother Linda Lafon tells this story about Doug.

"When Doug was small, before he started school, he was pretty timid, and while he never complained, he never took up for himself. I kept telling him, 'Doug, if this kid hits you,' and it started out to be girls, 'I don't care if she's a girl tell her, 'I don't hit girls normally, but if you do it again, I'm going to let you have it.' So she came to the door one day, and her nose was all red and she cried, 'Doug hit me in the nose.'

And I answered, Great! I'm glad! And that took care of that problem. Doug has been a fighter ever since."

Dreamer

Doug has a dream of wearing a Super Bowl ring. Here's what he says, "I got my high school class ring in 1978 and I told my friends when we had a ring ceremony that I would only replace this ring with a Super Bowl championship ring. I would never take off my high school ring until I had a Super Bowl ring to replace it. That's why I never bought a college ring."

Positive Thinker

Doug is always looking at a half-full glass, never a half-empty glass. He's a very positive thinker. He even thinks of his handicap as an asset. He says, "Never having actually kicked a ball is an advantage. I don't bring bad mechanics or habits to the kicker I'm trying to coach."

Hard Worker

Doug is a very hard worker. Doug's mother, Linda, went down to Miami to visit Doug and the Dolphins and had a chance to visit their coach Jimmy Johnson on a Saturday night. She said, "Doug it's Saturday night, he's probably really anxious to get out of here." Doug answered, "No mom, the man is going to go in his office and shut the door and look at films." The next morning, when Doug went in early and Jimmy Johnson met him at the

door and they were talking about the players and he said, ‘Well Doug, did you get any sleep last night?’ and Doug answered, ‘Well I went to bed about two o'clock’, and the coach said, ‘Well, I didn’t get out of here until two o'clock.’

That has pretty much been Doug’s history for the last twenty years. He stays up late and gets up early. His mother says, “I was glad when weekends came, because that gave Doug an excuse to sleep in. Doug always thought that sleep was a waste of time.”

Talking to Doug, I asked him what football has taught him and here’s his reply:

“You never quit, you never give up.

Like last Sunday, we lost to Green Bay. Now we’re a game out of first place. I’m very disappointed we lost, but hell that’s behind us now. Now we’ve got to ready to go play Tampa, and that’s the way life is. You’re not always going to be successful. You’re not always going to be able to accomplish the things you want to, but you’ve got to pick yourself up and realize that the only people to blame were us.”

“Like in the game we lost to Green Bay, we didn’t do the things that we needed to do, when we needed to do them.

It wasn’t Green Bay’s fault, it wasn’t society’s fault, it wasn’t the political systems fault, we weren’t victims, we beat ourselves. We didn’t make the plays.”

“You’ve just got to accept that fact.

I believe that we all have capabilities, we all have opportunities and we’ve just got to have the ole gut check and find a way to get it done.

You never quit, you never give up.”

My friends, when you’re ready to quit and you’re ready to give up, because the odds are against you, just remember Doug Blevins.

If he can do the impossible, certainly you can do the possible.

When Is Enough – Enough?

I was listening to a popular author being interviewed on a local radio station. The author was Susan Isaacs and her most recent book, *After All These Years*, is now on the New York Times Best Seller List, #13. By my count, she's written at least nine books. She started out with easy titles like, *How to Organize Your Kid's Room* and *Who's in Control?* But after those she moved into fiction and mystery.

The one point of the whole radio interview that stuck out was this. She re-writes the opening chapter of her book – ONE HUNDRED times.

Even for a speaker in Toastmasters, a hundred times seems to be overkill. Most people write their speech once, maybe twice and say, "That's good enough" or "That's the best I can do." And if you're a fanatic like me, you might rewrite it and rework it ten to twenty times, but never one hundred times. Yet this is what Susan Isaacs says she has to do to be a successful writer.

It goes to prove the saying that they teach in writing courses, "There is no such thing as good writing, only good rewriting."

Barbara Taylor Bradford is another successful modern author. She's written sixteen books in twenty-five years, the latest being *Angel*. She started off at the age of twelve writing, first with nonfiction just like Susan Isaacs. Her regime would make even a Marine sergeant back off and salute. She writes twelve hours per day, six and a half days per week. That works out to seventy-eight hours per week.

Even a master like Ernest Hemingway had to continually rewrite his material. He rewrote the last chapter of *Farewell to Arms* more than a hundred times.

Darn, there's that number again – maybe it's telling me something.

One of my favorite writers is Ray Bradbury. Ray says that the very first good piece of writing that he did was a short story called The Lake. He did this when he was 22 years old. Here's how he did it. From age 12 to 22, he wrote a minimum of a thousand words a day, every single day.

