

**Dream a Big Dream, Make It a Memory
of the Future, and Expect a Miracle!**

**Workbook to Prepare for
The Spark a Dream Workshop**

Your Coach will be Joe Tye



During our two days together in this workshop, along with the one the optional day hike, you will be thinking about your Big Dream. What is a project, a goal, or a dream that you would like to Spark to Life? By the end of the day our time together, you will have a preliminary plan and an idea for a working prototype to start building your momentum toward it's achievement. Don't worry if you don't have a project or a goal that excites you right now – just make that your goal for the Workshop.

This workbook is to get you thinking about your goals for our program together. Please give yourself some time to think about your answers to the questions. This workbook is for you and you only – you will not be asked to share anything that you write with others in the workshop, though you should bring a copy with you in case you want to work on it in the evenings, or to review what you have previously written.

The workbook is in four sections. Section 1 invites you to think about fundamental questions regarding your own sense of identity and direction. Section 2 asks you to think about your Big Dream, and what will be required for you to begin moving toward its realization. Section 3 includes additional notes and commentary for each of the seven steps outlined in Section 2. Section 4 includes short excerpts from a number of great books on visioning and goal-setting (and I'll give you more at the workshop).

I suggest that you save this document to your computer so that you can keep coming back to it. In fact, you might want to save several versions as you keep refining your answers so that you can look back upon the trail you have made for yourself.

Get ready to think big and get started!!

Joe Tye, *Your Values Coach*

PART 1

CLARIFY YOUR STARTING POINT

If a magic genie came to you and said that he could wave a magic wand and make any one thing happen in your life, what would you ask for?

How important are the following factors in your thinking about work and life?

- Feeling like I am making a difference, that I am somehow making the world a better place.
- Knowing I'm good at what I do, and my skills are improving all the time.
- Being financially rewarded at a level appropriate for my contributions, and at a level that supports my desired lifestyle choices.
- Opportunities for increased responsibility, professional advancement, greater technical challenges, and other potential for professional growth.
- Not having my time wasted in meetings, paperwork, and other activities that I don't believe are contributing to completion of the important work.
- A sufficiently manageable workload and schedule to allow me to spend time on family and personal activities.
- Opportunities for travel, networking, and other vehicles for broadening my horizons and making new contacts and connections.
- A great benefits package and retirement plan.
- Other.

Keeping those things in mind, what would you do if every job paid the same and had the same social status? Before you answer with a jerk of the knee ("I'd spend my days fishing," or "I'd be a professional bowler"), imagine how you would feel after several years of doing it (whatever "it" is in your case).

People also find identity along the dimensions of *having*, *doing*, and *being*. Many, maybe most, have the pyramid reversed. They begin by thinking about the things that they want to have, then they think about what they must do in order to have those things, and they end up becoming the person defined by the things that they do, as in this little pyramid:

Being
Doing
Having

It is ultimately more effective to reverse the pyramid. Start by thinking about the person you want to be. What must you do in order to become that person? Finally, what things will come to you as a result of doing those things?

Having
Doing
Being

How much of your identity is based upon what you have, including possessions, family, friends, and other tangible elements? How much of it is based upon what you do, including your work, hobbies, volunteer activities, and self-improvement efforts? How much is based upon simply being, accepting the essential humanity and soulfulness of your being, and knowing that you are accepted no matter what you have or what you do?

“A man is both a seed and in some degree also a gardener, for good or ill... I am impressed by the degree in which the development of ‘character’ can be a product of conscious intention, the will to modify innate tendencies in desired directions; in some cases the change can be great and permanent.”

J.R.R. Tolkien

There is often a trade-off between professional freedom and geographic freedom. For example, a career as a movie actor might require you to live in California rather than North Dakota; losing a job with the only bank in your community might require you to change professions if staying in your present community is important to you. How important are professional mobility and geographic stability to you, and what does this tell you about yourself?

The Gallup organization has done surveys that show only 20 percent of people feel like they actually use their greatest strength while on the job. What do you consider one (or some) of your greatest strengths, and what are some ways that you could bring those strengths to your work in ways not called for in your job description?

A fundamental principle of both military and business strategy is that your greatest vulnerability often lies close to the heart of your greatest strength. The unprecedented mobility of Napoleon's armies led him to become overextended and suffer defeat in Spain and in Russia. IBM's domination of the computer field left it blind to the threat posed by personal computer and software companies. What are your greatest strengths, and in what ways might they become vulnerabilities?

It often seems that we have two distinct voices echoing inside our heads (“the devil made me do it” versus “the angel on my shoulder”). One way of thinking about this is to consider that your consciousness contains elements of both Ego and Soul. Soul is the original you, the essence you were born with. Ego is that pile of defense mechanisms, conceits, anxieties, and other baggage that builds up over a lifetime. Like scar tissue, one of Ego’s functions is to be a protective barrier between the outside world and the soft inner you. And like scar tissue, Ego performs its task better the thicker and uglier it is. If you think about the emotions that you regularly feel, and the thoughts and self-talk that routinely goes through your mind, what do the voices of Ego and of Soul sound like, what do they say, and how do they each make you feel?

The Voice of Ego:

The Voice of Soul:

I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope
For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love
For love would be love of the wrong thing; there is yet faith
But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.
Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought.
So the darkness shall be light, and the stillness the dancing.

T.S. Eliot

For the next 30 days (at least) keep a personal journal

One of the most effective ways to get to know yourself better is keeping a personal journal. It will help you rid yourself of negative emotions that shouldn’t be vented on others, gain a higher level of self-understanding, and crystallize your goals and dreams. A daily journal can be much more than a

diary; it can be a powerful method of tapping into the untold spiritual power of your subconscious mind. Don't be discouraged if you miss several days or even weeks, just keep coming back to it.

“Keeping a personal journal is a high leverage Quadrant II [important, but not urgent] activity that significantly increases self-awareness and enhances the synergy among it and consciousness, independent will and creative imagination.”

Stephen R. Covey et al: *First Things First*

Here are ten good reasons for you to keep a journal:

- 🕯 Writing in a journal will improve your memory.
- 🕯 Recording your thoughts, emotions, and experiences in a journal can be an effective and safe emotional catharsis.
- 🕯 Regular journaling can help you better understand why you think and feel the way you do, and achieve a rational understanding of why you react the way you do.
- 🕯 Journaling can help you see the major patterns in your life, such as how you spend you time and money or how you respond to stress.
- 🕯 Writing in a journal can help you clarify your goals and values.
- 🕯 Reflection and writing can uncover hidden talents and aspirations — you may decide to become a poet or a writer!
- 🕯 Your journal can be the forum where you give yourself permission to be the person you want to be and do the things you want to do.
- 🕯 Journaling creates discipline, thereby enhancing self-esteem.
- 🕯 The habit of writing in a journal helps you set aside some protected time for yourself.
- 🕯 Time with the journal gives you a regular opportunity for reflection and prayer.

Keep your journals. Every so often, at least once a year, go back through and read the old ones. It will help you keep a long term perspective, and monitor the changes that are continuously taking place in yourself. And, you might find that you're becoming a pretty good writer compared with the rough early attempts at putting your thoughts and emotions down on paper.

“It's a poor sort of memory that only works backward.”

Lewis Carroll

Spend at least a few minutes every day writing about who you want to be, what you want to do, and the things that you would like to have. Here are some questions to spark your thinking:

What would you do if you knew you would not fail?

What would you do if you had only one more year to live?

Imagine that it is five years from now and everything has gone more perfectly than you could ever have imagined it would. What are you doing now?

Imagine that ten years from now you won the Nobel Prize (or the Pulitzer or whatever else suits your fancy, and fantasy). What was it for?

If you could step into anyone else's job right now, what would it be and why?

If every job paid exactly the same and had the same status, what would you do? Why aren't you doing it now?

What is one thing (and only one) about yourself that you would like to change?



Life is a journey. You'll make some extraordinary friends along the way!

According to a Zen story, a student asked his teacher how to make a statue of an elephant. “It’s easy,” the teacher replied. “You just find a big rock and carve away everything that doesn’t look like an elephant.” Sometimes, becoming the person you would truly like to be has more to do with losing things than with gaining things. Write about the things you wish *you* could carve away:

We all carry around emotional baggage – the deadweight of the past. If you could visualize one piece of your own emotional baggage as a stone that you’re hauling around in the backpack of your journey through life, and know that at the end of this workshop you could leave that stone deep in the Grand Canyon, what would you choose to leave behind?

The first question someone is likely to ask you upon meeting you is: “What do you do?” The purpose of the question is more than simple small talk. What they are really trying to discern is your social and financial status (especially as compared to theirs). Write for yourself an answer to the question “What do you do?” that shows pride in your work, but also reflects the fact that you are sufficiently detached from what the world sees as your occupation to know that “What do you do?” is a different question than “Who are you?”

In her book *Making a Living While Making a Difference: A Guide to Careers With a Conscience*, Melissa Everett provides a wonderful discussion on commitment. “One of the most frightening aspects of commitment,” she says, “is the specter of success... Because unconditional commitment to one’s work is powerful, it is also terrifying -- so terrifying that many of us screen it out of our awareness at all costs.” True commitment, which she distinguishes from externally-imposed duty, includes the following components:

- ♦ It comes from within, articulated by what’s important in your life.
- ♦ Keeping such a commitment offers a path for self-expression and actualization. It may require delay of gratification, but not suppression of your essential self.
- ♦ It is grounded in a higher purpose than personal satisfaction; it entails the desire to leave a legacy.

Everett says that commitment is not just a state of mind, but requires a consistent pattern of behavior. It’s not just caring, but cultivating the skills necessary to effectively act upon that commitment. What are some of the actions that you can (and will) take to solidify your commitment to the Big Dream that you work on while we are in Flagstaff?

