

# **How to Set and Achieve Compelling Goals: You Only Achieve What You Will Accept**

**Results Matter Consulting**

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## **Why this eBook?**

Thanks you for downloading.

Volumes have been written on the topic of goals, and how to go about setting goals. So why another book? If one does a Google search, it will throw up 2.9 million entries on goal setting alone, with nearly one in ten claiming to be books of some form or other on the subject. Such is the interest on the subject of goal setting!

My own journey with goal setting began only about ten years ago! I systematically started setting and following the goals I set myself. Although, like most people, I would like to think that I have been setting goals, small or big, all my life, it was only when I started going back to trace my journey and career, I realised that there were three ways I handled goals, and that kind of determined where I headed in life:

1. I set goals – sometimes ambitious – and made some attempts to take action, and gave up as soon as I found something else interesting enough to do.
2. I set goals, seriously went after these, and achieved these – in some areas of my life these took days, in some cases months, and in some others years or even a decade to achieve what I had set out to do.
3. I set goals, took persistent actions, but achieved no results, and gave up.

It is not an easy process taking stock of one's life and trying to determine how or why you achieved or failed to achieve certain goals, with more than four decades of life's experience behind you.

I then began to dig deeper and analyse why some goals were achieved and other weren't. To do this, I got drawn to study the science of neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) to understand how our mind works. This also took me to studying the experiences of other people, some great achievers, and some friends and clients who I coached. One thing I learned from all these is that it is not about what goals you set, but how you set goals that determines what you achieve and how quickly you achieve these.

This eBook synthesizes most of all that I learnt from these experiences.

If you find the contents useful, please feel free to use these. And do send us your comments, or share your experiences with us at:

[info@results-matter.co.uk](mailto:info@results-matter.co.uk)

I hope you enjoy reading it.

Best

*Abhijit Bhattacharjee*

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# What this eBook will show you:

This eBook is for ambitious people, people who want to take their personal and professional wellbeing to newer heights.

This book is written in the style of an experiential learning tool, and may not conform to what management *gurus* will teach you in management seminars and classes. My premise is very simple – if it works for me and thousands others I know of – it is good enough to learn from and enrich our lives.

Although the title of the eBook refers to goal setting, we all know that simply setting good goals is not enough to ensure that we achieve these. There are various associated factors that determine whether or not we achieve what we set out to achieve. This may be stating the obvious, but if there is one thing that I have learned from my experiences and those of others, it is this: while the ‘goals’ tell us what we want/wish to attain, it is the ‘other factors’ that determine whether or not we get there., but the most important discovery in my journey has been that often we keep the process of setting goals independent of the ‘other factors’ – we decide on goals first, and then start working on strategy and action plans later. I will show you through these pages that in our lives, all of us would have achieved many things, and whenever we have had great successes, we followed a slightly different formula: we would have set our goals in such a way that our ‘other factors’ got automatically aligned in the pursuit of our goals. This is the theme of this book. There are five sections which will show you:

- 1. Six steps in setting goals and making them compelling.**
- 2. How to develop a strategy that takes you towards the outcomes you want**
- 3. Taking action**
- 4. Continuous review of goals-strategy-action cycle and dealing with feedback.**
- 5. How to deal with blockages – what stops you – limiting values and beliefs.**

### YOUR KEY TO SUCCESS:

There are several exercises mentioned in different sections of the eBook. We recommend that you take a break after reading through the section 1 before you move to the subsequent sections. If you want to do the exercises, these are best done after you have given a quick reading of all the sections – this will help you see the purpose of each exercise, and decide on specific ones useful for you. We believe you can get the best from this eBook if you pick up some of the exercises and keep doing these regularly, at least 15 minutes every day.



# 1. Six Steps for Setting Compelling Goals:

The possibility of a future that is exciting, compelling, filled with enjoyment and accomplishment is what drives us as human beings forward in life. Unfortunately too many of us do not experience the daily motivation and joy of creating a more-fulfilling life because the future we desire is poorly defined, and lacks clarity in our minds. Creating a compelling and exciting future is a process that gives us a greater level of control over the way your goals are represented in our mind.

## Step no 1: Be Self-aware of what drives you

In terms of what motivate us to act, there are broadly two types of people in life: (1) some need very clear marker for the future – owning a million pound home, writing a book that becomes a best-seller, etc; (2) then there are others who would be always motivated by the need to avoid pain – ‘I do not want to be poor again’, ‘I don’t want to fail’. I have a daughter now doing her A-levels ; right from her GCSE days, it has been a pattern with her that while she is happy to stay away from her studies for eleven months of the year, come the exam time, she is at her desk studying almost eighteen hours a day. Every time discussions about future or grades come up, her belief is that she is doing all she can so that her grades do not *fall below* x, y, z. She doesn’t want to fail.

