

# THINK GROW PROSPER

7 STEPS TO THINK YOUR WAY  
TO SUCCESS



DEXTER FORD

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## How to use this e-book

Most people spend at least a little time daydreaming about their goals – fantasy jobs, lifestyles and scenarios – at one point or another. For most people, though, this is where it stops. Most people won't actually do anything to really investigate, analyse and understand their goals and to make plans to achieve them.

If you've downloaded this e-book, then it's pretty safe to say that you want to set yourself some life and career goals...and you want to do so in a way that goes well beyond what most other people do.

In essence, the principles of goal setting – and the ones we'll work through in this book – are pretty simple: define your goals, make a plan to achieve them, follow the plan.

Why, then, do people not bother? Well, there are probably many reasons: perhaps the 'stuff' of everyday life gets in the way of their achieving their goals; perhaps the going gets tough and they find out that they weren't really motivated towards the particular goal they set in the first place; perhaps it's the worst of all reasons – that they don't realise that they actually HAVE a choice over their life and goals.

Before we begin to look at how to set goals and devise plans to achieve them, there are a few things I need to be absolutely straight with you about.

## **Invest your time**

Setting your own goals is an investment in yourself and your future. You owe it to your FUTURE self to be thinking NOW about what you want him or her to be doing in 5, 10, 20 years' time. Will your future self thank you for investing time now in order to secure a better future? You bet (s)he will!

The first thing that you must commit to doing at the very outset is to set aside time to work on your goals – they won't just happen by themselves. The stages I'm setting out for you here are ones that I've followed myself, that I've coached other people to use and that work...if you invest the time to actually DO them, and do them consistently.

Setting aside some time may take a certain amount of self-discipline, but it shouldn't be a chore – you shouldn't look forward to it with dread – after all, these are YOUR goals we're talking about. It should be fun, because you'll be working on things that YOU actually want to do, for your own future. Besides, think of the return on investment of that time spent NOW that your future self will reap.

## **Spend time thinking**

Part of the time invested in your goals will be spent thinking about what it is that you want to achieve. What EXACTLY it is that you want to achieve. Knowing 'roughly' what you want might not be enough. Knowing what other people expect you to want is definitely not enough.

As you go through this e-book, you'll find crucial questions within each chapter and section. Please answer them. Ideally, make sure you have a notebook and pen (or their electronic equivalent) handy so that you can write down your considered response (trust me, you won't remember it if you don't!).

Sometimes, you might need to think about the answers to these questions for a

day or so, or add to your response over a period of time, so don't worry if you can't always come up with an immediate answer then and there.

Don't pass the questions by, though: challenge yourself to think about them and answer them, even if you do have to come back to them some time later. They are there for a purpose: to help to guide your thoughts, clarify your goals and plan for your future.

### **DO something**

You'll spend quite a lot of time thinking, especially at the beginning while you're working out your goals. It's critical, though, that your goal setting doesn't stop there!

This might seem a statement of the obvious, but it's vital that you DO something to achieve your goal.

Be prepared to put in a bit of spadework, put your plan into action, and take action to move towards accomplishing your goals.

Otherwise that dream's going to remain a daydream.

### **A crucial starting point**

Before you even begin to think about your goals, you must recognise and accept the fact that you have the right to shape your future. You just do. In my mind, there is no question about it whatsoever, and there must be no doubt in your mind either.

I'm guessing (it's certainly true for me) that throughout your life, other people will have made decisions for you. To start with, it will have been your parents or guardians. Obviously, this is entirely appropriate in childhood...however, many people allow childhood patterns to follow them into adult life and find that, without realising it, they are allowing other people, circumstances and outside factors to decide on big parts of their lives for them.

I was talking to someone recently who told a rather sorry story about her career (which, incidentally, is a very worthwhile one – she’s a teacher). She began by saying that she’d always enjoyed maths and science at school, and decided that she’d like to be a doctor. She went on “but they told me I wasn’t clever enough to do that, so I thought I’d focus on the maths side and be an accountant. But they said I’d have to go all the way to X University to study for that and it would take years to qualify, so I settled on becoming a teacher instead”.

It’s a shame that these people, even though they meant well, advised this lady not to follow her goals and encouraged her to aspire to something else. It’s even more of a shame that she allowed them to do so.

When I was in my early teens, I remember telling people I wanted to be a doctor. I didn’t want to be a doctor. I wanted to be an actor. My *mother* wanted me to be a doctor. I knew when I ran retching from the biology lab during the lesson where we had to dissect a cow’s eyeball that I wasn’t cut out for a medical career in any shape or form. I carried the façade on for a few more years until I finally had to risk the deep disappointment of my mother and choose arts and humanities as my areas of study.