Redwood trees live for hundreds of years, grow to heights of 350 feet, and produce bark more than a foot thick. And it all starts with a seed that is only one-sixteenth of an inch long!

What fears might be standing between you and taking action to achieve the goals that you set out for yourself in this Dream a Big Dream Workshop? How can you turn those fears into problems, and then what actions can you take to work on solving those problems (instead of agonizing over fear of the consequences of not solving those problems).

Caveat: be careful to distinguish between *problems* and *consequences*. When people are afraid of losing a job, the *problem* is that they have not made themselves not sufficiently valuable to the organization. Running out of money, not finding another job, or having to pull the kids out of private school would be consequences of not having dealt with that problem.

This is my biggest fear:

This is the problem behind the fear:

These are actions I can take to deal with that problem:

“Give fear a name and it becomes just a problem. It’s a lot easier to solve problems than it is to conquer fear.”

Joe Tye: Never Fear, Never Quit

Think of yourself as a corporation of one person called Me, Inc. You are chief executive officer, chief financial officer, and chief marketing officer. Think for a minute of each of these roles, then write about them in the space below.

Chief Executive Officer: As chief executive officer, you are responsible for creating a long term strategy that will assure the future success and security of Me, Inc. How are you going to do it?

Chief Financial Officer: As chief financial officer, you are responsible for the financial stability, prosperity, and exit strategy (retirement plan) of Me, Inc. How are you going to do it?

Chief Marketing Officer: As chief marketing officer, you are responsible for promoting Me, Inc. (including networking, visibility, and building an image). How are you going to do it?

Imagine that you are being introduced as the winner of an honorary degree at a college. The person introducing you has described you as one of the great leaders in your field. What is he or she saying about you?

What are the personal traits that have allowed you to make the contributions that you've made?

What are the things you've done to help other people along the way?

What are the innovations developed under your stewardship?

How do you feel as you hear your accomplishments being reviewed? Proud and fulfilled? Or more like a fraud and a fake who really doesn't belong up there? If it's the latter, what if it's you that's been fooled and not everyone else?

Now visualize yourself after the ceremony, speaking with old friends who have looked up to you as their leader. What are they saying?

How are they different than they would have been without your leadership? What did you learn from them?

Write about your family members as you recall the struggles that seemed so difficult at the time, but which helped you grow individually and as a family.

SECTION 2

7 Steps to Define, Plan, and Achieve Your Most Important Goal

“Almost as many individuals fail because they try to do too much as fail because they do not do enough.”

J. Paul Getty: *The Golden Age*



The simple secret of success

Imagine it's the evening of December 31, 2005. You are looking back on the year that's about to end with a feeling of immense pride and satisfaction, because you have accomplished your most important goal. What must happen during the year in order for you to enjoy that wonderful year-end experience?

This is the simple secret: Be very clear about what you expect to accomplish this year, be willing to make it your absolute top priority, then focus your energy and organize your activities on the achievement of that one magnificent goal. It's that simple. It's that difficult.

This SP+ workbook will walk you through seven steps to define, plan, and achieve your biggest goal for the year. But more important, if you do the work required to achieve that goal, you will set yourself upon a journey that culminates in your living your most cherished dreams.

In addition to the seven action steps, this special report includes two attachments. The first features excerpts from previous issues of *Spark Plug* as well as new material relevant to each step. The second features excerpts from fifty or so books (the books that could change your life if you only had time to read them) that are relevant to the theme of goal-setting and goal-achievement.

I suggest you complete the action steps once, immediately and without agonizing over whether or not you are “getting it right.” You can do this right on your computer, or you can print out a copy. Then, once you have responded to all seven steps, read through the two attachments and complete the seven steps once more.

Step #1: Articulate a worthy goal – in writing!!!

If you were to read every book that's ever been written on goal-setting, you would come away with the very clear impression that every expert on the subject believes that unless a goal is written down, it's not really a goal, it's just a wish. That is a conclusion with which I concur!

The first step to achieving your most important goal during 2005 is knowing just what it is you wish to accomplish – and knowing it specifically – with numbers and dates. Work on your goal by writing it out as an affirmation, in the first person and present tense, as though it has already been achieved. Here's an example, and that I will build upon for each of the seven action steps:

It is New Years Eve of 2005, and I am celebrating the achievement of my magnificent goal of paying off the entire \$12,564.95 balance of my credit card debt, without having taken on other debt to do it (and with enough left over to start a savings program!).

Imagine it's *you* that has twelve thousand dollars (plus) in credit card debt and in your financial life it feels like you are trying to swim with an anchor tied to your waist. Now imagine the joy of cutting loose that anchor by tearing up that last credit card bill. That is the feeling I want you to experience at the end of this year. If you fulfill the seven action steps in this special report, beginning with this one, I'm pretty certain that you will be celebrating come 12-31-05!!!

What one goal would, if accomplished, make 2005 a banner year for you? Don't worry about "getting it right" – just start by getting it down. Write it down in first person, present tense – as if it were December 31, 2005 and you were celebrating your accomplishment.

Keep working on your goal affirmation until it is Authentic (Core Action Value #1) – then print out several dozen copies and put them where you will see them many times every day.

© Credit Card (noun): A piece of plastic with which you buy things you don't need with money you don't have to impress people you don't know.

Step #2: Calculate the cost and commit to paying it

“There is no free lunch.” These are probably the truest words ever spoken (and well understood by most lottery “winners,” 80 percent of whom are bankrupt within a few years of cashing in their “winning” tickets). Whatever your big goal is for 2005, there will be a price to pay. If you are willing to pay the price, you will probably achieve your goal. If you are not willing, the goal will degenerate into yet one more unfulfilled daydream.

Again using the example of getting out of credit card debt, here are possible elements of the price to be paid to earn the victory:

1. Cut up all credit cards and make a solemn vow that you will take on no new debt, no matter what.
2. Disconnect cable or satellite and use the hours formerly wasted sitting in front of the boob tube on something that is productively focused on your overriding goal (building your Mary Kay business, networking with professional colleagues, writing articles for trade journals, mowing lawns and shoveling snow).
3. Sell the Expedition, pay off the car loan, and use whatever is left to pay cash for a used car that gets great gas mileage.

Make a list of the elements of your “price to pay.” There is no correct number of items to the list – it could be one big item or lots of little ones. Just make sure that they are sufficient to the task, and that you will make the commitment to honoring each one.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Warning: Your ego is not going to go along with most of what is on your list, at least not willingly. That is why the person in your life who is most in need of “tough love” is you ☺!!

Step #3: Motivate Yourself

The paradox of motivation: it's easy to be motivated when everything is going great. It's also irrelevant, because things are already going great. It's most difficult to motivate yourself when you most need to be motivated, and if you wait until you need it to work on it, it will probably be too late.

I am a big believer in the power of multiple sources of motivation. As a personal example, I write books because I have something important to say, and a book is the best way to reach a wide audience. I also enjoy the physical act of writing. But I'd be fibbing if I told you that I didn't enjoy the ego-boost of having someone ask me to autograph a book, or that I didn't get a lift of the spirits by receiving a royalty check in the mail. So on the days that intrinsic motivation (the joy of hearing the scratch of a pen across my yellow pad) isn't doing it for me, I can think of future royalty checks (and vice versa).

Looking at our example of wanting to get free from credit card debt, here are some possible motivating factors:

1. Being able to sleep at night – priceless!
2. Saving for college, retirement, or some other priority.
3. Setting a good example of thrift and fiscal responsibility for our children.
4. Enjoying the emotional and spiritual freedom of not being controlled by material possessions (including those not yet paid for).

Think about your priority goal for 2005. What are the benefits to you and to others? What factors will motivate you to do what needs to be done?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

In my book *Never Fear, Never Quit*, I wrote that caring is the root of courage, because if you care enough about something, you will find the courage to do what needs to be done. Look over your list again. Is there sufficient cause for caring to motivate you to do what will need to be done in order for you to achieve the big goal of 2005?

Step #4: +++ Attitude & Expectations

Your attitude will determine your altitude. Here are steps you can take to do a better job of managing your attitudes and your emotions in a way that fosters achievement of your big goal.

Accept complete and total responsibility for your life. Memorize, internalize, and operationalize *The Self-Empowerment Pledge: Seven Simple Promises that Will Change Your Life* (included in Attachment 1). You are well on your way to accomplishing your goal when you stop blaming other people for your circumstances and your outcomes. The fact that you don't have enough money is your own fault – not that of your employer, your banker, your parents, or anyone else.

Focus your dissatisfaction. Dissatisfaction can be an incredible source of energy and motivation, if you don't dissipate it with promiscuous complaining. If the only thing you allow yourself to be unhappy about is your credit card debt, that focused dissatisfaction will grow into a raging inferno of ambition. You'll start waking up in the middle of the night with ideas for how to make the dream home become your real home, and getting up in the morning with the inspiration to take action on those ideas.

Take the Pickle Challenge. For the next 30 days, absolutely eradicate the 3-Cs of Negativity (Criticizing, Complaining, and Commiserating) from your vocabulary – then make the habit stick for the next 11 months. These negative behaviors sap your emotional energy and spiritual vitality and drain the enthusiasm that's necessary to achieve any big goal. Send me an email if you would like a free copy of our special report *Get that Pickle Out of Your Mouth: 7 Steps to a More Positive Attitude*.

Pay attention to your reference group. One of the surest ways to change your attitude and your behaviors is to change your reference group (that's the fancy term that sociologists give to the people you choose to hang around with and identify with – and it is a choice). If you spend time with people for whom stuff and status are important, you're more likely to stay in debt yourself.

Be a Dionarap. Expect the best from others and you'll likely get it.

What changes need to be made in your attitudes and expectations?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Step #5: Take Action

“See one, do one, teach one.”