It is not that you need to be only one of the two types. Some people have blended both these motivations into powerful success formula. A friend of mine I have known for nearly three decades moved from one top job to another in several multi-national companies and became the Chief Executive before he retired, making millions in the process. During all these years, he rarely took holidays. While he always wanted the top job, he was also driven by the thought that he would never like to see himself jobless, ever in his working life. In his childhood, he saw his father become jobless and spend the rest of his days in extreme poverty and social ridicule.

### Exercise 1: Identify your motivational pattern:



You may find the following exercise extremely beneficial in helping you understand your motivational pattern. Repeat this process 4 or 5 times over a week, each session lasting about fifteen minutes.

Find a quiet place where you will not be disturbed by anyone or anything. Sit upright on a chair – or if you are used to doing yoga, sit on the floor – and relax. Take a deep breath in, making sure that as you breathe in, your diaphragm expands outside. To find out where your diaphragm is, place your right hand above your stomach just below the point where your chest bones end; then place your left hand just below your right hand; your diaphragm region is where your left hand is resting now, just above your naval. As you inhale, hold the breath for five seconds (with your diaphragm protruded outside) and then gently exhale – during this process the diaphragm will go back to its normal position. Repeat this process five times, and as you do this you will feel your body relaxing, your muscle tensions slowly reducing with each breathing cycle (*we will be referring to this exercise several times in this book – the process of breathing in and out is the same*).

In this relaxed state, think of all the great things you have achieved in your life, all the successes you have had. Now of all the successes, choose three or four which you think were really big moments in your catalogue of

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achievements – it does not matter whether others will consider these ‘big’ or ‘great’, as long as these stand out in *your* mind, they are big. Try to ask yourself: what motivated me to achieve this? What was driving me at *that* point in my life?

Stop this process after about 15-20 minutes in one sitting. If you have several ‘great’ moments to work through, it is best to do no more than 2-3 in one go. Repeat this for 4-5 sessions.

You now have a good awareness of what drives you – it could be something you aim towards with clarity of purpose, or something you want to avoid at all costs with a strong determination, or a combination of both. It is important that you are aware of how your mind’s operating system functions when it comes to sending out gush of energy and motivation for taking sustained action.

This is the first of my six rules: **be self-aware of what drives you – ‘towards’ a goal, or ‘away from’ something, or both?**

### **Step no 2: Know what you really, really want**

Too often people define goals in negative terms: ‘I don’t want to be poor’; my daughter’s motto ‘I don’t want to fail’. Our brain does not understand a negative command; when it hears words like ‘no’, ‘don’t’, etc., it ignores the negative and works with the rest. So those who drive their life with the aim of ‘don’t want to be poor’ will end up poor. There is also another problem: when I ask my daughter, ‘what grade do you want to attain’, her statement (I don’t want to fail) only tells me the *non-targets* she wants to *miss*, rather than *targets* she wants to *hit*. After all you can't hit what you can't see; so this does not give the mind anything to work with. But stating a goal in positive terms gives your mind a more clearly defined target. It gives you access to a vast source of motivation towards that goal. My successful millionaire friend I talked about earlier had clear sights on jobs he wanted and worked towards that, and he used his ‘negative’ command (never to be jobless) to drive himself to work harder and harder (you and I may debate whether or not working without any holidays is a healthy strategy for anyone to pursue, but that’s a matter of value which we will talk about later).

Define precisely what you really, really want: if it is money/wealth, then state a definite amount. Just saying I want to be rich is a wish, not a desire which the mind recognises. Stating a definite/ quantifiable amount gives the mind something to work on. It makes those goals more easily attainable. It helps you attract the goal. The power of the law of attraction is a reality we all experience from time to time. Visualising a goal with positive expectancy sets in motion universal processes geared towards drawing that goal to you like a magnet. The more you think about your major goal(s), and how to achieve it, the more you activate the Law of Attraction in your life. You begin to attract to you people, opportunities, ideas and resources that help you to move more rapidly toward your goal, and move your goal more rapidly toward you. We all remember times when we seriously thought of doing something, buying a particular car, or going on a holiday to a particular country, and suddenly we ‘chance upon’ programmes on TV or rave reviews on radio or by friends on exactly the same experience that we are after, although we may not have heard anything about these before we took a decision to have these in our lives. We call these coincidences – but are they?



### **Exercise 2: Know what you really, really want:**

Find a quiet place where you will not be disturbed by anyone or anything. Relax and do the same breathing exercise for about 2-3 minutes. Pick one of the goals you intend to accomplish over any time frame.