So who are YOUR goal stealers? Who might – even with the best of intentions – be making your goal choices for you? Think carefully.

Your teachers might have been encouraging or inspiring...or might have crushed your hope altogether and told you that you’d never make it as a doctor, actress, astronaut, vet...whatever you were aspiring to at the time. One has to wonder sometimes whose interests they have at heart when they advise in this way.

Your parents and your wider family might, while meaning well, be pushing you in certain directions, and showing their approval or disapproval of your life and career choices.

A friend of mine is an artist and art teacher. She commented recently that most parents are keen for their children to experience and take part in as many activities as possible...until they reach a certain point at secondary school when their focus turns towards future jobs. From there onwards, there's a tendency for parents to push their children towards certain subjects (usually science and maths, etc.) and away from others (usually arts and creative subjects), purely on the basis of their beliefs as to how job-worthy these subjects are.

I'm advising my children to find something they love, and do THAT. If that turns out to be creative writing or art rather than accounting or business studies, so be it. If they find something that they love and set their goals accordingly, they will find their niche and they'll always be able to make a business out of it. Either which way, they will choose their own goals.

Your friends and peers might be subtly pulling you towards certain life choices. Are there things that 'people like us' do/don't do? Are there things that you enjoy that you wouldn't necessarily share with your friends and peers because they might show their disapproval, or throw you out of their clique?

I used to work at The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. I know for a fact that some people came to see the opera productions not because they loved opera, but because people of their class and status came to the opera. What's that about?! If you love opera, go! If you don't, don't waste your time and money – do something you want to do instead!!

In the workplace, you might be tacitly waiting for your boss, colleagues or the organisation in general to give you permission to move on up the company hierarchy, to change careers or to make a move.

I was delivering a workshop on Personal Impact recently, and I asked the participants in the room, "Whose permission do you need to succeed?"

After a lengthy silence, someone said, “Well, my boss does my performance review...” and someone else added, “It depends what opportunities there are in the company...”. These factors may well have been true; HOWEVER, they masked the crucial point that these delegates were waiting for someone else to give them permission to succeed. Someone else!

It’s NOT up to your teachers, your family, your peers, your boss, your company or anyone else. Your goals are up to YOU!

## Secret 1) Establish Goals



Working out what you want to achieve and focusing on your goals is fun. Unfortunately, it's where most people start and finish when it comes to goal setting, in a 'wouldn't it be great if I could...oh, well, back to reality' sort of way.

We're going to start with a blank piece of paper (literally – so get your notebook ready) and think of your overall goal first of all, before breaking it down into its component parts.

Both at this early stage of the goal setting process and as we move through the e-book, we'll be following a principle (and what will become a recurring theme) of 'define the goal, break it down' before moving on to devise a plan of action that will take you closer to your goal...and then put that plan into action.

By the end of this chapter (if you've answered the questions and invested a bit of time!) you'll have a much clearer idea of your goal AND the key factors that contribute to it. You'll also have a much better understanding of WHY these are your goals, and this will become important later on when you start to make your plans and put them into action.

### **Choose your goal**

I'm sure that you'll have heard a lot of clichés when it comes to goal setting: Think big. Aim high. The world's your oyster.

These are all absolutely true...up to a point.

At this stage, use your imagination and don't put limits on yourself. This might SOUND unrealistic, but at this point in the process it's imperative. Don't worry – we'll be focusing on the practical aspects of putting your goal into action in later chapters. For the moment, it's important that you use your imagination and let your creative brain come to the fore.

For those of you with a more practical or logical mindset, this might prove more of a challenge. You might find that no sooner have you begun thinking about your goal that you're thinking, "I can't do that because..." or, "that means I'll have to..." STOP! At this early stage, you will need to consciously put your 'editor' or 'practical' brain to one side. We'll need it later, but not now.

A small caveat here: Challenge yourself to 'think big'...if that's what you want.

### **GOAL MINDSET # 1**

**THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT,**

**AND NOT ABOUT WHAT OTHER PEOPLE EXPECT YOU TO WANT**

I cannot stress enough how critical this point is, and it links back to some of the

goal stealers and goal influencers that I mentioned in the introduction.

I've worked with so many people who have focused their energies – in some cases their entire working lives – on other people's expectations, and have turned round one day and realised that they've denied themselves opportunities which now, in retrospect, they wish they'd taken.

Please don't let this be you.

It's actually very easy to get swept along by other people's aspirations and expectations of you. We're constantly being fed images and ideals of the sort of lifestyle that we're supposed to aspire to by the media: a large house in the countryside with a sweeping drive up to the front door: a fancy executive car, and perhaps a sporty little number to sit alongside in that driveway: exotic holidays with smartly dressed hotel staff at your beck and call...