Informal teaching philosophy of surgery residency programs

Dave Ramsey, author of a number of bestselling books on managing personal finances, says that whenever someone gets out of debt on a fast-track schedule, they do so by putting *serious* emotional energy into the challenge, and moving quickly to take action. It’s the same with the accomplishment of any big goal.

The \$12,564.95 in our hypothetical example breaks down to about \$35 a day, seven days per week. Obviously, waiting half a year to get started increases that to \$70 per day (not including additional interest charges). Speed and momentum pay off, big time. Here are actions that can get you started:

Create a prototype. Read more about prototypes in Attachment 1. Having a prototype mindset can help you overcome fear of failure, procrastination and perfectionism, and help you build confidence while minimizing risk. You can create a prototype for almost anything: some of the bestselling business books grew out of journal articles; signing up for a network marketing company is a low-risk, high-leverage prototype for learning about starting your own business; and taking a night class at the community college is a prototype for going after your PhD.

Commit to one small action every day. What you do matters less than the fact that you have committed yourself to *daily* action – small things do add up to bring about great changes. If nothing else, turn off the TV and go pick up cans and bottles on the highway. You won’t make your daily \$35 when you turn them in for deposits, but you will later be rewarded by a 3 or 4 figure day.

Ask for help. This is what Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen call “The Aladdin Factor” in their book of the same title – “asking the right question of the right person at the right time.”

List actions that you can take to move toward the achievement of your big goal (ideally, your list will have 365 items on it).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Step #6: Hold yourself accountable

Feeling that we are accountable to someone other than ourselves (parents, children, coworkers, God) seems to be a basic human need. Of course, you need to begin with self-accountability (see especially the first two promises of *The Self-Empowerment Pledge*), but having others to whom you feel accountable can also be a great source of motivation for keeping you on track.

Have daily and weekly meetings with yourself. Start out every morning with a review of your daily to-do list, and make sure that at least one item high-up on that list will move you toward the achievement of your goal. Then at the end of each week (all 52 of them) have a longer meeting in which you review your activities and “little victories” of the week, and plan for the next week.

Maintain a healthy sense of cognitive dissonance. Complacency and giving up are the twin dangers to the achievement of your big goal. One of the surest ways to make sure that you don’t get complacent as you start making progress (“I’ve cut my credit card debt in half – I think I’ll celebrate by buying a plasma TV set”), or from giving up if you don’t seem to be making any progress, is to prod yourself with the painful gap between your current situation (over your head in debt) and your ideal (seeing your paycheck go into your retirement account instead of being shipped off to the credit card gougers).

Set measurable goals – then measure. “What gets measured gets done” is a standard phrase in quality circles, and it applies equally to your goal. Make a game of it. Put up a thermometer poster that charts your progress toward being debt-free. **What are the key measurements that you can make as you progress toward the achievement of your Big Goal for 2005?**

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 2. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 6. _____ |

Create an Accountability Board. CEOs of big corporations are accountable to a board. Shouldn’t you be accountable to someone other than yourself? An Accountability Board can help you lose weight, get out of debt, hit your sales goals, or spend more time with your children. You just have to let your board members know what your goals are. (The November edition of *Values Coach Strategy Letter* includes more about constituting an Accountability Board.)

Who are the people you would like to see on your Accountability Board?

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 2. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 6. _____ |

Step #7: Stay on target

Why do so many New Years resolutions fail so quickly? Because we lose focus, we get sidetracked away from what should be our top priorities. These actions can help you stay on target:

Write the history of your future: In his book *How to Make Luck* Marc Myers tells of a man who writes his own horoscope every morning: *Today you will receive a phone call that will result in a significant increase in your income.* He says it's amazing how often the day plays out as scripted. Another great way of writing your history in advance is a future autobiography (see last entry in Attachment 1).

Use Direction Deflection Questions: The most simple yet powerful technique I've discovered for profound personal change is the *Direction Deflection Question* (DDQ). Every DDQ is a variation on this one question: **"Is what I am about to say or do consistent with my ideal best self?"** (The October, 2004 edition of *Values Coach Strategy Letter* is entirely devoted to the power and technique of Direction Deflection Questions.)

Ask that question often enough, and you will make changes in your attitudes and in your habits that alter your direction in life, leading you toward becoming the person you are meant to be and achieving your most authentic goals and dreams. Here's an example of a DDQ that someone whose goal is getting out of debt could use:

Is what I am about to spend my hard-earned money on going to help me achieve my goal of having all credit card debt paid off by the end of this year?

What is the Direction Deflection Question that you will tattoo in your mind and in your heart *now* so that it can guide your actions in the year to come, keeping you on target for achieving your Big Goal?

SECTION 3

ADDITIONAL NOTES AND IDEAS

Notes for Action Step #1: Articulate a worthy goal – in writing

Begin with the end in mind, and leave the middle section in God's hands (The Vision Hourglass)

"Define your ideal future by your dreams and not by your memories, by your hopes and not by your fears."

Joe Tye, America's Values Coach™

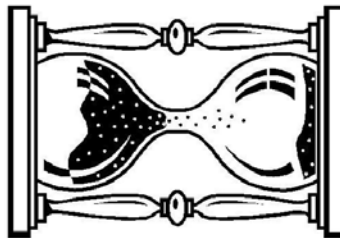
Most of us can picture where we would ideally like to be in our futures. We might consider it just a daydream, or even a wild delusion of grandeur, but we can picture that ideal reality out there in the distant future: sitting in the big leather chair in the CEO office, building a successful business, writing (and publishing) that first novel, the retirement condo in Maui, whatever.

Assuming that distant dream is Authentic (Core Action Value #1) and not meant merely to stoke our own ego and impress other people, with a bit of thought and planning, we can define an ambitious but doable goal for the current year that would be a good start (though just a start) on the road toward that ultimate Big Dream.

For most of us, the problem comes in visualizing that vast space in the middle. If your Big Dream is a condo in Maui and your big goal for this year is simply paying off the Visa card, the space in between can feel intimidating and downright overwhelming. The best thing to do is not even think about that space in the middle. I've pictured below *The Vision Hourglass* which depicts this graphically. The first secret to success is to "look close and see far." In other words, keep your *vision* on that ideal future, while keeping your *attention* on the tasks that must be completed to achieve the immediate goal.

THE VISION HOURGLASS

If you have some idea of what your ideal future is (CEO, Maui condo, writing a novel, etc.), you can be clear about a one-year goal that will begin to move you in that direction.



With imagination, you can generate a widescreen vision of where you want to be in 7 or 10 years, at the distant end of the hourglass.

The long stretch of time between accomplishment of this year's goal and realization of the eventual dream is like the narrow waist of the hourglass, where vision becomes constricted. This is the "black box, expect a miracle" phase of the journey

For example: My long term vision, my Big Dream, is that someday there will be ten million or more graduates of Spark Plug University all over the world who are using *The Twelve Core Action Values* as a guide for their own goal-setting and decision-making.

My (very ambitious!!!) goal for the year 2005 is to have recruited 500 or more members of Spark Plug PLUS. This goal helps me identify the actions I need to take this year, including further refinement of the core curriculum (*The Twelve Core Action Values*), creation of a virtual Spark Plug University campus, and seeking help from others to do that which I cannot do myself.

If I'm willing to organize my energy, efforts and activities around this unifying goal of 500+ SP+ members by the end of 2005, I can be quite certain I will achieve that goal.

What about the space between 500+ and 10,000,000 SP+ members? I don't know, *and right now it's not my concern*. Remember, I've left that in God's hands. For this year, all I must do (really, all I can do) is stay focused on what must be done for me to hit my 2005 target, and to nourish the ultimate dream through the inevitable obstacles and setbacks so that it does not degenerate into a mere daydream.

I do know this: it will be easier to go from one million to ten million than it was to go from one thousand to one million. That's because of the properties of Critical Mass Goal Achievement (see note below). Every time you achieve a goal, you build momentum and you open doors previously unseen that propel you onward to the achievement of your dream.

A note on vision and visualization

Let's distinguish between "vision" and "visualization." This is an important distinction because a truly authentic vision for your future does not spring forth all in a piece, it is a picture that evolves over a period of time through the interaction of visualization and vision:

Visualization is a verb – a mental rehearsal, a vivid picturing of you going through the steps that will take you to that future state.

Vision is a noun – a mental image of the desired outcome, an ideal future reality.

Vision and visualization work together hand-in-glove. An authentic vision of the future rarely comes as a sudden epiphany, an A-ha!, Eureka!! sort of moment. Rather, it is typically the culmination of a process of reading, networking, thinking, and dreaming that coalesces into a mental image of a desired future reality.

Not only that, vision is never final. The mind's eye can only see so far down the road and through the mist. When Walt Disney first dreamed of Disneyland, the notion of the Epcot Center, or of building parks in Paris or Tokyo, was part of the vision that was yet to evolve. When, finding herself alone and jobless in London, Anita Roddick started The Body Shop as a means of supporting her

children, the vision of a worldwide business empire famous for supporting important social causes was still far in the future.

Creating a vision is a physical as well as a mental activity. Taking action – building a prototype, writing a business plan, talking to people who have already done something similar – all help to refine, and to expand, the vision. It's not enough to just see it, you also have to just do it!

Couple “impossible” goals with “impossible” deadlines to create an overpowering sense of urgency

Committing yourself to an “impossible” goal with an “impossible” deadline has a wonderful way of clarifying and focusing the mind on key priorities such as getting out of debt or breaking addictive behaviors.

In the years following World War I, America's military languished in the back waters of the Great Depression. When Hitler invaded Poland in 1939, the United States had the world's eighteenth largest army – and a woefully under-equipped army when compared with those of potential enemies. Recognizing the danger, the Roosevelt administration established one “impossible” goal after another and gave them each an “impossible” deadline, in a pattern that was to persist throughout the war; they did this for quotas on weapons production, recruiting and training of soldiers, transport of supplies to allies, and invasion schedules.