With your eyes closed, develop a picture in your head of you having achieved this goal. It will help if you look with your eyes to the right. Once you have a picture, turn it into a movie that depicts you in the act of having achieved the goal. See the movie in first person, as though from your own eyes when you are experiencing it. What can you see? What is happening? What are you wearing? What is the weather like? Work on making the image as detailed as possible. Is there anyone with you? What are they wearing? Try to get a really intricate movie rolling.

Next make the pictures of the movie very big and very close to you in your mind's eye. Make the colours extremely bright and vibrant. Increase the picture's borders out to include more detail. You should notice that the more detailed your picture gets, the more intensely you start to feel the feelings you associate to having achieved this goal.

Now focus on what can you hear as you are achieving this goal. How loud are the sounds? If your goal was to buy a nice car, hear the sound of the engine, or what your spouse says about how great it was that you finally had this awesome car. Make the sounds as detailed as possible too. Can you hear any noises in the background like birds chirping or a car driving past? Make the sounds louder and more clear, like you would hear them if you were actually there. We are trying to create the experience of what it will be like when (not if, WHEN) you are actually there.

Now feel what you will actually feel as you are experiencing achieving your goal. Is there a breeze blowing that you can feel on your face? Are you touching anything or anyone? Can you feel the warmth of the sun on your skin? Whatever it is, feel the feelings you would feel. Make them feel as real as possible in your mind.

Finally try to think what you would be thinking and feeling mentally as you achieve your goal? Maybe an excitement that it's finally happened? Maybe a sense of accomplishment? Perhaps anticipation? Maybe you feel a sense of freedom or happiness or fulfillment? Whatever it is, let the 'you' in the movie think and feel those same feelings.

Do the above exercise every morning or at night before going to bed.

You should now be thinking, hearing, seeing, and touching everything as you would if you were actually there having it happen. This is as close as you can possibly be when you actually achieve your goal, and you should be starting to feel those same feelings while you sit and picture! You can have the feeling without even having the goal. This movie that you have created can be extremely motivating. Take some time each day to relive this experience and re-enact your goal. You will find it becomes clearer with each repeated visualisation. Eventually it should feel so real to you that when you think about it while not visualising, it will start to feel like it actually has happened, in other words the visualised experience will start to seem like an ACTUAL experience. Remember everything in the world started as a figment of someone's imagination, a visualisation. The Wright brothers imagined man can fly and gave us aeroplane. Marconi imagined that sound can be transmitted long distance through ether without any wire, and gave the world wireless.

Try recreating the movie whenever you feel a lack of motivation toward that goal, or even first thing in the morning if you find that empowering.

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Successful people visualise the kind of success they want to enjoy, *in advance*. Prior to every new experience, the successful person visualises previous success experiences that are similar to an upcoming event. It is said that no Olympic medallist ever won a medal without visualizing the finish line. Sports psychologists say that the material difference in skills between the finalists is non-existent – in other words they all have the same speed or skill – however, what differentiates the gold winner from the rest is how he/she experiences the winning moment in his/her mind's eye before the race begins. A successful salesperson will visualise and remember previous successful sales presentations. A successful speaker will visualise and remember the standing ovation he /she received for the last presentation made to a large gathering.

Unsuccessful people also use visualisation, but to their detriment. Unsuccessful people, prior to a new event, recall, imagine, and visualise their previous failures, real and imagined. The power of imagination and visualisation has been a subject of research by psychologists for many years now, ever since it was discovered that reality and imagination run through the same circuitry in our brain. There was an experiment done on how mental training compared with actual physical training. A group of men were divided randomly into three basketball teams. They were asked to shoot from the free throw line and their scores were recorded. For the next three weeks, each team went through a different training routine. The first team physically trained for four hours. The second team did not physically train, but imagined themselves shooting perfect shots for two hours a day. The third team was the control group so they were asked not to train at all. After three weeks, they were re-tested and their scores recorded. The first team that trained physically scored an average improvement of 30%. The second team that trained mentally also scored an average improvement of 30%. The third team showed no signs of improvement at all. The experiment showed that mental training is amazingly as effective as actual physical practice. If you were to combine both, your performance would truly be astounding.

### **Step no 3: Determine What YOU Will ACCEPT:**

One important step in setting goals is to determine what is that you are prepared to ACCEPT. You may want a job that pays you £100,000, but if you are prepared to accept a job which fetches you £50,000, it is the latter you will get in life. Successful people will not ACCEPT anything short of what they EXPECT. They make their level of expectation a 'MUST'. As you think about it, do you begin to realize that the level at which you are living your life is the result of the level of acceptance you have been setting for yourself? You only get what you are prepared to accept, not what you expect.



Think in colours

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### Exercise 3: Expectation vs. Acceptance

This is a simple exercise to take stock of your life. Use a plain sheet of paper and make a table with the following elements. Ask yourself the following questions and write down the answers.