For me, much of the above represents a complete nightmare

If what you'd rather work towards is a cottage in the countryside, a retro Volkswagen, and camping holidays in the great outdoors of the Scottish Highlands...then focus on that.

It really is YOUR choice. After all, YOU are the one who's going to live it...or live without it.

### **Start with the 'big picture'**

While running a workshop for teenagers, my colleague and I were encouraging them to set some life goals. In their case, it was a question of saying "imagine that you're 35" – to them, this represented a great age.

Predictably, the boys all said that they would be premier league footballers married to supermodels. The girls demonstrated a more mature response, and described the type of house they'd like to be living in, the family and career they'd like to have, the community they'd like to be part of and so on. Here's where you and they are the same: the choices that you make in ten

years' time will be by the choices you have made.

## GOAL MINDSET #2

### START WITH AN OVERALL PICTURE OF YOUR GOAL

### AND THE POSITIVE IMPACT IT WILL HAVE

Your goal can be absolutely anything you like, from a life or career goal, to a specific project at work, to a personal challenge. As I've already said, start with the 'what' at this stage. We'll focus on the 'how' later on: at this stage, gaining absolute clarity on what you want to achieve is essential.

Imagine you're booking the holiday of a lifetime. You'd make pretty sure you knew exactly where you were going and what it was going to be like, wouldn't you? You'd browse the internet, read reviews of the location, investigate some of the sights that you wanted to see, plan a few excursions and activities... you'd figure out what you'd need to take with you – some things you'd already have, others you might need to go out and buy especially. You'd pick who you were going with – friends or family, and so on.

You'd not spend large sums of money just knowing ROUGHLY where you were going. You'd not risk spending your valuable fortnight's holiday in some dive that looked OK online, so you didn't really check it out...and you forget to bring mosquito repellent...all with a bunch of people you don't care about, would you?

How much more important are your goals? Make sure that you invest time NOW to focus on exactly where you're going.

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How much more important are your goals? Make sure that you invest time NOW to focus on exactly where you're going.

### **To wrap up Chapter 1...**

By now, if you've thought about the questions I've posed and invested a little time thinking deeply about your goal, you'll have a better understanding of:

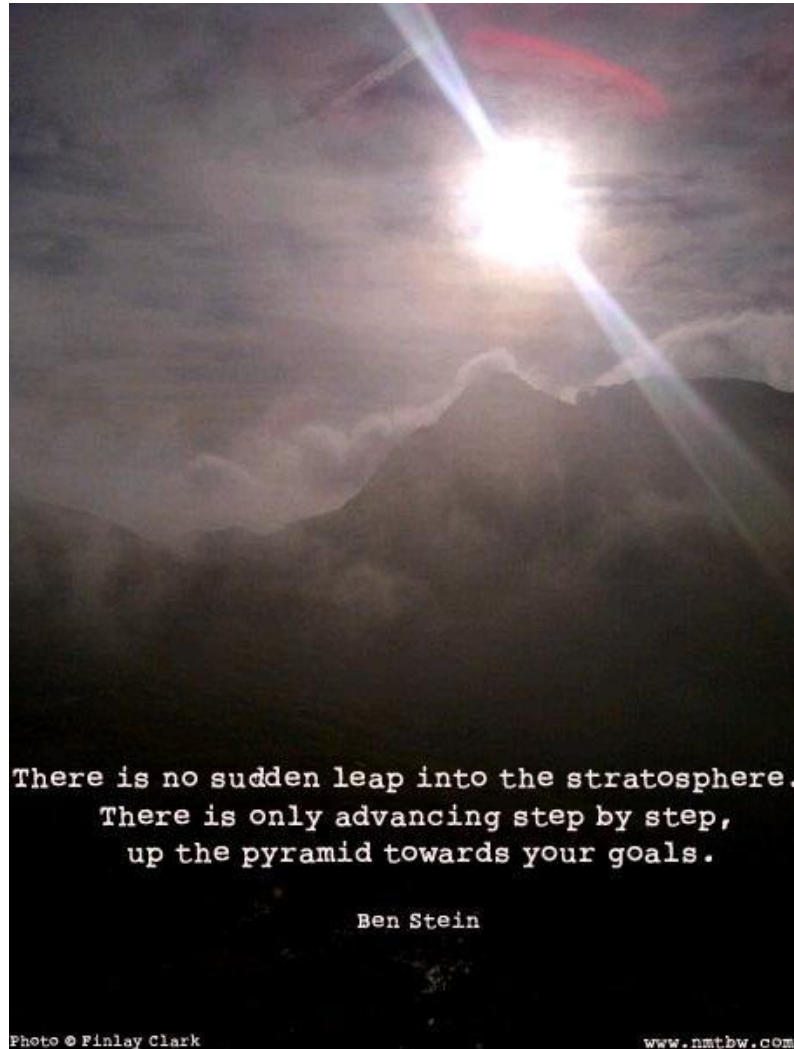
- Your overall goal, and what it will mean to you to achieve it
- WHY you want to achieve this goal

In Chapter 2, we'll move on to break those goals down, analyse them, and refine them. For now, I'll leave you with a poem to consider...