In 1985, Rotary International took on the “impossible” goal of eradicating the disease of polio, with the “impossible” deadline of doing it by the year 2005. In 1988, an estimated 350,000 people contracted polio around the world. By the year 2000, this had been reduced by 99 percent, to fewer than 3,500 cases worldwide. The Western Hemisphere was certified as being polio-free in 1994. To date, Rotary's PolioPlus program has raised over \$400 million and vaccinated nearly two billion children.

During World War II, the Sea Bees famously said that the difficult they accomplished immediately, while the impossible took a bit longer. That's the philosophy adopted by Rotary, and one that will help you achieve success.

The four tools that big goals give you

“Concerning all acts of initiative there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favor all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance, which no one could have dreamed would have come along.”

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

A big goal gives you four tools that timid little dreams do not give you:

Compass: A big goal can be your true north. For example, if you truly want the dream house we've just described, you'll find a lot less time to go east for watching television or west for impulse shopping at Wal-Mart.

Magnifying Glass: A big goal has incredible leverage. When you are committed to a big dream, your efforts are magnified through everyone else who buys into that dream with you (friends, family, co-workers, and even eventually your banker).

Magnet: A big dream is like a magnet that attracts the people, money, and other resources needed for its fulfillment. Examples of magnet dreams are everywhere: Habitat for Humanity, Ronald McDonald House, Apple Computer, the list goes on and on.

Flywheel: A flywheel is the heavy metal disk that gives momentum to a car's engine in between firings of each piston. In the same way, a big dream gives you momentum to power your way through the inevitable down days, obstacles, and setbacks.

The paradoxes of big audacious goals

"I think the time has come now when we should attempt the boldest moves, and my experience is that they are easier of execution than more timid ones."

William Tecumseh Sherman

- Great big goals are often more likely to be achieved than timid goals, because they inspire you (and probably others as well).
- Big goals often require the same level of risk and effort as smaller goals.
- Big goals almost always become the platform for an even bigger and more audacious goal.

When Admiral DuPont was explaining to Admiral Farragut why he did not sail his fleet of ironclads into Charleston Harbor, Farragut waited until the end and said, 'DuPont, there is one reason more.' 'What is that?' asked DuPont. 'You did not believe you could do it' was the answer.

Goals are the bricks in the foundation of your castles in the air

Goals are the stepping stones that lead you from your current reality to your desired future. Here are some of the qualities of an effective goal:

- It is based on a dream that inspires you and that is consistent with your personal values, purpose, and mission.
- It is consistent with your other goals, both those you have selected for yourself and those you must meet in your work with others.
- Achievement of your goal is in the best interests of those you care for.
- It has a timetable for completion, you can measure your progress toward fulfillment, and you have a way of knowing when you've achieved it.

- You know the price that will be required for achieving it, and you are willing to pay that price.
- You know who you can ask for help, and what specific assistance you will request.
- It is do-able — even though right now it may not be evident how it can be done without a miracle.
- You have written it down in a place where you will see it often.
- You *do* read it often, and reinforce its inevitability with positive affirmations.

Transform dreams into *Memories of the Future*

“A rock pile ceases to be a rock pile the moment a single man contemplates it, bearing within him the image of a cathedral.”

Antoine de Saint-Exupery

People can “remember” the future more clearly and more accurately than they can remember the past, and that they can transform their dreams into memories of the future. A memory of the future is far more likely to be realized than a wish or a daydream; it is inevitability waiting to happen. There are five steps – the five A’s – to transforming a dream into a *Memory of the Future*. Let’s say, for example, that you wish to transform your dream of having

Articulation: The first step is knowing what you want, and as specifically as possible. Can you articulate the dream? Instead of just “a big house” can you describe the ideal location (country or city); do you have a mental picture of the ideal floor plan; in your mind, can you feel the brass fixtures with your fingertips, smell the new carpet on the floor, and hear the wood crackling in the fireplace? The more vivid your mental image, and the more different senses and emotions involved, the higher the likelihood of achievement.

Affirmation: This step is vitally important, because we tend to dream in pictures but worry in words. A great deal of our self-talk is negative and obstructive. It is essential to counteract this with affirmations that are positive and nurturing. Most affirmations fall into two categories. They remind you that you are:

That you are *capable* of achieving your dream (perhaps not immediately – you might need to save more money, go back to school, etc. – but if it is an authentic dream, you *are* capable of making it happen)

That you *deserve* to enjoy the fruits of your success (which is why it is so important to counteract poor self image and low self esteem, which can be the ultimate dream killers).

So a reminder affirmation for the new house might be something like this: “I am capable of finding and financing the house of my dreams, I am willing to do the work that’s required to earn that house, and I deserve to enjoy the fruits of my labor by living there.”

Asking: Any dream of significance will require help from others, and the way you get that help is by asking for it. In the case of the dream house, for example, you will probably have to ask the bank for a mortgage. The best approach is to, very early in the process, go to the bank and share your dream, then ask: “What do I have to do in order for you to give me the loan I need to make this happen?”

Action: Without action, a dream is just a wish. But here’s the neat thing: small actions consistently applied can add up to great accomplishments. Every time you do something, *anything*, in the pursuit of your dream, even something as simple as window shopping for fixtures, you are reinforcing a future reality in your own mind, which is ultimately where the battle is won or lost. The secret is to do something *every single day*.

Adaptation: Finally, you must be willing to adapt to changing circumstances. In many cases, that will mean adapting *upward*. The more you practice transforming dreams into memories of the future, the more you exercise the mental muscles of attention, imagination, and belief, the bigger your dreams are likely to become.

Notes for Action Step #2: Calculate the cost and commit to paying it

Make sure your dream really is authentic, and don’t fall into the trap of Kwai Syndrome

In Pierre Boulle’s novel *The Bridge Over the River Kwai*, Colonel Nicholson was the senior British officer in a Japanese prisoner of war camp. His men, who were seriously demoralized by maltreatment at the hands of their captors, had been put to work on building a railroad across Burma to support a planned Japanese invasion of India.

Irrked by the incompetence of the Japanese engineers trying to build a bridge across the River Kwai, Nicholson stepped in and took charge. He tasked his own engineering officers to design a bridge that would be an edifice to British superiority. Morale soared as his men took pride in the magnificent structure to which they were giving shape in the jungle.

In the end, however, Nicholson was so fixated on his short term goal (building the bridge) that he lost sight of the ultimate goal (win the war). When he discovered that a British commando squad had mined the bridge (his bridge!), he blew the whistle. He was killed in the resulting melee, and the bridge survived—a double tragedy born of Nicholson’s not being clear about what he did and did not really want.

This is easy to do in a world where the primary function of business, including almost all media, is to convince us to want things that not only do we not need, but the acquisition and maintenance of which can actually distract us from pursuing more meaningful dreams and goals. This harkens back to Core Action Value #1, Authenticity – making sure that the things you desire really

are authentic, and not meant to please or impress others. In a world that is saturated with advertising and status-consciousness, constant vigilance is required to make sure that your desires truly are authentic.

You might be familiar with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which states that people cannot pursue self-actualization until they have taken care of basic needs such as security, food, and shelter. So why is it in a society where most of us eat reasonably well (many of us too well!) and live in pretty nice houses, so many people are still frustrated in their search for self-actualization?

A big part of the problem is that as we become more comfortable and affluent, our definition of basic needs expands. Living in a tent or dorm room no longer meets the definition of shelter. And the more we have, the more we want. As you think about your vision for the future, include self-actualizing activities like education, travel, and relationships, not just material things.

Questions for you to ponder: If someone were to ask you about your core values and priorities, about the things you stand for and the things that really matter, and about what you hoped to accomplish in your lifetime, what would you say?

If that person were then to review your calendar and checkbook entries for the past year, would they see an obvious correlation between the things you have said were important to you and the ways in which you have chosen to spend your time and money?

Answer these questions for yourself:

What are my core values and priorities, the things I stand for and the things that really matter, and the accomplishments that would mean the most to me?

Being totally honest with myself, how strong is the correlation between the things I have just written about and the actualities that are reflected in my 2004 calendar and checkbook register?

What changes must I make in my beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors to make sure that there is a better correlation in the year to come?

Notes for Action Step #3

Be clear about the benefits that motivate you

It's hardest to do when you need it most

Like all other forms of self-motivation, vision and visualization are hardest to do when you need them most. It's easy to en-Vision the dream house the day after you've gotten the big promotion (you may have already called the realtor), but it's really tough the day after you've lost the job. In the aftermath of being fired or laid-off, a big dream can serve as a personal flywheel, giving you momentum through the challenging days to come.

Likewise, it's easy to visualize yourself winning when the cards are falling your way; it's much more difficult to conjure up a mental image of yourself cruising through the tape at the finish line after you've just fallen on your face. It is precisely when you feel like a loser, however, that you most need to look inside yourself and visualize yourself as a winner.

Not Only That...

You never know when you'll need it most

It's a paradox that, while you can often see life's little speed bumps in time to brace yourself for the impact, the really big potholes tend to sneak up unannounced, jarring you to the core of your soul. "You're fired." "I'm afraid it's cancer." "There's been an accident." In the blink of an eye, our sense of security in the certainty of our dreams can be shattered.

Because it is hardest to do when you need it most, and you never know when you'll need it most, it is essential that you cultivate the habit of regularly visiting your ideal future, using the methods we will cover in the coming weeks.

"Those who dare to fail miserably can achieve greatly."

John F. Kennedy

Healthy dissatisfaction creates energy for change

Motivational speaker and author Anthony Robbins is best known for his fire walk seminars, but he is also a leading exponent of neuro-linguistic programming. One of the things he says is that there are only two basic sources of motivation: seeking pleasure and avoiding pain (including dissatisfaction).