Areas of my life	My goal/dream/expectation is:	I am prepared to accept/settle for:
Career: What do I wish to achieve in my career & business?		
Income level: What is my desired income?		
Lifestyle: What lifestyle I would love to have? Describe it.		
Health: What is my ideal weight and state of health? Describe it.		
Relationships: What kind of relationship do I want to have with friends & family?		

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### **Step no 4. Write Down your Goals:**

Writing goals down crystallises them and gives them more force. In his book *What They Don't Teach You In The Harvard Business School*, the author describes a research conducted between 1979 and 1989 on students graduating out of the school. In 1979, the graduates of the MBA programme were asked if they had set clear, written goals for future and made plans to accomplish them. Only 3% of the graduates reported having written goals and plans, and another 13% had stated that they had goals, but not in written form. The rest 84% had no specific goals at all, apart from their focus on graduating out of the management school.

A decade later, in 1989, the same members of the class who had by then settled in their career were interviewed again. The researchers found that the 13% who had goals, albeit unwritten, were earning on average twice as much as the 84% of students who had no clear goals in 1979. But the most surprising finding was that the 3% of graduates who had clear, written goals and plans when they left Harvard were earning, on average, ten times as much as the other 97% of graduates who had no written goals.

In fact, the research did not stop there. A few years later, another University (Dominican University) carried out slightly more elaborate research. They divided participants into five groups: one simply thought about their goals; a second group wrote their goals down; another wrote their goals and formulated action steps to reach these goals; a fourth group was asked to write down their goals, formulate action steps, and send their goals and steps to a friend; and a fifth group wrote down their goals, formulated action steps, sent their goals and steps to a friend, and created weekly reports on progress towards the goal. The test was conducted over the period of a month and a total of 149 participants were part of the study.

What do you think the research showed?

The participants in the study who simply thought about their goals scored a 4.28 on a scale of 8 in terms of achieving their goal where 0 is no progress made and 8 is goal fully accomplished. However, those in the last group who wrote down their goals, formulated action steps, sent their goals and steps to a friend, and created weekly reports on progress towards the goal scored 7.6.

Isn't this powerful evidence?

What makes written goals so powerful?

The answer lies in the fact that the process of putting goals down on paper forces you to ask questions which help clarify in your own mind as to what the goal is, how important it is for you, and what obstacles you might face. In fact writing down goals also helps in breaking down big long-term goals into small chunks which provide clarity of steps when it comes to taking action.

But more importantly, I have found that the process also has an important effect on how our mind grapples with future plans we make for ourselves. The planning process itself is a left-brain (our rational brain, conscious mind) thinking, but the process of putting the plans down on paper makes an impact on our

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*sustained commitment to act* which requires our sub-conscious (right brain) to be fully engaged. Only when the sub-conscious is fully awake to the rational plans (need to lose weight, make a career change, etc) we make for ourselves, can we get the drive and momentum to keep going.

The power of written goals was brought home to me by a forgotten notebook I once used to write down everything that came in my mind. Over fifteen years ago, I was working in Iraq for an international non-profit organisation. I spent several weeks and days trying to define life's bigger questions – my career goals, personal development goals, etc. In one of my notebooks - which I had forgotten about for many years until it reappeared in one of my bookshelves about ten years later – I had written down that my big goal was to become a consultant and coach. Leaving Iraq, I moved on to a variety of roles with the organisation I was working for at that time. Life had moved on and I moved from one job to another. Although the idea of getting into consulting work kept reappearing from time to time, life was going good, and I had forgotten about the weeks and days I had spent visualising what my consulting career would look and feel like.

Although in my conscious mind I tried to dismiss the idea of consulting work for several reasons – leaving a stable job with reasonably decent salary, uncertainty of consulting work being the major one – it had a grip on me. Somewhere in the back of my mind, I didn't want to continue doing what I was doing, and sure enough five years later, I found myself setting off to do what I was avoiding (uncertainty, risk) and launched my consulting career. Years later when I found my Iraq diary resurface on my desk, did I realise that I had committed myself to developing my consulting and coaching business in 3-5 years' time. Fifteen years later, whenever I feel I could do with a bit of motivation, I still tend to go back to my Iraq notes which have been my life script all these years.

In the past couple of years, I have been fascinated by the stories of some very successful people. What makes them succeed, and achieve extra-ordinary things in life? I used to think success comes with luck, being in the right place at the right time, and all that. In the past one year, I have enrolled myself in a mastermind group with a very well known coach, and this has given me opportunity to study some very successful people in business and social sector. Every month we get together on a Wednesday and visit a successful entrepreneur, some of who have acquired almost a celebrity status in their fields. What I find amazingly common among all these men and women is that they almost followed the same script: written goals, action plans, social commitment of their goals and follow through. They do this with such consistency that it becomes a habit, no matter if the goal was big or small.