**My Wage by Jessie B. Rittenhouse**

*I bargained with life for a penny,  
And life would pay no more,  
However I begged at evening  
When I counted my scanty store;  
For life is a just employer,  
He gives you what you ask,  
But once you have set the wages,  
Why, you must bear the task.  
I worked for a menial's hire,  
Only to learn dismayed,  
That any wage I had asked of life,  
Life would have paid.*

## Secret 2) Refining your goal



If you've worked through chapter one, you should have a fair idea now of your overall goal, and of the reasons and values that lie behind that goal. And I hope you've accepted your right to choose your own goals, and have focused on these, and not other people's aspirations on your behalf, or what you think you ought to aspire to.

Once you've got to that point, it can be difficult sometimes to know where to start, so in this chapter, we'll be looking at defining and refining your goal, and breaking it down into do-able chunks.

Our starting point will be something with which you may well be very familiar – turning your overall goal into a SMART goal.

### GOAL MINDSET #3

**BREAK YOUR OVERALL GOALS DOWN INTO SMALLER GOALS.**

**BREAK THESE DOWN INTO EVEN SMALLER GOALS**

**UNTIL YOU HAVE A DAILY 'TO DO' LIST.**

### **Making your goal SMART**

Start by writing your goal down in a sentence or two: stick to the high level overview here.

Let's use, as our working example, Kate, who expressed the following goal "within the next 3 years I will set up by own business, based on my hobby of crafting and embroidery."

This is a clear goal, with some obvious parameters: it's not like the aspiration that I mentioned in chapter one, of 'making a difference in the lives of young people' which gives little indication as to what the person with this aim will actually DO.

However, to make that goal more robust, it must be SMART, that is

- Specific
- Measureable
- Attainable and Action orientated
- Relevant
- Time bound

Kate can make her goal more *specific* by considering details of her business:

- What exactly will she do? Teach her skills to others? Sell her

products...and if so which ones and where – online, offline?

- How big does she want this business to be...to take over from her existing job, or to run alongside it?

...and so on.

Look at the goal you've written down and ask yourself:

### **Be SPECIFIC**

If your goal is still a little vague, now is the time to sharpen it up and clarify what you're aiming for

- ***What exactly do I want to achieve?***
- ***What will it look and feel like?***
- ***How will I know I've got there?***
- ***Which parts of it are measurable?***
- ***What aspects of my life will be different to what they are now?***
- ***Which parts of it are under my control? Which can I influence? Are there any that I will have to leave to chance?***

### **Make your goal MEASURABLE.**

You'll need to know whether or not you're on the right track and making progress as you move forward towards your goal.

Ask yourself:

- ***Again, how will you know when you've succeeded?***
- ***What are the milestones along your way that will confirm to you that you're moving in the right direction?***
- ***If these can't be counted numerically, what will indicate to you that you're heading in the right direction (or not)...remember Kate's positive and negative indicators of being taken seriously as a business***

- ***HOW will you measure your progress?***
- ***How will you celebrate these milestones as you reach them?***

**Make sure your goal is TIME-BOUND.**

This is often the biggest single point of failure in goal setting – people simply don't set themselves deadlines....in which case, more often than not, time drifts on, and nothing happens.

Set yourself some timescales, even if you have to be flexible later on. Aim for something. Put it in your diary.

