

How to Use Common Sense to Achieve Your Goals *A Simple, Sensible System to Success*

Achieving our goals is far easier than we allow it to be. Is there challenging work to be done? Yes, often there is. We frequently make it harder than it has to be. In my personal experience of working with thousands of people, I have discovered seven common sense steps to success. The steps are simple and will support you in creating your dreams. Try them for yourself. Experience living on purpose with great excitement, joy and adventure.

- **First step: evaluate your current situation.** Writing in the May-July 2004 issue of *What Is Enlightenment*, Duane Elgin expresses it this way, "...we begin by becoming an objective witness or impartial observer who tells ourselves the truth about our actual situation." Nothing is a good thing or a bad thing. Your life simply is. Keenly observe how you are doing life and what your outcomes are. What's your financial situation? Personal relationships? Community involvement? Physical exercise or couch potato? Hobbies and down time? Spiritual disciplines? Creative outlets?

- **Second step: define your goal.** In specific language state your desired outcome. Make it in the positive and measurable. "I want to earn more money" is vague. How much more money? And by when? "I am earning 75% more money this year than last year and I am investing 10% of my gross income in my IRA every month." Have a *heart connection* with your goal. Do you love it? Do you feel enthusiasm for it? The more specific and the more positive emotion attached to a goal the more quickly and easily it will become reality. Imagine your goal *from* the outcome. In other words, you have already achieved the goal. "I am earning....." "I am exercising" "I weigh....."

- **Third step: develop a roadmap.** Would you start out on a trip across country without a road map? Probably not. It is possible to get across country with out a map. It is, however, less efficient. You can reach your destination more easily and quickly with a plan. A plan is a tool that gives you guidelines along the way to gauge your progress. It also supports you in staying on track. A road map makes it easy to stay on the main road leading to your destination. Put in writing the small, incremental actions required to reach your outcome by the desired time frame. Each action step has a target date unique to it.

- **Fourth step: track your progress.** While traveling in the Middle East in 1997, I saw mileposts along the King's Highway. These ancient stone posts which had been placed there by the Romans were approximately a mile apart and give the traveler feedback about how she's doing. A more modern day example, is a pedometer. 10,000 steps a day is the minimum amount of exercise for good health. A pedometer is a great way to measure your progress. For me, 4.4 miles is 10,000 steps. Before using a pedometer, I did not realize how few steps I was taking on a daily basis but now I have objective feedback to inform me of how I'm doing. Am I moving in the direction of my goal of 10,000 steps a day? I have instant information from which to make a choice. Create graphs and charts to give objective information in the form of easily understood pictures. Design an Excel spread sheet to track your progress. According to Thomas S. Monson, "When

performance is measured, performance improves; when performance is measured and reported back, the rate of improvement accelerates.”

- **Fifth step: ask for support.** No one ever achieves anything without the help of others along the way. Recognize that you don’t know everything about everything and it is not necessary for you to know everything about everything. Get support in achieving your goals in two ways. First, spend your time doing the things you do well. Hire, for example, a web designer to get your website revamped or up and running. Get advice about tax consequences from your CPA. Consult your attorney about legal issues. Secondly, share your goals with people who genuinely want you to succeed and will provide encouragement. Many people who know and love us will tell us why our dreams are impossible. They want to protect us and keep us in a safe place according to their limiting beliefs. Choose carefully with whom you share your goals, particularly in the early stages of their development. “Do just once what others say you cannot do, and you will never pay attention to their limitations again,” the wisdom of Edmund J. Brown.
- **Sixth step: recognize the process is dynamic and evolving.** As you move along the path taking incremental steps, you will discover any number of phenomena. You may realize additional steps are required so you add them to your roadmap. You may discover steps you initially thought were essential are not necessary at all so you eliminate them from your written plan. You may get an idea that leads you down a path you had not anticipated. You can realize you were unrealistic in the time it would take to achieve certain steps so you adjust the target dates to reflect the new time frame. I have known people who discovered they were pursuing someone else’s goal and tossed it completely....and with great relief I might add. Free to pursue their goals. One value of a written plan or roadmap is the context for moving forward on what’s important to you with clarity of direction and purpose without rigidity and confinement.
- **Seventh step: release your control of the outcome or results.** For many of us this sounds bizarre. If we didn’t want control of our lives why would we set goals in the first place? Control of the results is a myth. We have the ability to choose the action we take. The action produces the results. If we are willing to invest our energy in taking appropriate action moment by moment, hour by hour the results will take care of themselves. And often, in my experience, the results will far exceed what I imagined or planned for. Our responsibility is to state the goal (the dream, the vision) clearly and with emotion (the heart connection we spoke about earlier). Show up to do the work. Give thanks in advance for the outcome. And expect the goal to show up. Our job is to declare the *what* and let powers greater than we are to figure out the *how*. © 2004 Ann Elliott

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