

The Importance of Goal Setting

As remote working continues to be the model for many people, one of the issues concerning many of you has been the challenges with making best use of your time and a sense that things which have been postponed, in the hope of face to face opportunities, are now overdue.

While there are many strategies for successful time management and we have covered some of them in previous articles, (www.lynnpeyton.com) another important aspect of time management is staying on purpose, doing the important things first and keeping focussed on our goals. It is ok that in our busy lives that not everything gets done - so long as the most important things do get done. Without goals and targets it is too easy to get distracted and to focus on the wrong things.

All high achieving individuals set goals - yet only 3 per cent of the population have written goals. Are you in the 3% of highly successful leaders – or the 97% of followers?

A goal without a deadline is just a dream – we cannot just dream about getting a promotion – we have to set a goal with a timeline – we have to be proactive. The goal is to be a first line manager/middle manager/senior manager by a specific date. Now we have the goal we can work out the steps to get there.

Another way of thinking about it is as follows:-

- **Goal is the top of the mountain**
- **Actions are the steps to get there**
- **Commitments are the daily disciplines that keep us on target**

Now that we have set a goal we are looking forward with purpose and not looking backwards. The past, whatever stories we have about it, is not the direction of travel. We have to learn to integrate the learning from the past, including any failures and wounds, and move forward towards compelling goals.

So, if goal setting has proven to be so effective, why do more people not set goals?

As leaders, we need to understand our own mind-set and behaviour and that of others. There are a number of reasons people do not set goals.

1. Fear of failure. For many people, the truth is that if they don't set goals then they cannot fail. That is just a cop out - for 2 reasons. Firstly, we all have to fail in order to better understand what to do differently next time and secondly, standing still is never an option. When we stay too long in the one job, we stop growing. We may become disillusioned. The only failure is the failure to set and pursue goals
2. Worried about what other people will think. Do not share your goals with anyone who does not set goals themselves or who does not want you to succeed. Remember misery loves company. Identify with new peers who are moving up, setting goals, developing their skills and growing their mindset.
3. Many people don't know how to set goals. Goal setting is often not taught at university or in business. Of course, there are targets in agencies – financial, statistical, budgets which are organisational targets. We need to have individual goals and team goals that we can own. We also need family goals, health goals, relationship goals. The secret to goal setting is starting – and you must write them down
- 4 They do not know importance of setting goals. We get what we focus on so we have to focus on what we want more of. We need to take control of our future and that requires some quiet time and reflection, to really focus on where we want to be individually and as a leader.
- 5 They overcomplicate the goal setting process. They procrastinate rather than getting started.

Do the short exercise below to get started on changing your future.

Exercise:

Start by answering some simple questions:-

- What are the 3 most important aspects of my world which have to be different than what they are right now?
- What specifically needs to change?
- What can I improve?
- What do I need to stop doing?

Next week we will look at how to set goals that are realistic and yet stretch us beyond our comfort zone. We will also look at the importance of daily disciplines that keep us moving in the direction of our goals

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