As soon as somebody becomes sufficiently sick and tired of being sick and tired, they will begin to do something to become healthy and energized, and that is the first step toward transforming a daydream into a memory of the future. Now, if this seems like a contradiction to what I have just said, keep reading – the next three items will clarify the point.

Notes for Action Step #4 **Be positive in your attitude and expectations**

Erase the graffiti of negative self-talk

Nothing can sap your belief in yourself or in your dreams more quickly and thoroughly than your own negative self-talk. In his book *The Evolving Self: A Psychology for the New Millennium*, Dr. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi showed that for a variety of evolutionary reasons, the human mind automatically gravitates toward negative, frightening, and depressing thoughts. It is your challenge to confront these self-inhibiting notions before they interfere with your pursuit of your future vision. Here is a seven step process for using the Metaphorical Visualization process of *The Janitor in Your Attic* for confronting negative self-talk and transforming it into positive affirmations.

Catalog: Pay attention to all of the negative self-talk going through your mind. Hint: it will almost always be in the second person (“You are an idiot,” not “I am an idiot”). Every time your Inner Critic verbally abuses you, make a note of what is being said. You might end up with pages full of such notes, but it’s an essential starting point for neutralizing what can in many cases be Your Own Worst Enemy.

Identify: Negative self-talk is usually a voice from the distant past that has metastasized into something far more critical than was the original intention of the speaker. For example, I once had a teacher tell me that I’d “never amount to a hill of beans.” He was trying to get me motivated to complete an overdue homework assignment, but that accusation comes back to me every time I set out upon a new venture, every time I face rejection or failure, sometimes even before I get out of bed in the morning. Being able to identify its origin goes a long way toward helping me appreciate that it is not truth, it is mental graffiti.

Pay Attention: Having made a catalog of your negative self-talk, and identified the source for at least some of it, now pay attention. It is important that these inner lies be confronted immediately, before they can take root. By paying

attention to your inner soundscape, you can catch negative self-talk before it effects your attitudes and actions.

Relabel: One reason negative self-talk can be so destructive is that we believe at some level of consciousness that it is telling us the truth. Offset this pernicious influence by relabeling negative self-talk for what it really is – graffiti being spray-painted on the walls of your mind. In my seminars, I actually encourage people to paint a mental picture of the little graffiti vandal, and to give it a name (one of my favorites is Hideoso).

Erase: I then have seminar participants create a mental picture of *The Janitor in Their Attic*, and give him or her a name (my Janitor’s name is Spike). Every time their little vandal puts graffiti up on the walls of “the attic,” they visualize “the janitor” coming along with a utility cart and painting it out.

Replace: Whatever the graffiti of negative self-talk that has been painted over (“You are such a loser”), then gets replaced with an attractive sign stating the exact opposite, along with a positive affirmation (“I’m a winner, and I keep on chugging when the going gets tough”). Notice that the graffiti was in the second person, while the affirmation is in the first person. That’s the difference between an ancient lie and a truth of today.

Repeat: It takes repetition to override harmful old mental circuits and replace them with positive new ones – what he called “survival of the busiest.” Likewise, overruling negative self-talk takes repetition over a period of time.

Belief is a force of nature, like gravity or magnetism. There are two essential differences, however. First, unlike gravity, belief is subject to entropy, the law of thermodynamics that states things tend to fall apart if energy is not constantly applied. Unless positive mental energy is consistently applied, belief degenerates into wishful thinking, or worse, pessimism (believing that things will turn out badly). Second (and here’s the good news), unlike gravity, belief is subject to mental control. By using Metaphorical Visualization, you can enhance your belief and wire yourself for success.

Are you a victim or a visionary?

Are you a victim or are you a visionary? You cannot be both simultaneously. Victims are focused on the past; visionaries are focused on the future. Trying to be a visionary while at the same time complaining about how you have been victimized by people or circumstances is no more possible than trying to inhabit two different rooms at the same time.

Any time you find yourself complaining – about anything! – you are living in the past. At this precise moment, you have absolutely nothing to complain about (by definition, if you are reading this, you are alive and better off than most of the world’s population), and nothing has happened in your future to complain about except in your imagination. If you want to dream bigger and more effective dreams, replace complaining with gratitude and replace worry with expectancy.

Be a Dionarap

Dionarap is the word paranoid spelled backwards. Being a Dionarap – a reverse paranoid – is one of the surest ways to overcome the fears that stand in the way of genuinely connecting with other people, including fear of rejection, fear of humiliation, and fear of criticism. Convince yourself that people genuinely like and respect you; that when they criticize your ideas or reject your offers, it's nothing personal; and that regardless of what they do or say, they are acting in good faith. If you can do that, you will find the courage to stick your neck out more often and cultivate more meaningful relations.

Too often, because we are hurt by criticism or rejection, a connection is broken, and the relationship stops growing, dead in its tracks. For the Dionarap, however, criticism and rejection become the opportunity for asking the kind of questions that actually deepen the relationship.

Consider your reference group

Sociologists tell us that one of the most important, if not *the* most important, influences on our lives is the people we spend time with, the people with whom we identify. This is what they call our reference group. People tend to hang around with others who are much like them in terms of attitudes, opinions, income level, etc. We are all profoundly imprinted by the characteristics of the reference groups with which we identify, in both conscious and subconscious ways.

If your reference group consists primarily of people who are depressed, pessimistic, and chronically whining about how the world has made them a victim, over time it will be almost impossible for you to not fall into that emotional quicksand. On the other hand, if you are depressed and anxious but spend time with people who are confident and optimistic, their attitudes are likely to rub off on you.

One of the surest ways to enhance your courage is to change your reference groups. You do this by consciously seeking out people who have the qualities you would like to emulate. This entails sticking your neck out, making those proverbial cold calls, joining Rotary or the Optimists Club, and otherwise getting out of your shell. The payback can be enormous, however, both personally and professionally.

“This talent for connecting epitomizes stars in almost every kind of job... One estimate indicates that for every hour a star puts into seeking answers through a network, an average person spends three to five hours gathering the same information.”

Daniel Goleman: *Working with Emotional Intelligence*

Don't let fear stifle your imagination

When Randall Patrick MacMurphy is committed to a mental institution in Ken Kesey's masterful novel *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, he quickly grasps a reality that has alluded the mental health professionals who work there: many

of the inmates aren't crazy at all, they're just afraid, and they have given up their freedom in exchange for the illusion that the things they fear can be kept outside the cage door. But as Chief Bromden proves by his escape, you can only gain freedom by facing your fears bravely, and that once you do, you will realize the extent to which you, too, have been prisoner to needless fear.

Fear is the hidden crippler of our time. Its paralyzing effects prevent people from pursuing their dreams and goals, and as a result it is responsible for massive and unnecessary poverty – of body and soul. Faith is the antidote to needless fear. Having faith that the dragons of your imagination will be slain before they become real is often the most important step in the long march toward the realization of your dreams.

*“The worst, most damaging learning disability – also *by far* the most common, affecting 100 percent of the population at one time or another – is *fear*. Simple fear. Fear of failing. Fear of looking stupid. Fear of being ridiculed or rejected. It starts in school, but it certainly does not end there. It can continue throughout life, holding people back time and again from trying something new, from learning a new skill or trying some advanced technique or starting a fresh career.”*

*Edward M. Hallowell, M.D.: *Worry: Controlling It and Using It Wisely**

Cultivate a healthy sense of cognitive dissonance, and save your dissatisfaction for the one goal that really matters

“If you would attain to what you are not yet, you must always be displeased by what you are. For where you are pleased with yourself there you have remained. Keep adding, keep walking, keep advancing.”

Saint Augustine

Cognitive dissonance is a situation that comes about when there is a serious discrepancy between a person's inner beliefs and what they perceive in the world around them. It's a very uncomfortable psychological state, which is why people often go to extraordinary lengths to avoid it. For example, a person who believes himself to be a nice man, but who is abusive in his treatment of others, will rationalize away the discrepancy by convincing himself that the people he beats up deserve the treatment they're getting, or that they can be motivated in no other way.

Someone who has spent his entire life feeling like a victim but who suddenly wins the lottery must either change his self image (victim) or find a way to blow all that money, since being a rich victim is a contradiction in terms in the eyes of most people. In the same manner, the self-conceived winner who loses a job might have to work delivering pizzas as a temporary measure to feed his family, but it won't be long before he again has work that is consistent with his self image.

When somebody raises their sights and standards, it often creates a sort of healthy sort of low-level cognitive dissonance, in that there is a divergence

between the dream and the reality. At this point, one of two things *must* happen: either the dream dies and becomes just a daydream, or the dream becomes a source of motivation and energy that brings about its own fulfillment. Think about the things that are making you unhappy – about the gaps between what you would like to see and what you actually do see.

Is this gap just a psychological nuisance, or does it create unbearable mental agony? Imagine how wonderful life would be without that agony (living in the new home instead of the dumpy old trailer, being out of debt instead of being chased by bill collectors, etc.).

Save your dissatisfaction for things that really matter

Although most of us are rarely at a loss to find something to complain about, we only have so much genuine dissatisfaction to go around – that is, if we are only expressing dissatisfaction about those things we intend to change. The more powerfully you can focus your dissatisfaction on a few key gaps, and not fritter it away on every little thing that bothers you, the more powerfully motivating and energizing it will be. Think of dissatisfaction as a limited resource, just like time and money, and don't fritter it away on things that don't really matter, or that won't really change.

Here's an example of how it works. Say that the biggest source of dissatisfaction in your life is that dump you live in down at the trailer park (this is perhaps hypothetical, but bear with me). Your greatest dream is to have a house of your own out in the country, far away from the trailer park. One day, you find yourself complaining about your job and all the stress it involves – “They don't pay me enough to put up with all this hassle!”