I did a little math:

365 days X 1,000 words/day X 10 years = 3,650,000 words

A very impressive figure

Zig Ziglar, one of America's top motivational speakers, says that you have to practice telling a joke twenty times for it to become yours. How many people do you know that will gladly tell you, "Oh, I just can't tell a joke." Well of course they can't. They never told it once, much less twenty times.

Zig was in St.Louis for a motivational rally and he commented that although he had given this particular speech more than a thousand times, yet he still got up early that morning and worked on it for another three hours.

If you haven't figured it out by now, let me put it in plain English. Don't be satisfied with your first effort – it's probably not that good.

Don't be satisfied with your second effort. It might be a little better, but still needs lots off work.

To be successful, you have to keep at it, time after time; ten, twenty a hundred times if necessary.

But don't be discouraged. Even the best writers and speakers in the world have to continually rewrite and practice and redo their material. If the best have to follow that model, then why wouldn't you!

Five Minutes Per Day

When you think of working on a goal, what words and ideas come to mind? Possibly you think of commitment, hard work and hours upon hours of drudgery, toil and sweat. You probably see yourself grinding it out, huffing and puffing, fighting that back breaking work. You scream for relief. Arrgghh!

No wonder most people stop, before they even start.
"This goal setting is too much like work!"

BUT – One of the secrets to persistence is that you can accomplish your goal in as little as five minutes per day. That's right just five minutes per day!

You're probably saying to yourself, "That's impossible! I can't accomplish anything in just five minutes."

You're correct, you can't reach your goal in just five minutes, but if you add up those five minutes, day after day, week after week, month after month, and yes, even year after year, it's amazing what you can accomplish.

Let's do a little math:

5 minutes X 365 days = 30.42 hours
That's almost four solid eight-hour days.

Now we both might agree that we can't get much accomplished in five minutes, but I'd bet you'd agree that we can get quite a bit accomplished in four days of work.

And who can't spend five minutes a day to work on a goal? Five minutes is nothing! We spend more time watching commercials on TV, more time plucking our eyebrows, more time combing our hair.

Now I'm not going to tell you that all goals can be reached in as

little as five minutes per day. That's certainly not true, but some goals can! You can accomplish quite a bit in just five minutes. I've been working on juggling four balls for over a year, just five minutes per day, and I'm getting there. I can now consistently juggle four balls, sixteen times in a row. Can you do that?

And what you'll probably find is that what originally started out as five torturous, agonizing, brain racking, minutes, starts to get a little easier and gradually turns into fun. And sense you're having such a good time, that five minutes turns into six, then ten, then twenty minutes or more.

I started writing many years ago as a mail carrier. I would sit in my car having lunch, thirty-nine cent notebook on my lap, Bic pen at the ready, waiting for the Muse to strike.

It was pretty embarrassing! Nothing was happening! Did I really have nothing to say? That first five minutes was depressing.

Then slowly over time, a random thought or two would jump out and I'd scribble them down, then a few more ideas here and there. Then over a period of time, IT started to control me rather than I controlling IT. Thoughts literally came so fast that I couldn't write them down fast enough.

Now I try to write sixty minutes per day, five days per week. And I get very frustrated sometimes, when at the end of sixty minutes, and I'm really cooking, my brain is on fire, and I'm stirring up with some great ideas, but then I have to quit and get ready for work.

My five minutes have turned into sixty and it's a blast!

Can you find a spare five minutes a day?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Chapter 7

After the Letter is Delivered

It's the Trip, Not the Destination

Have you ever been on a long car trip with a couple of young, rambunctious kids in the back seat? That's why some people say "family vacation" is an oxymoron.

Usually, within the first thirty minutes the kids are yelling and fighting and you using your best drill instructor voice say, "I'm going to turn the car around and head back home if everyone doesn't settle down."

Those kids never let you rest. They keep asking the same questions over and over.

"Are we there yet? How much farther? When do we get there?" And of course they don't say it in a pleasant conversational tone. They say it in a whiny, wailing pitch that will drive parents crazy.

"Are we there yet? How much farther? When do we get there?"

What's interesting though, as we grow up and become adults and start to have goals of our own, we end up asking the same questions.

- Are we there yet?
- How much farther?
- When do we get there?

It can be an aggravating process. We have a goal, some place we want to be, but it's taking soooooo long.

One of the secrets to happiness in life is to enjoy the trip. Enjoy the process of getting there. Stop asking the question, "When do we arrive?" Enjoy where you are right now.

It's the trip, not the destination that's important.

