

Life... Trouble sticking with goals

Situation:

I was listening to a radio interview this afternoon with a man who literally went from rags to riches. While they were talking I caught myself feeling a little down. After the show was over I found myself mulling over a lot of the things I thought I would once do. My dreams – so many of them just haven't come true. And it's not only the financial ones I haven't reached. My relationships, physical stamina and stress management skills aren't what I'd like them to be either.

My pattern seems to be this: I get a great idea, take a few steps in the right direction, even stick with something for a few months, then I lose interest. Something else always takes precedence. What can I do to keep on track?

Answer:

First let's start with – You're not wrong, you're average! You're not going to get too far pouring your precious energy into trying to figure out "why" you didn't do what you first set out to do in the past. Millions of people have dreams that end up collecting dust or vaporize into thin air after a while.

There is only one real reason we don't achieve what we set out to do – we give up. Period. That's a hard truth for us to accept. We'd rather blame circumstances, other people, the economy – anything outside of us. It's another area where we haven't exercised self-responsibility. Nobody can take away our goals. Nobody can extinguish them. We are the ones who allow them to die through neglect.

Be aware that our goals do in fact change throughout our lifetimes. What was meaningful at 21 changes by the time you're 35. If you had goals that are no longer goals, leave them behind. It's perfectly OK to change your mind. And if there's something still burning in your heart – go for it!

As you probably know, I'm a great advocate watching your words. What you label something does make a difference. Take a minute to look at the following terms and what they mean:

A "Dream" or "I want..." is like saying: "I wish..." I wish I weighed 165 lbs. I wish I could be more comfortable in all social situations. I wish I was more successful.

A "Goal" is like saying: "I think I will..." or "I'd like to..." I think I'll work at weighing 165 lbs. I'd like to be more comfortable in all social situations. I'm going to move forward on a plan to write a book.

An "Intention" is like saying: "I will..." I will weigh 165 lbs. I will be more comfortable in all social situations. I will write a book.

And then there's a "Genuine Intention" which goes beyond a good intention. A Genuine Intention means: "I may not know exactly how I will, but I will! I will! I will! Your Genuine



Intention must be fueled by your will, your will to move, to act, to march step-by-step towards your objective – not away from it.

Let's look at some samples:

I intend to weigh 165lbs., means you are going to be extremely conscious of what goes into your mouth.

I intend to weigh 165lbs., means you will say "No thank you" to the chocolate cake, even though everyone else is having it.

I intend to weigh 165lbs., means you will exercise even when you don't feel like it, even when you think you're too tired.

I intend to be more comfortable in all social situations, means you will go out to lunch with your co-workers instead of creating excuses not to go.

I intend to be more comfortable in all social situations, means you will speak up at a PTA meeting when you have an idea, even if you're feeling anxious. You will ask a question when you want/need clarification on something, even when you feel embarrassed because you think you're the only one in the room who doesn't get it.

I intend to be more comfortable in all social situations, means you will take a Dale Carnegie course or join a Toastmasters group. You will attend every session, even when it's cold or rainy, or you don't feel like it.

I intend to write a book, means you will take the quiet time you need to come up with ideas.

I intend to write a book, means you will type on your computer everyday, even when the weather is absolutely gorgeous outside and you'd rather be playing in the yard or driving to the beach.

I intend to write a book, means that no matter how uncomfortable it is, you will fire the graphic artist who doesn't really have the time for your project and find one who is willing and available.

When I make a Genuine Intention, it's a solemn promise to myself. It's serious business. When a person with integrity tells you, "I give you my word," you know you can count on him. It's the same with you – your Genuine Intention is you, giving yourself, your word. It's you, giving yourself, your solemn promise. I don't know about you, but it takes some pretty extenuating circumstances for me not to keep a promise I've made.

Some people are scared to make a solemn promise, even to themselves. They think, "What happens if I can't achieve what I set out to do? I'm scared of making such a serious commitment." The best antidote I know for those kinds of self-discouraging statements is the truth: "At this point I don't know how I will, but I will!" Saying you "don't know how" you will is not a scary thought – it's reality. No one, that means every single person on the face of the earth past or present, who set out to do anything meaningful did not know every single step and every single detail when they started out. Not Henry Ford. Not Mother Theresa. Not Tiger Woods. Not Mary Kay Ash from the highest selling cosmetics company in the world. Not even all those great folks in the Bible had every phase defined when they began.

Plans evolve as you move forward – if you stay focused on your intention. How do you stay focused? By stating your intention every single day, at least once a day! If you have trouble deciding what to do next to move toward your ever-important goal, state your



intention out loud. I guarantee that the simple act of speaking and hearing your intention will jump-start your motivation. Then make your actions match your words.

If you think about it, the true opposite of “I will...” is “I won’t” – another way of saying “I can’t.” And we all know that when we think we can’t, we never will. The next time you find yourself dreaming about something you really want to accomplish, use the words “I intend to _____” and fill in the blank. When you do, take a second to notice your posture and the tone of your voice. You’ll find yourself sitting or standing a little taller, a little straighter. Good-bye slumped shoulders. Your voice will sound stronger, more vibrant – a pleasant mixture of joy, anticipation and commitment.

Say farewell to your “I want to _____” and embrace your “I intend to _____.”



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