You have just taken a big step away from that country home by wasting the resource of your dissatisfaction on something you cannot do anything about – the hassles you perceive being associated with your job. Instead of whining about what a victim you are (which is what you're doing when you complain), transform that complaint into a source of energy and motivation to be directed toward something that really matters – like this: “They don't pay me enough, so I'd better learn some new skills and get a pay raise so I can afford that new dream house out in the country.”

Notes for Action Step #5: Commit to immediate and sustained action

Plan by doing

One of the best ways to counteract the “Ready, Aim, Aim ...” syndrome is to plan by doing. Think big, start small – but start. Dartmouth business school professor James Bryan Quinn has written extensively on what he calls “logical incrementalism.” Successful companies, he says, are not successful because they have grand strategic plans; rather, they are successful because they plan

by doing, adjusting the plan as they go along. They float lots of trial balloons, and then run after the ones that fly.

Neither Debbie Fields (Mrs. Fields' Cookies) nor Anita Roddick (The Body Shop) had a grand plan for an international business empire on the day they opened their first shops. They planned ahead just about as far as they could see, then they took action. In effect, those first shops (shoppes in England) were prototypes for what was to come. Their early success led to more planning – how to recruit franchisees, how to control inventory, advertising strategies – which in turn led to doing more things and building more prototypes, which in turn led to more planning in an ongoing cycle.

Think about your big dream – the one that by this stage in your life you might have written off as an impossible daydream. How can you plan by doing? What is the prototype you can build? How can you get started? For example:

Dream: You think you'd like to start your own business someday, but right now you don't think you have the necessary start-up capital, and even if you did, you don't have a clue what you would do.

Prototype: Join a network marketing organization. There are hundreds from which to choose, selling everything from cosmetics and vitamins to legal and financial services. Commit yourself to working your new home-based business a minimum of four hours per week for at least two years. If you do this, two good things will happen, and a third good thing might happen. First, by getting out of (perhaps WAY out of) your comfort zone, you'll learn a lot about yourself, including things that might surprise you. Second, you'll learn practical skills that are essential to success in any business (such as how to make an effective sales pitch and then seal the deal). Third, if you take it seriously you'll make a bit of money, and if you really get good at it, you just might earn that start-up capital the lack of which was once your excuse for not starting your own business.

Dream: You've often been told that you missed your calling, that a caring and compassionate person like you should have been a nurse, and now at midlife you think that might actually be true. But there's that pesky old day job, the bills to be paid, kids about to head off to college, and a million other reasons why it just won't work.

Prototype: Volunteer at a local hospital or nursing home. While you're there, make a point of talking to as many people as possible about what nursing is really like. If you find that you did, in fact, miss your calling, go talk to the administrators of the facility where you are volunteering. Who knows, with the serious shortage of nurses that is projected to extend for many years into the future, they just might be willing to help you make it possible to return to school.

Dream: What is your dream?

Prototype: Now it's your turn. What can you do *today*, right now, to start small while you are thinking big?

“If the first plan which you adopt does not work successfully, replace it with a new plan; if this new plan fails to work, replace it in turn with still another, and so on, until you find a plan which does work. Right here is the point at which the majority of men meet with failure, because of their lack of persistence in creating new plans to take the place of those which fail.”

Napoleon Hill: *Think and Grow Rich*

The Water Snake

Tom Peters, co-author of *In Search of Excellence*, the best-selling business book of all time, today says that the most important and enduring of the eight characteristics of excellent companies that he and Bob Waterman identified was “a bias for action.” Highly-innovative companies like 3M and Newell-Rubbermaid are able to maximize revenues from a constant stream of new products by trying out lots of them to see what works.

Once, while hiking in the Grand Canyon, I had an idea for a cheap alternative to the expensive hydration systems that we hikers have grown to depend upon. I reviewed the idea with several friends with expertise in outdoor sports, all of whom loved it. Then I came up with a name (I called it The Water Snake), had several prototypes made, had a friend design a logo (a cute little water snake), and registered a website domain. In all, it cost me about fifty bucks and might have taken ten hours.

I ended up leaving The Water Snake on the back burner. Not because it was a bad idea (I still think it would work), but because I realized that to pursue it, I would have to violate Core Action Value #7, Focus (which we will come to in several months). But I’ll tell you this: it was an awful lot of fun getting outside of my box and playing with this idea, I learned some cool things about hydraulics and met some pretty neat people, and I have ownership of a website name for The Water Snake (in case anyone out there is looking to buy a pretty cool domain name ☺).

Plans are useless – it’s planning that’s essential

Planning should be seen as a way of thinking, an ongoing process, not a finished product. It is a starting point, not an ending point. Confucius said that a wise person is always asking, “What should I do about this? What should I do about that?” Just so, planning is a state of mind as much as it is a formal activity. Let’s assume that you’ve used your imagination to “build your castles in the air.” Here are some questions that planning can help you answer, so that you can put foundations under those castles:

- What resources do I need, whose help do I need, and how can I go about getting it?
- What are the alternate routes I can take to achieve my desired end?
- What is the best sequencing of the required activities, and what is the best timetable for phasing them?

- How will I measure my progress toward the goal, and how will I know when I've achieved it?
- What contingencies should I be prepared for?
- As I approach accomplishment of my goal, how can I make sure that it serves as the platform for an even bigger goal – the dream beyond the dream that keeps me motivated to do my best, to make a difference?

“The most common mistake I see in public and private organizations alike is that people treat strategic planning as a process separate from daily management, not as a way to reinvent the way we do business day to day... Instead, your planning (and Strategic Management) system should be designed organization-wide so it is self-renewing and self-perpetuating.”

Stephen G. Haines: *The Systems Thinking Approach to Strategic Planning & Management*

Don't get locked into a plan that's not working

In the days before World War I, the great powers all had detailed mobilization plans for bringing their armies to the front in the event of hostilities. Once the spark hit the powder keg, the plans began unfolding according to an ironclad timetable, substantially beyond any human control (one of the best analyses of this point in history is *The Guns of August* by Barbara Tuchman). The result was a catastrophe, the effects of which are still being felt nearly a century later.

Things like this happen at a personal level, all the time. For example, a recent survey of young doctors in their last year of medical residency showed that nearly a quarter now regret having entered the profession. My bet is that it will be the rare individual who acknowledges the mistake, then has the courage to change careers even after all the time and money already invested. The rest will become prematurely cynical, burned-out physicians following a dismal career path the way the world's armies followed their mobilization timetables to a dismal war in 1914.

Don't let this happen to you. Don't wait for the horse to die before you get off. If the plan is not working, either change the plan or change the way you are pursuing it.

Notes for Action Step #6: Hold yourself accountable

The Self-Empowerment Pledge: Seven Simple Promises that Will Change Your Life

The Self-Empowerment Pledge is a powerful tool for transforming your attitudes and behaviors. Simply repeat each daily promise to yourself at least four times a day – morning, afternoon, evening, and right before bed. Post a copy on the bathroom mirror, in your daily planner, and wherever else you will see it often.

You will be astonished at the changes you see in your thinking, in your attitudes, and in your behaviors after the first few months.

Commit yourself to one minute per day repeating to yourself that day's promise from *The Self-Empowerment Pledge*. Devoting yourself to a mere fifteen seconds every morning, noon, afternoon, and evening to repeat that day's promise can be profoundly life-changing. That's only 365 minutes a year (the amount of time the average person spends watching television every two or three days). The return on your investment will be enormous!

Think of a rocket ship that's been launched toward the moon. If you alter its course by just one tiny degree as it is coming off the launch pad, it will miss the moon altogether and end up in the stars. In the same way, small changes made as a result of taking the seven simple promises of *The Self-Empowerment Pledge*, if they are sustained over time, can have a huge impact upon your future success and happiness.

Five or ten years from now, you will be in a much different place – professionally, personally, financially, and in many other ways – than you would have been otherwise. And that's my guarantee, backed up by shared experiences with thousands of people who have changed their lives by taking *The Pledge*.

THE SELF-EMPOWERMENT PLEDGE

Seven Simple Promises That Will Change Your Life

Monday's Promise: Responsibility

I will take complete responsibility for my health, my happiness, my success, and my life, and will not blame others for my problems or predicaments.

Tuesday's Promise: Accountability

I will not allow low self-esteem, self-limiting beliefs, or the negativity of others to prevent me from achieving my authentic goals and from becoming the person I am meant to be.

Wednesday's Promise: Determination

I will do the things I'm afraid to do, but which I know should be done. Sometimes this will mean asking for help to do that which I cannot do by myself.

Thursday's Promise: Contribution

I will earn the help I need in advance by helping other people now, and repay the help I receive by serving others later.

Friday's Promise: Resilience

I will face rejection and failure with courage, awareness, and perseverance, making these experiences the platform for future acceptance and success.

Saturday's Promise: Perspective

I will have faith that, though I might not understand why adversity happens, by my conscious choice I can find strength, compassion, and grace through my trials.

Sunday's Promise: Faith

My faith and my gratitude for all that I have been blessed with will shine through in my attitudes and in my actions.

Know when to change the dream, when to change the dreamer

You've hit the fork in the road and made a major life change – gone back to school, started a new business, changed your career. It is almost certain that before long you will hit a crisis point. Something must change, because what you're doing now is not working. The most important question for you to ask at such a time is what needs to change: the dream or the dreamer.

Every great accomplishment was once the impossible dream of a dreamer who simply refused to quit when the going got tough. The dream will test you, challenge you, and push you to the limit. If it is an authentic dream, though, you cannot let it die. Change your attitude and your self-image, ask for help, learn new skills, do whatever you need to do to keep that dream alive.