I remember one winter Olympics, when a competitor from an Arab country, a land filled with desert, sand and rocks, and not a flake of snow, competed in some of the skiing events. As I recall, he always came in dead last. He had no chance of winning or getting a medal, yet he was having a blast.

He was obviously enjoying himself and had such a positive spirit and winning attitude that they featured him a number of times on television. He, possibly more than any other athlete, was an inspiration for many people.

That's what I'm talking about. It's the trip, not the destination.

John Candy, in the movie, *Cool Runnings*, about a Jamaican bobsled team, preaches to his team about winning an Olympic medal. He says, "If you're not enough without the medal, you'll never be enough with the medal."

Winning a medal is a great experience, but it's not going to make you into something that you're not in the first place. I think that a lot of people have the idea that if they can win a medal, then they'll be happy. "If I can only get that promotion; if I can only make it to retirement; if I can only get a bigger house, then I'll be happy. Having goals is great, but don't wait to enjoy life. Don't be so caught up in the goal that you fail to enjoy the trip.

You also need to realize that once you reach your goal, once you do earn a medal, you'll feel euphoric, even terrific! You'll feel proud that you have accomplished something you set out to do. But that emotional high doesn't last very long. In an hour, a day, maybe a week or two if you're lucky, reality rears its ugly head again. The trash is piling up. You're late for work. The kids are screaming! What do you do then? You either have to quickly set another goal, even higher than the first, or quit and possibly lose all the benefits of attaining the first goal.

If you're only happy at those infrequent goal-achievement peaks, when you're up there at the top, then all those times in-between will be filled with unhappiness and dissatisfaction.

One reason I continue writing this book, even after three years, is that I enjoy the process. It's fun. I enjoy seeing what I have to say. If I was always looking at the goal and asking the question, "When do I arrive?" I'd be frustrated, and disappointed.

Charlie Schulz, the creator of Peanuts, was once asked by a group of writers if Snoopy would ever publish a book.

Mr. Schulz answered, "No, Snoopy would never be published." He was then asked what words of advice he had for budding writers, who also had never been published. He answered, "The reward is in the doing." Enjoy what you're doing. Enjoy the trip and you'll be rewarded every day.

As I rewrite this section, I noticed that yesterday's paper had a Peanuts cartoon in which Charlie Brown brings Snoopy four letters from the mail box. They are all rejection letters from different publishers. Snoopy is always working on the great American novel. And Snoopy asks, "Do they like my stories?" Charlie Brown reads, "Dear contributor, who told you that you could write, your mother? Dear contributor, we've seen better writing on license plates." Charlie Brown then takes the letters to a large closet and as the doors open you see three gigantic stacks of letters, six feet high. Charlie Brown tells Snoopy, "I filed them with all the others." The reward has got to be in the doing. Enjoy each moment.

It would be great if we could all be Olympic medal winners, all the time, but it's not going to happen. It would be great if we could all be published authors, but it's not going to happen. We need to enjoy what we can do, what we can be today.

One of my favorite sayings is, "Remember the Past – Plan for the Future – But Live in the Present." The reward is right here and right now. Unfortunately too many people seem to let the moment slip away.

I have a friend who rarely seems to enjoy the present moment. He's always worrying about the mistakes of the past, what he

might have done differently. He's always second guessing himself about decisions that he made yesterday. And if that's not enough, he's also worrying about the future and what it might hold for him, what might happen. And since he spends so much time concentrating on the past and the future, the present joy and happiness eludes him on a daily basis.

You can't change the past and you'll never know for sure what the future holds for you, but you can enjoy the present. You can enjoy the trip you're on and where you are right now.

Art Linkletter, in his book, *Yes You Can*, defines success this way. "Success itself is a journey, not a destination. Your goals for success, should not be final destinations, but only way stations on your journey through life."

Author and speaker Jim Rohn, explains it slightly differently. He says, "The major purpose of having a goal is not to acquire the goal, but to compel yourself to become the person it takes to achieve that goal." In other words, attaining the goal is of secondary importance. What's far more important is what you become in the pursuit of it.

I see this all the time in Toastmasters. People join Toastmasters because they want to get a better job, a promotion or they join because their boss said they had to improve their speaking skills. But what's most exciting to me is not that they accomplish their goal, but what they become in the process. Time after time, I see new people join who are timid, quiet, and insecure, but in a matter of a few short months they change dramatically. Their self-esteem rises as does their self-confidence. They come out of their shells and develop new facets of their personalities. It's like someone stuck in a chrysalis, but with a little work, breaks out and emerges as a beautiful butterfly.