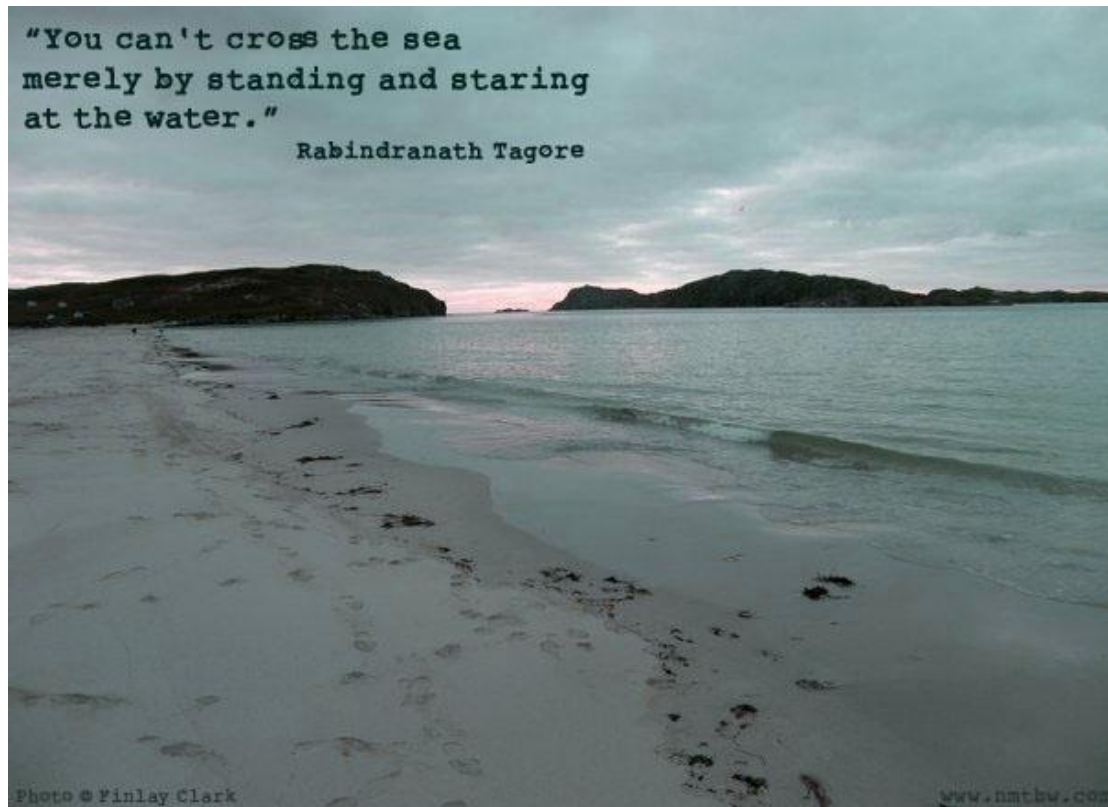
Ask yourself:

- When do I want to achieve this by?
- When do I need to start?
- Where am I now?
- Where do I want to be by the end of the year?
- Where do I want to be by the end of the month...week.....day?!
- What's the consequence of NOT setting some deadlines?

Setting SMART goals – and writing them down and putting them somewhere where you can see them – is a major step forward.

It's important that your goal is exciting to you – that you're motivated by it and that you stop every so often to review your progress and check that you are where you need to be.

### Secret 3) Devising a plan



Having gained clarity over your goal and reasons and values behind it, this section will be a 'how to' on breaking your overall SMART goal down into manageable and realistic chunks, and building a practical plan to achieve it.

There are a couple of points to make here before we start with the chapter.

To some people (myself included) who are more action orientated and would rather just define their goal and get on with it, this planning phase can seem a little dull.

To others, who have a more thoughtful and process- driven approach to life, it will be easy, as it's all about taking your ideas and aspirations and turning them into the practical steps you need to take to achieve your goal.

For those action-orientated people who want to skip the planning stage and start running towards their goal now...pause for a moment. Planning is vital and in this chapter, you'll be considering factors that will in the end help you to get to your goal quicker.

For those who enjoy thinking and planning – ensure that you remain focused on achieving your goal, and not in planning for planning's sake.

Once you have your plan, it'll be a question of sticking to the plan and being self disciplined if the goal is to be achieved.

A plan on paper is worthless. A plan in action is priceless. And with that in mind consider also that you should start taking your first few steps towards your goals as soon as you have clarified your first few steps: don't wait until the whole master plan of your life has been drafted out in full...begin to walk the path as soon as you can.

#### GOAL MINDSET #4

#### PLAN. DON'T JUST DIVE IN.

##### **Make a list**

Start by looking at your overall SMART goal, and start with what you want to achieve and your timescale (the S and the T).

Think carefully about all the things that need to happen if you are to meet that goal in that timescale, and make a list. To start with, just write things down in any order, and bear in mind that more things might occur to you in the coming days.

It's also extremely likely that things will be added to this list as you move forward: at this starting-out point there will be things about your goals that you

don't know you don't know...you'll find out as you journey towards it.

At this stage, be as thorough as you can though – the more detailed your overall 'to do' list is, the more robust your plan will be.

Let's take the example that we saw in chapter 2 of Kate, whose goal is to set up a business based on her crafting skills.