### **4 Ps of Written goals:**

There are some rules for writing down goals. The following broad guidelines will help you to set effective goals:

- *Precise* – Goals must be specific and measurable: want to be 'rich', 'successful' etc are not measurable; some people will consider themselves rich with a thousand dollars in their pockets, for some a few credit cards in



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their wallet is enough to give them a feeling of being rich. Be precise in putting in dates, times and amounts so that you can measure achievement. Rather than “make a lot of money,” it must be more like, “I earn £100,000 per year by (a specific date).”

- *Positive* – goals must be stated in positive terms. Our brain does not understand negative commands: instead of saying ‘I want to *lose* weight’, write down ‘I (want to) weigh xxx stones’; or instead of ‘I don’t want to make a fool of myself while making a presentation’, state ‘I want to feel and appear confident when I am presenting’.
- *Present tense* – goals must be stated in present tense, as though you had already achieved these goals. For example, you would write, “I weigh nine stones.” Or, “I run my own business with a turnover of three million pounds.”
- *Personal* – must be personal to you; i.e., it is in your control. Instead of saying ‘I would like my company to give me a raise’, state as ‘I have exceeded my sales target by 25% and therefore I want to ask for a raise’.



### Exercise 4: Writing down goals

Take out a sheet of paper and write down a list of ten goals you would like to accomplish in the foreseeable future. Write them in the present tense, as though you had already achieved these goals. After you have completed your list of ten goals, go back over the list and ask yourself this question: “*What one goal on this list, if I were to accomplish it immediately, would have the greatest positive impact on my life?*”

### Step no 5. Determine what it will cost:

No goal is achieved for nothing. Every goal you go after involves a sacrifice – making choices between options. If there is a positive ‘by-product’ of where you are now (your current state), you need to identify that, and be aware that you might lose that if you achieve your goal. If your goal of staying healthy involves giving up smoking which you have found a way to relax, it is important to be aware that you will be losing this - ‘one way you relax’. What’s that you intend to give in return for achieving your goal? Many a times, we give up pursuing our goals after a few attempts as we find ourselves unprepared to live with what we are losing.

If you are going to lose something which is very important for you while pursuing your goal, ask yourself if there is anything else you could substitute it for. In the smoking example above, if you are losing one way to relax, can you find other ways which will give you similar relaxations, for instance music, watching TV, going for a walk, etc? If so, make that a sub-goal to pursue together with your main goal. In addition to losing something which you now consider important (relax while smoking), you may also have to pay a price in additional work (going for a walk to relax), time and commitment to achieve your goal. Determine all these right now. This is the price you’ll need to pay to achieve your goal. Once you know the price you’ll have to pay, take this information to the visualisation exercise you do every morning, and again ask yourself if you really, really want the goal.

### **Step no 6. Rewrite Your Goal Statement:**

Now write a goal statement incorporating all the above elements: precise statement of what you desire and what you are prepared to accept, state what you will give up to reach this goal and state the precise time by which you want to achieve this. Either in the morning or at night before going to bed, give yourself quiet time for ten minutes; relax, and read this statement aloud. Read your written statement aloud every day for at least thirty days. Imagine that you have achieved your goals, see it in your mind, feel *as if* you are already there, and hear what others around you are saying about your achievement. All in present tense. (For those of you curious as to the rationale for this, please note that imagination and reality run through the same circuit in our brain; our sub-conscious mind does not distinguish between the two – if you repeat the same thing over and over again in your conscious mind, it gets transferred at some point to your sub-conscious mind so strongly that it takes over and you start believing what you are thinking. Mohammed Ali proclaimed 'I am the greatest' years before he actually won the world title).

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## 2. Strategies to Reach Your Goals:

Now that you have a compelling goal which you are prepared to pay the price for, the next step is to develop a strategy that will move you towards your goal. The more specific your goal is, the easier it is to develop an appropriate strategy – the route that will take you there. You can have all the drive and energy, but without the right strategy, you will never get what you want. If you are running business and want to grow your business from £50,000 to £60,000 next year, you need one strategy; but if you want to take your business to £500,000 in the next two years, you will need a radically different strategy – possibly an entirely different business model from the one you have now.

Without well thought-out strategies, even the best of goals remain wishes without energy behind them. A friend of mine who is a successful business coach has operated his business on the conventional swapping time for money model (charging by the hour), and last year decided to double his business using a range of other strategies like membership forums (individuals pay to be part of a forum where he provides them access to high-value information through the common platform), writing training manuals etc., which he can sell *repeatedly* (“making money while he sleeps”, in his words).

Once you have identified your strategies (ideally more than one) which will take you to your goal, select the ones that are likely to produce the best results for you.