On the other hand, there are times when what needs to change is the dream. For example, within five years of start-up, many entrepreneurial companies are in a totally different field of business from the founding dream. Upon hitting the proverbial brick wall, the founders change direction and often end up achieving a dream much larger than that with which they started.

**Notes for Action Step #7:
Stay on target**

Direction Deflection Questions can help you stay on target

Think about who and what you want to be, then write out one or more affirmations in first person and present tense. For example:

I am a positive thinker and self-empowered doer who does not allow low self-esteem, self-limiting beliefs, or the negativity of others to stop me from thinking big and working hard to realize my dreams.

I am a focused and energetic person who uses time wisely, and does not allow procrastination or resistance to interfere with my taking effective action toward the achievement of my goals

I am a careful manager of my finances and am on the path to being financially independent within ten years.

I am a healthy person who exercises and eats well so as to have the energy I need to work and play at being the person I really want to be.

Repeat these affirmations to yourself often – in your thoughts, in your journal, and even out loud in front of the bathroom mirror. Then, several times each day, ask yourself what you would be doing or saying in a given situation if that affirmation were already true.

Your inner voice of intuition will most often tell you the right answer. Then, simply do what that intuitive voice tells you to do, and you will gradually act your way towards success. In this regard, Direction Deflection Questions (DDQs) such as the following can be a powerful tool:

Is what I am about to do or say consistent with my ideal of my authentic best self?

With this Direction Deflection Question, before you do or say anything that you might come to regret, stop and ask yourself that question. If the answer is “no,” then ask the logical follow-up question: “If I were being true to my authentic best self, what would I do or say in this situation?” If you get your ego out of the way and pull a tight reign on your emotions, you’ll hear the answer come to you in a soft, calm, and clear voice.

Do what that voice tells you to do and you will, over time, be amazed at how much more closely you begin to think and act like that ideal best self that you really want to be! Remember – all it takes is a shift of one tiny degree, sustained over a sufficient period of time, to achieve miraculous personal transformation.

Being positive and self-empowered

Complaining is often the first step on a slippery slope of negativity that hits bottom with you saying or doing things you later regret. Whenever you catch yourself about to complain, immediately stop and ask yourself this question:

Is what I am about to say consistent with my ideal best self?

If the answer is No, then your next question is, “What *would* I say if I *were* being my best self?” If you listen to your intuition, you will hear the answer; if you act upon that answer, you’ll spend a lot less time acting like a victim (which you are every time you complain about something), and a lot more time in “best self” mode. Pretty soon, you’ll also find that you have less to complain about.

Critical Mass Goal Achievement

“Success is the ability to bounce from one failure to another without loss of enthusiasm.”

Winston Churchill

As I’ve often said, every great accomplishment was once the “impossible dream” of a dreamer who simply refused to quit when the going got tough. And at some point or another, the going will get tough if you are pursuing big dreams and goals. You will reach low points, perhaps many of them, where it feels like

you have not option but to quit. You'll never know just how close to success you were when you finally did throw in the towel, but as Thomas Edison once said, people would be appalled if they knew how close to success they were when they quit.

Along the way, you might also hit a serious slump, an extended run of bad luck, or some other seemingly disastrous or tragic interference with your plans. At this point, it might seem like failure is inevitable (in fact, during this period well-intentioned friends and relatives might assure you that's the case). But as Rosabeth Moss Kantor said in her book *The Frontiers of Management*, anything can look like a failure in the middle (AFIM – Apparent Failure In the Middle). To this, I would add that it's only a failure if you quit.

But even the darkest valley eventually opens up into the sunshine and, miracle of miracles, you start to make forward progress again. But then, another setback hits ("it's always something," as Gilda Radner said). You begin to despair that this big dream of yours might never come true after all. That's when you need to remember Napoleon Hill's dictum that every successful person finds that their greatest success lies just beyond the point where it appears that things will never work out.

So you keep working. And slowly, things do start coming together. Some of those things are obvious – sales are increasing, you get the new job or the promotion, you're finally out of debt. Others are invisible – the strength of character you've developed, the sense of certain destiny that now envelops your goals and dreams, the faith that allows you to stop worrying about problems but instead to be working on solutions.

Eventually, all of those seeds you've planted, all of those friends you've made, all of that work you've done adds up and you hit a critical mass (the proverbial tipping point) and things start to take off for you. Eventually, the "impossible dream" of yesterday is your reality of today.

That's when it's time to dream Beyond the Dream. Once accomplished, goals lose their power to motivate you. One of the oldest books in the world is the *I Ching*, the book of changes. It warns against the temptation to rest at the top of a hill when you should be setting your sites on a more distant mountain.

The next mountain will be higher. And you will be stronger. And the Dream Beyond the Dream will be a Big Dream, a magnificent Dream – the next "impossible" dream of today that is destined to be your reality of tomorrow.

Redwood trees live for hundreds of years, grow to heights of 350 feet, and produce bark more than a foot thick. And it all starts with a seed that is only one-sixteenth of an inch long!

Write your autobiography in advance

Write a prospective autobiography as if it were an article to be published in a newspaper or magazine at some future time. Begin with something like this: "You wouldn't know it from the circumstances today, but..." Then write about your dream of the ideal future having been fulfilled, and the steps by which you

fulfilled it. Be sure to include reference to all the people whose help you required.

For best results, use a desktop publishing program to make it actually look like it was copied from a real publication – for example, by including your photo of today with a caption that reads, “the hero begins the quest.” Then, post that article on your day-timer, on your bathroom mirror, and anywhere else that it will remind you and motivate you to transform the dream into a memory of the future.

SECTION 4

EXTRA CREDIT READINGS

The following excerpts are meant to both give you one last spark of inspiration to get moving toward your Big Dream (your castle in the air), and also to steer you toward additional readings. I will provide additional reading suggestions at the workshop itself.

“I learned this, at least, by my experiment: that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours. He will put some things behind, will pass an invisible boundary; new, universal, and more liberal laws will begin to establish themselves around and within him; or the old laws be expanded, and interpreted in his favor in a more liberal sense, and he will live with the license of a higher order of beings... If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them.”

Henry David Thoreau: *Walden*

“There is no hope of success for the person who does not have a central person, or definite goal at which to aim.”

Napoleon Hill: *Think and Grow Rich*

“Think back. Remember when you were little and the world was a glittering place of limitless possibilities. Everywhere you looked, you found something new and different. As far as you knew, you could do anything because nobody had told you otherwise. You could fly and you could walk through walls. You and your invisible friend could touch the sky... When we are small, we are able to invent our own answers.”

Doug Hall: *Jump Start Your Brain*

“As you learn to recognize, nurture, and protect your inner artist, you will be able to move beyond pain and creative constriction. You will learn ways to recognize and resolve fear, remove emotional scar tissue, and strengthen your confidence. Damaging old ideas about creativity will be explored and discarded... The experience will make you excited, depressed, angry, afraid, joyous, hopeful, and, ultimately, more free.”

Julia Cameron: *The Artist's Way:
A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity*

“To make sure a goal unleashes the power of your subconscious mind, it must meet two criteria. It must be stated in a way that you and anybody else could measure it... [T]he two criteria are *how much* (by some measurable quantity such as pages, pounds, dollars, square feet, or points) and *by when* (a specific time and date). Be as specific as possible with all aspects of your goals... Remember, vague goals produce vague results.”

Jack Canfield: *The Success Principles*

“There is a space between man’s imagination and man’s attainment that may only be traversed by his longing.”

Kahlil Gibran: *Sand and Foam*

“It is creativity, not hard work, that is at the heart of success in any field of endeavor. And in order for a person to have the time to engage in creative thinking, he must learn to work efficiently. To do this, it’s crucial to develop the habit of focusing on the crux of the issue.”

Robert J. Ringer: *Million Dollar Habits*

“In my conversations with hundreds of top salespeople over the years, I have found that they all have one thing in common. They all have clear, written goals. They have taken the time to sit down and create a blueprint for themselves and their future lives. Every one of them has been amazed at the incredible power of goal setting and strategic planning. Every one of them has accomplished far more than they ever believed possible in selling.”

Brian Tracy: *Advanced Selling Strategies*

“A direct correlation exists between possibility thinking and the level of a person’s energy. Who gets energized by the prospect of losing? If you know something can’t succeed, how much time and energy are you willing to give it? Nobody goes looking for a lost cause. You invest yourself in what you believe can succeed. When you embrace possibility thinking, you believe in what you’re doing, and that gives you energy.”

John C. Maxwell: *Thinking for a Change*

“A great difference between winners and losers is their attitude towards what they need to know. Losers feel it’s someone else’s job to teach them everything they need to know. Winners are determined to learn, and will seek out the best possible training, if necessary completely on their own.”

John Lawhon: *Retail Selling*

“Regardless of the circumstance of your life, you are the writer, director, and producer of your mental images. You will always act out those pictures. Your circumstances do not determine what your life will be; they reveal what kinds of images you have chosen up until now. From the quality of your physical appearance, to your level of nutritional health, to the state of your financial holdings, to the quality of your relationships and everything else that requires

an action by you, you are acting on images. Your mind stores away all of the images that you elect, and you daily carry out the assignments of those thoughts.”

Wayne Dyer: *You'll See It When You Believe It*

“To succeed you have to believe in something with such a passion that it becomes a reality.”

Anita Roddick: *Body and Soul*

“Prosperity starts with an idea. Become convinced that it's available, persuade yourself to obtain it, and accept it as it arrives. Then, if you are positive about it, you breathe life and form into it.”

Mark Victor Hansen and Jack Canfield: *Dare To Win*

“When you begin to actually work toward your goals through a plan of action, you assert power over your life. you prove that you have control. When you live life with purpose and energy by acting upon goals that are based in principles that you believe in, then you are living on your full power. You are fully engaged in life. You know who you are and where you are going and what sort of person you want to be when you get there.”