Kate's initial list might look something like this:

- Find workshop premises
- Develop website
- Make more products to sell
- Start with soft furnishing and clothes
- Buy / source more raw materials to work with
- Think about farming work out for completion
- Think about design services, completed elsewhere...
- Branch into home décor and 'how to' resources online
- Join craft networks to share ideas
- Learn business skills
- Contact the bank to set up an account
- Sell product range on TV shopping channels
- Run craft workshops and residential weekend programmes
- Find an accountant
- Find someone to help with marketing
- Contact the local enterprise agency for business start-up advice
- Join and attend business networking groups

...and so on

Add these to the list you're putting together now.

Work through the list

Clearly with each of these, further thought is required.

The first consideration is what needs to be tackled first?

Looking down Kate's list, it's fairly safe to say that things like

- Visiting the local enterprise authority for business start up advice
- Setting up a bank account
- Finding an accountant
- Start with soft furnishing and clothes

Considering the factors on her list like this might make Kate think about some factors that she might not have considered before:

How big do I want to start – go for major bank investment, or fund it myself and work from home to start with?

And leading on from this:

- What sort of start up businesses do the banks lend to?
- How much do they lend?
- What are their terms?
- What are the implications for me?

These questions in turn might lead her to think about researching funding options BEFORE choosing a bank and setting up her account.

In terms of her overall goal, Kate might reflect that she wants a successful business in three years time, so she'll need to invest heavily at the outset to get the ball rolling.

As for your own list, it's important that you take each point on it and ask yourself:

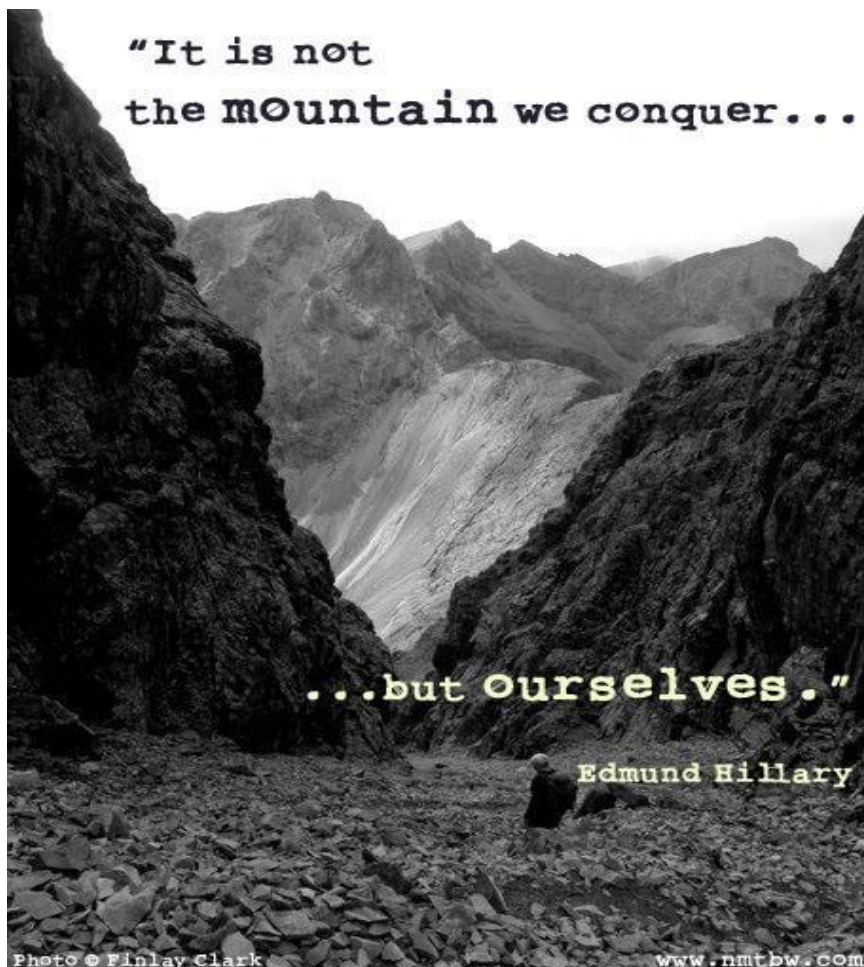
- ***Where does this sit in relation to other things on my list?***
- ***How important is this thing, in terms of my overall goal?***
- ***What is involved with getting this particular thing done (you might***

*even want to draw another mind map to capture your thoughts around any particularly complex points)*

- *When does it need to happen – right away? In six months time?*
- *When EXACTLY will I do these things?*
- *Who do I know who can advise/help me with this?*
- *What else do I need to find out about this? Where can I go to find out?*
- *What will I need to do to achieve that step?*

Following on from this, once you've organised your list into some sort of timeline order, each thing on your list will need to become a mini SMART goal.