## 3. Taking Action:

The third step is to get yourself to take consistent action, using the strategy you have crafted. This will move you, step by step, towards your goal. Consistent action is what separates the thinkers or dreamers from the doers. The primary difference between high achievers and low achievers is “**action-orientation.**” Men and women who accomplish tremendous things in life are intensely action-oriented. If they have an idea, they take action on it immediately.

Working with each strategy, develop an action plan outlining tasks you will carry out, time frame for each task and measures and standards to track your progress. While outlining the tasks, you will have identified the key *obstacles, difficulties and constraints* that stand between you and your goal, and organised them by priority. You will also have identified the essential *knowledge and skills* that you will require to achieve your goal, as well as identified the *people, groups and organisations* whose help and cooperation you will require, both inside and outside your business. You have decided on the specific steps you are going to take to earn the support and assistance of these people in achieving your goals.

Now comes the more difficult task of prioritisation.

There is a universally accepted rule called the 80/20 Rule, more technically, the Pareto Principle (named after an Italian economist Vilfred Pareto). The 80/20 Rule applies in various walks of life – for our purpose it is important to recognise that 20% of your activities will account for 80% of the results of all your activities. There is another variation of this which says that highly effective people spend 80% of their time on those 20% of the activities which produce the best results, while the rest of us will be wasting 80% of our time on those tasks that produce only 20% of results.

Once you have prepared a list of tasks for your goal(s), review your list and apply the 80/20 Rule before you begin. If you have a list of ten items to complete, two of those items will be more valuable than other eight items all together. Two of the ten tasks will have greater potential consequences for completion than the other 80%. Successful people are always working on tasks of high value. Unsuccessful people are always killing time on tasks of low value.

If you have followed the steps we outlined in the visualisation section, i.e., if you have visualised the goal powerfully enough, you would find that actions come naturally to you. As the goal becomes almost an obsession, the law of attraction we spoke about earlier would start working for you driving to take actions, overcoming obstacles, until you reach your goal. It is this clear and continual visualization (or use of the compelling future technique) that takes the goal to a physical reality.

Here is an exercise I find extremely powerful in bringing goals and action plans in line with each other and in creating a strong imprint in mind. It takes the body through a mental rehearsal of the goal actually happening, and coding it into your mind and physiology.



### **Exercise 5: Consolidating Your Goal**

1. Stand in a large-sized room (with lots of empty space). Imagine you are looking at a line that represents your life. See the line stretching way, way back into the past; see yourself standing on the spot that represents right now; see the line stretching way, way out to the future. On this line are all the events of your life. Maybe some of them stand out. Maybe you don't really see events but just notice areas of light or dark or skinny bits or thick bits. Everyone will have a different experience, depending on their own unique ways of remembering things. Take a moment to check out your timeline and become familiar with its qualities and characteristics. Mark the imaginary line in your mind from one end of the room to the other.
2. Now stand on the NOW position on your timeline and look at your time line with the future ahead of you.
3. Bring back a picture of yourself achieving your future outcome (the picture you created in Step 2 earlier).
4. Now imagine you can float above yourself: float out into the future above your imaginary time line. As you float over it, take with you the clear picture, sounds and feelings associated with your outcome.
5. As you reach the future point and time where you want to achieve your goal fully, allow your goal outcome to be inserted into your timeline beneath you. Point to it on your future time and mark it with something.
6. Step along the timeline and stand on that future point now. As you do this, you may see in your mind's eye certain events change to help you in the process. You may also think of additional resources you need to help you achieve your outcome.
7. Walk slowly backwards from the future outcome to the NOW again and integrate all the learning and steps you have taken along the way that contributed to achieving your goal.

8. Then stand on the NOW, looking at your future outcome and knowing that it is firmly imprinted into your timeline.

## 4. Review and Feedback

Even the best of goals, strategies and plans may not always produce exactly the outcome you intended. We have all seen people who after careful research and planning, go on a diet, and get the size and shape they want. But only temporarily. Give them another three or six months, and back to business as usual. They have given up – ‘it can’t be done’. End of story. In their minds, they have tried very hard; while the fact is they gave up at the first hurdle they encountered. It is said that Thomas Edison took almost 10,000 attempts before inventing the light bulb. When asked how he did it, he said that he had to first find 9,999 strategies of how not to invent the light bulb. He then used this feedback to change his strategy until he got what he wanted. To him, there was no failure, only feedback (9,999 times) which gave him one big success! Successful people know what they want specifically, develop strategies, take actions, get feedback and change their strategies until they succeed.

The rule they follow is simple – there is no failure, only feedback.

