

Inspirational Emails

How Do I Get There from Here?

(Goals and Plans)

It does not matter how old you are, how many failures you have experienced or how much baggage you are carrying. You can change your life right now by committing to making your life a masterpiece that gives glory to God.

Go to any book store and look at all the books about goal-setting. The same authors usually offer workshops and a plethora of related application tools – planning calendars, software, motivational teachings, etc. Now, think of all the people that you know who have read the books and/or attended the workshops – yet rarely attain their desired outcomes. What is going on here? It is **the age-old tension between knowledge and action**. For some reason, we humans tend to assume that having a map is the same as actually following it. Not so.



I use the following process with my clients and in my own life. These steps are not original and they are not written on stone tablets. My experience is that **just about any goal-setting strategy will be effective if the individual actually follows the steps he or she maps out**. Whether it is the strategies of Steve Covey, Tony Robbins, Carmine Baffa or Allan Somersall, the key is to actually follow the map.

1. Establish your desired outcomes and state them in positive and specific terms.

How many times have you ever asked someone what he or she wanted out of life and they responded by telling you what they did not want? "I want to stop smoking" rather than "I want ever increasing health." **Running toward a positive vision is far more empowering than running away from an unwanted problem.** Where do you wish to be in every context of life 5, 10, 15 and 20 years from the present?

What do you want in the area of your finances? Is your answer, "Abundance"? What does that mean to you? How will "abundance" look in 10 or 20 years? In other words, **what will you have accomplished** with these finances? What sort of experiences will you have purchased?

What sort of possessions will you be managing? How will you have blessed your church or community with this abundance? Don't simply do this in regard to your finances but write out what you desire in the area of your relationships, your spiritual life, your hobbies, your contributions to the world around you and elsewhere.

2. Gather a support group.

This team can consist of family members, friends or spiritual advisors but it should be people who are every bit as strong and talented and gifted as you are. Why? **Because you want people whose input you can respect.** Also, because of the multiple perspectives and talents of these people, your perspective can be broadened and nuanced in ways that will greatly support your quest.

3. Play the movie out to the end.

Pretend to be watching the movie of your life as it plays out for the next 20 years. See it arriving at that point where you actually are experiencing your outcomes. Now ask yourself these questions as you look at the climax of this point of your life. What does it look like? What sounds do I hear? Are there any smells that are associated with the attaining of this outcome? What will I be feeling and experiencing? Be as detailed as possible.



So many people have dreams that are so fuzzy that they do not motivate them. **The more specific content we can pack into our dreams, the more motivated we will be.**

One of the fascinating things that often will take place at this point is the re-evaluation of our stated outcome. When we play the movie out we are surprised to see that circumstances are not what we had assumed. "This is not what I really want." For example, while we arrived at the desired outcome, we may notice that our families are nowhere to be seen. What we then need to do is go back and rewrite the script so that the movie includes them, resulting in a different ending!

4. Do a reality check.

What are your assets and liabilities? What are your strengths and present limitations? If you want to be a writer but have poor grammar, this is your present "reality." It is a limitation that needs to be dealt with. If you wish to build a school and have twelve dedicated, skilled and gifted teachers ready to join you, this is an asset. If you as yet have raised no money, this is a limitation. Both types of realities need to be addressed as you map out where you want to go.

5. Identify the specific steps necessary to attain your desired outcomes.

If you wish to build a school what would be your first steps? Well it depends somewhat on your assets and liabilities. If you have a clearly mapped out plan for where you want the school, what educational philosophy it will be built upon, how many teachers you will need, etc., but have no money, then one of the first steps is to find someone who is an expert at raising funds. If you haven't even decided on a philosophy yet, that may be one of the first steps you need to consider. And **as you gradually decide what steps need to be taken and when, you should constantly ask yourself: exactly how will this move me toward my desired outcome?**

6. Commit to specific time frames.

At what date, at what time of the day, will each step need to be completed? **Time frames keep us from allowing things to fall through the cracks and help us avoid**

procrastination. It is easy to be lulled into a false sense of movement when nothing is actually happening. Simply because you wrote all the steps out doesn't mean that you are actively following the steps. Speaking of time, if you don't want to waste a lot of time, do not skip the next step.

7. Address all potential obstacles.

Many obstacles will have already been dealt with by now. However, I have found that **if there is not a specific step whereby we sit down and actually consider all the many obstacles and challenges that may come up we are often waylaid by the "unforeseen."**



A spouse who is yet to be in agreement with your stated outcomes is a potential obstacle! Further, this obstacle can become increasingly distracting if it is not taken care of early on in the process. Usually, if we would have included our significant others in the very beginning of the process they will be totally supportive, However, what usually happens is that we hand over the completed map and state with great finality, "This is where I am headed...what do you think?"

Other obstacles can be a lack of education or your present amount of debt. Focus your energy on foreseeing and dealing with as many potential obstacles as possible at the very beginning of this process.

8. Commit.

If you have a support group (which could just be some good friends), lay the completed plans out before them with all of the time frames and commit to following through with the process. **Ask them to hold you accountable.** That's correct: we need people who will contact us and, in a positive manner, ask how things are going. Are the time frames being met? Are you progressing toward your outcome?

9. Be flexible.

If you see that your map – the goals you have made to get to your outcome – is not moving you in the direction of your outcome, adjust accordingly. For example, sometimes you discover that a time frame was not realistic. Change it. **The destination is what matters most.**

It does not matter how old you are, how many failures you have experienced or how much baggage you are carrying. You can change your life right now by committing to making your life a masterpiece that gives glory to God. Why sit around another minute simply taking up space and oxygen? Make your life count. Give your energy to creating a legacy.

by C.V. Doner