#### Secret 4) Developing the confidence to succeed



It's absolutely vital (I cannot stress this strongly enough) that you have the confidence and self belief that you will achieve your goals. Self belief is crucial to success. If you don't believe you can make it, then you probably won't – even if there are other people who do.

Depending on how ambitious your goals are, this might sometimes mean flying in the face of those who don't think you WILL achieve. And that can take some bravery.

There will be times when you have to ignore the voices of those around you (we spoke about them in chapter one) and dig deep into your inner resolve and believe in yourself to succeed.

I cannot overstate how VITAL it is to have self confidence, and a strong self belief (which is why I'm repeating myself again so soon). The same goes for teams and organisations: if you don't actually believe that you can achieve your goals, or – worse still, that you aren't really worthy of them – then it's pretty much 'game over' from the start.

I'm not talking about becoming arrogant, ignoring feedback from others and thinking you're infallible or invincible – I'm talking about a balanced view of yourself that doesn't indulge in false modesty and self-pity, and an inner view of yourself that is strong enough not to be crushed and defeated when someone challenges you.

I've worked with a lot of senior executives and company directors over the years, and I'm astonished at how many of them have 'impostor syndrome': they almost don't believe they are worthy to be where they are, and some of them focus upon issues that really are NON issues. One of them was deeply concerned that her accent and tone of voice grated on people: another very senior director

fretted about his writing style, which he didn't think was as good as his colleagues. Yet another one felt guilty that he had risen to a senior position, and didn't have a university degree. NOT helpful baggage to be carrying around!

Here's the thing. You must develop the mindset and confidence to achieve your goals. If you really want to reach your goals, you cannot afford to wallow in thoughts of 'I'm not good enough'.

Don't think "is that statement (about your accent, writing, lack of education etc.) true or not?" Think to yourself "is it helpful to focus on this?" If not, ditch it.

## **Confidence techniques**

### **Self Talk**

What is your inner voice telling you? Is it your best coach...or your worst critic? It's been said that we often talk to ourselves in a way that we'd never allow anyone else to. If your inner voice is always telling you how stupid you are, how you're not as thin/beautiful/clever/wealthy as someone else...then it's time to shut it up.

I used to know someone whose standard phrase used to be "it's very difficult for me because...." And guess what. She seemed to struggle with EVERYTHING, from finding a boyfriend to holding down a job. She was CONSTANTLY telling herself how difficult life was for her, and it became a self fulfilling prophesy. She could have made a slight – but profound – change by focusing on a solution rather than a problem 'I face challenges head on' is a lot more useful than 'Woe is me, everything is so difficult'. Are you talking about brain surgery here? Rocket science? No? Then how hard can it be?! If you find yourself making negative statements to yourself, think of a positive statement you can say instead. Discipline yourself to say this positive statement WHENEVER you catch yourself thinking the negative. Every time.

I'm quite clumsy, and have often found myself dropping a sheaf of papers all over the floor, spilling my coffee on my desk...on one occasion I was wearing a long and heavy pendant necklace to a meeting, and as I leaned forward to pull my chair up to the table, the pendant swung forward and smashed the glass of water in front of me.

Here's the thing. If I say "I'm such a klutz, I've got to be careful not to drop/spill/smash anything" it's going to result in nervous behaviour that will probably lead to those very things happening. I choose to tell myself "I'm every inch the successful businesswoman". Believe it or not, this makes a huge psychological difference.

I was once at Heathrow airport buying a coffee, and as I lifted my briefcase off the floor, I managed to catch it on a shelf of potato crisps. The entire shelf fell off the wall below the counter.

As the crisp packets scattered in all directions across the floor, I reminded myself that I was "every inch the successful businesswoman", confidently apologised for my mistake, politely asked if I could 'leave this with them', and left with my coffee. As opposed to grovelling on the floor at everyone's feet to pick up the crisps, probably ending up spilling my coffee too, and feeling like a complete idiot.

Self talk. Sounds daft. Try it – it works.

## GOAL MINDSET #5

### TALK TO YOURSELF. IN A GOOD WAY.

#### **Take on the 'mask of the expert'**

In layman's terms, this means 'fake it till you make it', and acting as though you ARE the thing that you want to be. In the past I've found it a useful technique for situations which I'm new to: I'm literally saying to myself 'now what would so-

and-so do in this situation?’ and acting as I’d expect them to act.

Earlier in the chapter I wrote about how important it is to think positively about what you’re doing. I also said that people don’t know what’s going on in your head, they merely respond to what they hear and see you do – your behaviour.

Luckily, we can leverage this if we take on ‘the mask of the expert’.