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## 5. Dealing with Blockages – Values and Beliefs

At this stage I need to add a caveat. If success was all about setting positive and precise goals, developing appropriate strategies and taking actions, couldn't we all attain what we want? I could teach these principles and practical steps to thousands of people, but not everyone will act on these, and act consistently. I have used the visualisation technique for several years now with hundreds of people in training and consulting work with clients, and have come across scores of sincere hard working people who would say they find it hard to visualise, or the picture they see in their mind is not that bright and clear and inspiring. When we unearth the reasons, these generally boil down to some of the values or limiting beliefs they have. Some months ago I was coaching a consultant friend of mine who has set clear goals for his business, but it simply wasn't moving fast enough. The consulting work he does involves, like mine, quite a lot of travel away from home. Although he enjoys travelling and the kind of work he undertakes, we discovered as we dug deeper that his strong family values has actually made him sometimes unhappy with his work, although consciously he (in agreement with his wife) has always tried to ignore this conflict between his family values and work demands as unimportant. But somewhere in the back



of his mind that did persist, and whenever his creative mind tried to visualise the future, his mind's eye just refused to engage.

Values are like emotional hot buttons that drive our behaviour. They are what we value as important in our lives. All of us regard values like 'success', 'freedom', 'security', 'love' and 'happiness' very differently. And it is the way we internally rank these values that determine the kinds of choices we make, and the actions we take. Some might value material success over spiritual, while others might simply concentrate on their spiritual well being. Once we identify the specific value(s) that drive us and acknowledge them, we can craft strategies that support these values, rather than strategies and values working in opposition to each other.

Beliefs fall into a different category, especially when these become self-limiting. When people don't believe a goal is possible (like passing the driving test, for example), they feel hopeless. And when people feel hopeless, they don't take the appropriate action. A person may also believe that a goal is possible for *others* to achieve, i.e., people can pass driving tests, but not possible for himself. When the person believes he doesn't have what it takes to succeed, you'll typically find a sense of helplessness. Contrarily, if one has empowering beliefs about what one can achieve, well.....anything is possible – remember, Mohammed Ali's "I'm the Greatest"!

Self-limiting beliefs, sometimes based on a single experience or a casual remark, can hold you back for years. Almost everyone has had the experience of mastering a skill in an area where they thought they had no ability, and being quite surprised at themselves when they overcame the limiting belief.

### **Your Beliefs Are Acquired, Not Inborn**

The good news about beliefs is that *all beliefs are learned*. They can therefore be unlearned, especially if they are not helpful. When you came into the world, you had no beliefs at all - about yourself, your religion, your political party, other people, or the world in general. Just as you once shed your belief that Santa Claus or tooth fairy was real, you can shed any belief or acquire new beliefs if you want to.

In my coaching work, I have been working with a gentleman (we will call him Jim) who has been, what I would call, a successful businessman. At sixty-six, he runs a family business, with a turnover of a slightly over a million pounds. On the surface, he is happy –he makes a decent living from his business which is managed by a Chief Executive and his team. But somewhere in his mind is a long unhappiness that his business wasn't growing over the years. He has had his close circle of friends desert him as they grew their businesses and some of them became multi-millionaires. They grew up together, spent their youths together, set up business together, and went to the same golf clubs. Suddenly in the last ten years, Jim noticed he was getting cold shouldered by some of them as they had moved on to being friends with more successful, richer people.

Losing his friends and self-esteem, Jim invested all the time and finance he could master in his business in the past three years, wanting to expand his business. He has worked closely with his Chief Executive and management team to push for business growth and expansion. But nothing has really made much of a difference in their business – Jim's company manufactures DIY tools for well known brands like Black & Decker, Draper tools, Bosch, etc. Competition has been stiff as manufacturing moved to Asia and Eastern Europe. Jim's company has had to work harder and harder to stay where they were. He had no doubt that his management team had done all they could.

It turned out some of his friends have ridden on this wave of global change and moved their production to China, and that's how they grew their business several-fold, while Jim saw that same change a block to his business. Jim did not want to take risks. He likes his management team because they run the business in the way he ran it for two decades, and they don't take risks. Although Jim pushes them to expand, he subconsciously likes it when they come back with the explanation that times are difficult with competition from the emerging countries.

All his life Jim has valued safety and security, and avoided risks. Back in his teen years, he joined horse-riding and football. A couple of times he came home slightly injured. His loving mother who had his best in her heart always advised him not to do those risky sports. He will be no good in those.

In his later years, he would go to the skiing slopes of Swiss Alps and would spend his days there sipping wine while his wife would be go skiing with their children.

Jim had managed his entire business with this single motto: don't get hurt; don't take risks so that you do not fail. Be safe!

Once he realised how a few childhood incidents had such a grip over him throughout his life, it was easy to make a change – the safety advice he got in childhood was no longer relevant to run his business. And one of the first things he has done in the past few months is to hire a dynamic CEO who is a risk-taker and has proven track record of growing businesses he has managed.