Stedman Graham: *You Can Make It Happen*

“If thinking big accomplishes so much, why doesn't everyone think that way? I've been asked that question many times. Here I believe is the answer. All of us, more than we recognize, are products of the thinking around us. And much of that thinking is little, not big. All around you is an environment that is trying to tug you, trying to pull you down to second class street.”

David Schwartz: *The Magic of Thinking Big*

“[I make] up my own daily list of the six most important things I have to do. Writing this list is one of the smartest things I ever learned to do. I believe in it, heart and soul. Each night, I put together my list for the following day. If I don't get something on my list accomplished, it goes on the next day's list. I put the hardest or most unappealing task at the top of the list. This way, I tackle the most difficult item first, and once it's out of the way, I feel my day is off to a good start.”

Mary Kay Ash: *You Can Have It All*

“Take dead aim at a spot on the fairway or the green, refuse to allow any negative thoughts to enter your head, and swing away... Take dead aim. Make it a point to do it every time on every shot.”

Harvey Penick: *Harvey Penick's Little Red Book of Golf*

“Aiming for the moon is a good start, but the secret to extraordinary accomplishment is continually re-adjusting your sights, aiming higher and higher. To be successful on your journey, you must continue to think bigger and bigger with each step, establishing new goals when you reach each plateau.”

Daryl Bernstein: *Venture Adventure*

“I know it sounds corny and overly simple, but it works every time. I have made several dream books, since that first one many years ago. And one-by-one I’ve seen my dreams materialize. The faith-building power of my handcrafted books is something to behold!”

Rebecca K. Merriman: *Simply Happy*

“There are no right or wrong goals, only ones that excite you because you believe in them. Don’t set humdrum, Milquetoast goals; you’ll be too bored to bother. Don’t set goals within such easy reach that you can knock them off with a fly swatter. Give yourself a sense of adventure, a quest for the mountains of the moon, perhaps, or the silk route to China.”

Mary Sprouse: *If Time is Money,
No Wonder I’m Not Rich*

“Vision is the best manifestation of creative imagination and the primary motivation of human action. It’s the ability to see beyond our present reality, to create, to invent what does not yet exist, to become what we not yet are. It gives us capacity to live out of our imagination instead of our memory.”

Stephen Covey, Roger Merrill, Rebecca Merrill: *First Things First*

“Those who learn best and most, and change most comfortably, are those who: a) take responsibility for themselves and for their future; b) have a clear view of what they want that future to be; c) want to make sure that they get it; and d) believe that they can.”

Charles Handy: *The Age of Unreason*

“One of the traits [great and famous people] have in common is a sense of expectation and destiny. They always believed that they were destined for greatness... Our society creates heroes in every endeavor of life. We all want people to look up to and emulate... In [these heroes], you’ll not see a different species of human being, but you will see the same doubts and fears that you face, and you will see their greatness and potential in yourself.”

Jim Stovall: *Success Secrets of Super Achievers*

“Are you ready to throw away the old boomerang, and to keep throwing it away every time it comes back to you? The old boomerang is caring about what other people think of you; trying to do what you think will please and impress everyone else, even if it makes you unhappy; playing it safe by staying close to the ground when deep in your heart you want to spread your wings and soar, even if at first it’s terrifying to fly... The old boomerang is not part of you, it’s something you can throw away and replace, if you want to.”

Joe Tye: *Your Dreams Are Too Small*

“The most pernicious aspect of procrastination is that it can become a habit. We don’t just put off our lives today; we put them off till our deathbed. Never forget: This very moment, we can change our lives. There never was a moment, and never will be, when we are without the power to alter our destiny. This second, we can turn the tables on [inner] Resistance. This second, we can sit down and do our work.”

Steven Pressfield: *The War of Art: Winning the Inner Creative Battle*

“In my years of research on human achievement and accomplishment, one of the most striking things I’ve learned is that a high expectation of success is the single most valuable quality you can bring into any challenging situation. A high expectation of success is more important than natural ability or the lack thereof. It’s more important than practice or preparation. This has been proven in any number of controlled experiments.”

Denis Waitley: *The New Dynamics of Winning*

“When you focus most of your time and energy doing the things that you are truly brilliant at, you eventually reap big rewards. This is a fundamental truth. And it’s critical to your future success.”

Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen,
and Les Hewitt: *The Power of Focus*

“You can achieve the unachievable. Firstly, you need to aim beyond what you are capable of. You must develop a complete disregard for where your abilities end. Try to do the things that you’re incapable of... Make your vision of where you want to be a reality.

Paul Arde: *It’s Not How Good You Are, It’s How Good You Want To Be*

“If you want to accomplish something positive, there can’t be a ‘no’ in your vocabulary. You are not to be stopped. This actually defines a pro – someone who accomplishes what he or she has decided to do.”

Milton Katselas: *Dreams Into Action*

“It’s important that you recognize that your entire worldview is based on how much respect you have for yourself. Believe in infinite possibilities and you cast a vote for your own possibilities... Your level of self-regard must come from your knowing within yourself that you have a sacred connection. Let nothing shake that divine foundation.”

Wayne Dyer: *The Power of Intention*

“Every dreamer experiences a time when things aren’t moving, when progress is bogged down. I believe that God allows this to happen to prepare us to receive success with profound gratitude and true humility!”

Robert Schuller: *If It’s Going To Be, It’s Up To Me*

“Asking simple questions makes luck happen.”

Marc Myers: *How to Make Luck*

“Never take anything for granted. Most of the world operates in a very limited way. Sometimes you must think creatively for others in order to overcome obstacles you face together.”

Robert J. Petro: *The Book of Secrets*

“If you lack the confidence to create, you are undoubtedly tuned in to the Voice of Judgment [VOJ] that all of us have within. You might think that the inhibiting pronouncements come from your associates, or the mores of your business environment, or society as a whole, but if you allow them to stop you, it’s your own internal broadcast you are listening to... Even a slight decrease in judgment increases your ability to respond creatively to situations. It has been estimated that a normal individual uses only five percent of his total capability. We blame that on the VOJ. If, by silencing the VOJ even a bit, you reclaim only an additional five percent of your total mental capacity, you will *double* your present efficiency and creativity.”

Michael Ray & Rochelle Myers: *Creativity in Business*

“Most people can achieve beyond their dreams if they insist upon it. I’d encourage everyone to dream big, lay your foundations well, absorb information like a sponge, and not be afraid to defy the conventional wisdom. Just because it hasn’t been done before doesn’t mean you shouldn’t try.”

Howard Schultz: *Pour Your Heart Into It*

“To change your circumstances, first start thinking differently. Do not passively accept unsatisfactory circumstances, but form a picture in your mind of circumstances as they should be... Believe and succeed.”

Norman Vincent Peale: *The Power of Positive Thinking*

“As the twentieth century closes and the twenty-first century dawns, we will bid good-bye to the most prosperous century in the history of mankind... We’ve increased our lifestyles, but in the process haven’t we also lost our ability to really live? We have amassed wealth, not wisdom. We have given our children toys, not time. We have children who have been taught to consume rather than work; we have fathers who don’t know their children, and marriages that do not work or last. We have been in a rush to run a race without understanding the finish line. Could it be that we are being robbed of our very lives because we are not thinking correctly about why we have money and what we are to do with it?”

Russ Crosson: *A Life Well Spent*

“There are two general ways for you to deal with your pessimistic beliefs once you are aware of them. The first is simply to distract yourself when they occur – try to think of something else. The second is to dispute them. Disputing is more effective in the long run, because successfully disputed beliefs are less likely to recur when the same situation presents itself again.”

Martin Seligman: *Learned Optimism*

“There is no more imperative and no simpler law for strategy than to keep the forces concentrated.”

Karl von Clausewitz: *On War*

“Solidifying intent refers to the formulation of mental energy into thought. The mind should be calm and quiet, thought should be deep and far-reaching. When the mind is calm and quiet, then brilliant measures are conceived; when thought is deep and far-reaching, then strategic plans are perfected. When brilliant measures are conceived, then the will cannot be disturbed. When strategic plans are perfected, then achievements cannot be blocked.”

Thomas Cleary: *Thunder in the Sky*

“[W]e are seeing evidence of the brain’s ability to remake itself throughout adult life, not only in response to outside stimuli, but even in response to directed mental effort. We are seeing, in short, the brain’s potential to correct its own flaws and enhance its own capabilities.”

Jeffrey Schwartz, M.D. and Sharon Begley:
The Mind and the Brain

“Although no one enjoys frustration and despair, people who sustain their creativity over the course of a lifetime do come to accept periods of anguish as necessary parts of the whole creative process... Since evidence suggests that people often fail to solve problems not because the problems are insoluble but because they give up prematurely, persistence can be seen as one of our greatest allies.”

Daniel Goleman, Paul Kaufman, and
Michael Ray: *The Creative Spirit*

“We eventually lose all awareness that these [mental] ‘models’ are in fact internal illusions. We accept them as external reality and act on them as if they were. If they are good models, in most circumstances they more than adequately permit the mind to handle external reality. But here a danger creeps in. when the world changes in important ways, we can find ourselves with a model that is completely irrelevant to the current situation. We find ourselves wearing street clothes when we are thrown off the deck of a ship. What we need at that point is a wet suit and lifejacket.”

Yoram Wind and Colin Crook: *The Power of Impossible Thinking*

“In today’s world of change, you cannot succeed by merely working harder on the old plan. You and your organization need a new plan... Consider a new way of thinking about the purpose of business: The purpose of any business is to profitably create emotional connections that are so satisfying to customers and employees that loyalty is assured.”

Scott McKain: *All Business is Show Business*

“All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us.”

J.R.R. Tolkien: *The Lord of the Rings (Gandalf)*