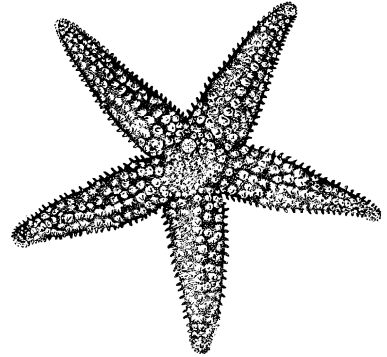
Enjoy the trip, the process, where you are, right here and right now. It's a blast!

Success is the trip I'm taking, not somewhere I need to be.

Stop asking the question, "When do I arrive?"
You are already there.

Making a Difference

There's a classic story about a man walking down the beach and ahead of him he noticed a young boy. The boy was picking up starfishes stranded on the beach and throwing them out into the ocean. The starfish had been washed ashore by a storm the night before. The man walked up and asked the little boy, "What are you doing?" The boy said that the sun was getting very hot and he was concerned that the starfish would die if they wouldn't get back in the water quickly. The man said, "That's true, but look down the beach. There are hundreds and thousands of starfish lying on the beach. You can't possibly make any difference." With that the young boy reached down, grabbed another starfish, threw it out to sea and said, "It makes a difference to this one."



The story vividly illustrates the way I feel.

If you watch the TV news, you may easily become discouraged and feel like the world is a terrible place. You may feel there is nothing you can do.

Not true! You can make a difference; just lower your sights.

Instead of getting rid of all racism, try to erase racism from your heart.

Instead of getting rid of all poverty, help one person find a job.
Instead of trying to make all young people into model citizens, work with one small youth group.

You can't make a difference in the whole world, but you can help one other person and say, "It makes a difference to this one."

Some of you may be asking, "What does making a difference have to do with achieving your goals?"

The answer is another question.

What do you do once you've achieved your goals?

What do you do when you're financially secure, physically sound and emotionally stable?

One answer might be to share what you have become with other people. Make a difference to someone else.

Getting what we want is satisfying, yet I've found that helping other people along the same path is even more fulfilling.

Try making a difference, not to the world, but to one other person. It's a marvelous feeling.

Parable of the Talents

The Bible has a great story about Talents. Talents originally were a unit of weight, then a unit of money, and now they refer to a person's abilities.

Matthew 25:14, says, "The master had to go on a trip, and he gave five talents to one servant, two talents to another and one talent to the last. The one who was given five talents used them and earned five more. The servant who was given two talents earned two more. But the servant who had received one talent, what did he do? He dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. When the master came back, he talked to all the servants. To the first two who had invested his money, he said, 'Well done,' and gave them each more responsibility. But to the one who hid his money he said, 'You wicked and lazy servant! Throw him outside into the darkness!'"

I never quite understood this story. It always seemed to me that the master was just a bit harsh on this one guy. The servant was just being conservative. He didn't want to lose what he had, and what does the master say, "Throw him outside into the darkness!" Boy, how would you like to have this guy for a boss? I never quite got the message, until, one day when I found out what one talent was actually worth.

According to the Concordia Self-Study Bible:

- 1 talent = 60 minas
 - 1 mina = 100 drachmas
 - 1 drachma = \$100
- (A day's wage updated for today's wage scale)
- Therefore: 1 mina = 100 X \$100 = \$10,000
 - 1 talent = 60 X \$10,000 = **\$600,000**

That's a lot of money!

Can you imagine someone giving you \$600,000!

Now I understand why the master is so upset.
The conversation might have gone like this today.

Donald Trump – George, what did you do with the \$600,000 I gave you?
George – Well, I dug this big hole in the back yard and I buried it.
Donald Trump – You what! You buried it!
You stuck it in a hole in the ground?
George – Yes sir.
Donald Trump – You're fired.

Now, the story starts to make some sense.

The question we learn from the parable is this: "Are you using your talents, investing your talents, multiplying your talents, or have you buried your talents deep within yourself?"

It's also interesting that the master didn't give an equal amount of talents to each servant. To one he gave five talents. To one he gave two talents. And to the last person he gave one talent. And that's very true to life. We see these situations every day.

Even though the Declaration of Independence says, "All men are created equal," we know, it's just not true.

The question is not, "How many talents have you been given," the question is, "What are you doing with the talents you've been given?"

How are you investing your talents? Are you using your talents? Or have you buried them away, because you're afraid of losing what you've got?

Leo Buscaglia says that when we die and are judged, we won't be asked why we didn't become great architects or great lawyers or world leaders; we'll be asked, "Why didn't you become YOU? Why didn't you invest your talents and multiply them for the Master?"

We can only live dynamically and energetically when we're using our talents, investing our talents and taking a chance with what

we have.