### **Changing Beliefs:**

You can wish for a thing, but you are only *ready* for it when you believe that you can achieve this. The state of mind must be belief, not simply hope or wish. Negative beliefs can be changed easily through changing the internal dialogue that goes on in our mind constantly. There are seven easy steps in the process:

1. State the belief ('I am hopeless in remembering names').
2. Gather evidence: allow your 'other self' (our internal dialogue always has two personalities involved – usually 'self' and 'the other voice') to gather as much evidence based on experience and reality to counter the belief statement. 'Don't you remember any names?' 'Don't you remember names of twenty of your friends'?
3. Seek Alternative Explanation: if the evidence in the second step wasn't strong enough to disprove all the arguments (which confirm the belief that 'I am hopeless'), are there alternative explanations – 'I usually can't remember the names when I meet people for a short time'.
4. What are the consequences (of having the belief)? Is that serious?
5. If the belief is still strong, ask the question: what is the use in holding this belief? Is there any positive value from holding this belief? If not, it's *better to change it*.
6. What action can I take to improve the situation? Write them all down.
7. Make an action plan

There are also other easier way of changing beliefs and planting new beliefs. I once heard the American motivational guru, Brian Tracey, tell this story about a successful American sales manager. After carefully

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interviewing and recruiting a new salesman, the manager would take the salesman to a Cadillac dealership and insist that he trade in his old car for a new Cadillac. The new salesman would usually balk at the idea, frightened at the cost of the car and the huge monthly payments involved. But the sales manager would insist that he buy the Cadillac as a condition of employment.

The salesman would drive the car home, and his wife would almost have a heart attack when she saw that he had bought a new Cadillac. But after she had settled down, he would take her for a ride around the neighbourhood in the new Cadillac. The neighbours would see them driving in a new Cadillac as he waved on the way past. He would park his new Cadillac in front of his house or in his driveway. People would come over and admire it. Gradually, imperceptibly, at a subconscious level, his attitude toward himself and his earning potential would begin to change. Within a few days, he began to see himself as the kind of person who drove a new Cadillac. He saw himself as a big money earner in his field. He saw himself as one of the top performers in his industry.

Such is the power of beliefs.

### ***If you think***

***If you think you are beaten, you are,***

***If you think you dare not, you don't!***

***If you like to win, but think you can't,***

***It's almost a cinch you won't.***

***If you think you'll lose, you're lost;***

***For out in the world we find***

***Success begins with a fellow's will;***

***It's all in the state of mind.***

***If you think you're outclassed, you are.***

***You've got to think high to rise,***

***You've got to be sure of yourself before***

***You can even win a prize.***

***Life's battles don't always go***

***To the stronger and faster man,***

***But sooner or later the man who wins***

***Is the man who thinks he can.***



### Do Corpses Bleed?

Changing beliefs require one to have an open mind. There is an old story described by Abraham Maslow that illustrates this. A psychiatrist was treating a man who believed he was a corpse. Despite all the psychiatrist's logical arguments, the man persisted in his belief. In a flash of inspiration, the psychiatrist asked the man "Do corpses bleed?" The patient replied, "That's ridiculous! Of course corpses don't bleed." After first asking for permission, the psychiatrist pricked the man's finger and produced a drop of bright red blood. The patient looked at his bleeding finger with abject astonishment and exclaimed: "I'll be damned, corpses *do* bleed!" (story told by Robert Dilts<sup>1</sup>)

## Summary:

1. The primary difference between high achievers and low achievers is **"action-orientation."** Men and women who accomplish great things in life are intensely action-oriented. If they have an idea, they take action on it immediately. The factor that distinguishes those that move to take action consistently from the others who 'wish to achieve something' is simple: they make their goal(s) **a must**, while the rest belong to the category of general population who **like, wish, want, hope** to succeed. The latter group will work within their comfort zones, and when challenged, will find excuses why something cannot be done. They **want** to lose weight, but it is not a must. They would **love** to make more money and **wish** to take charge of their lives, but they could live without these. They have SOFT goals – Some Other Future Time.
2. You must put yourself on the line if you want to achieve anything. Make a public declaration or put yourself in a position where you have no choice but to succeed. The words you use affect your frame of mind and the emotional states you experience. Using the word 'must' fires off a greater sense of urgency & motivation.
3. Write down your goal statement and read it aloud for a month at least twice a day, while continuing to do visualisation at least once a day.
4. Develop strategies and action plans. If needed, keep changing these as you go along. And most importantly:
5. If you find any of your beliefs coming in the way, identify those. Sometimes you may be able to work on your beliefs on your own. If not, seek help from you coach or mentor, if you have one.

If you did these, success is within your grasp.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Dilts. *Beliefs: Pathways to Health and Well-being*

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