To begin with, focus on a role model who inspires you, and watch people who appear confident. How do they behave? What do they wear? How do they carry themselves? How do they talk?

Begin to notice these things consciously, and absorb some of the techniques into your own behaviour. This is not about trying to ape someone – this is about emulating successful behaviours that you see in others.

I used to be terrified of networking situations – walking into a room of strangers and trying to strike up a conversation. To my mind there’s nothing worse (there still isn’t!).

I used to watch my boss Lesley walk into a room with her head held high, and start talking to someone, effortlessly. I started to copy her body language...make no mistake, I was just as terrified as before, but I’d think to myself ‘what would Lesley do’ and I’d just do that.

Amazingly, I had broken into the ‘behaviour attitude cycle.’ I had deliberately changed my behaviour, by taking on the ‘mask of the expert’ and copying someone else. Somehow, this changed people’s attitude towards me – they thought I actually WAS confident. This changed their behaviour in response...which began to change MY attitude. It became a virtuous cycle.

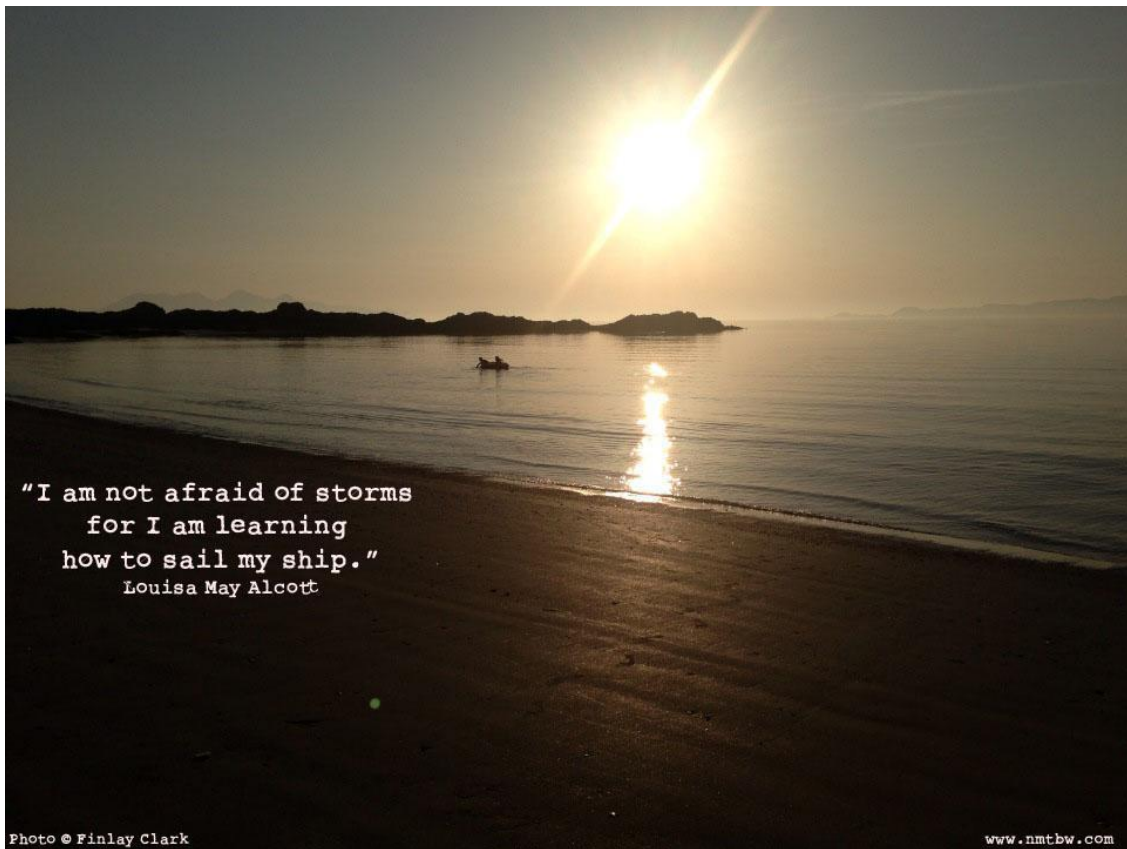
I still don’t enjoy walking into a room full of strangers and striking up a conversation...but I’ve got to a point where I can actually do it reasonably well,

appear confident, and get results.

In conclusion, ask yourself:

- ***What am I good at?***
- ***What do people appreciate me for?***
- ***How have I used these skills successfully in the past?***
- ***What am I saying to myself in my head?***
- ***Where are my negative self beliefs coming from?***
- ***Whether they're fact or fiction, are they useful?***
- ***What positive messages or mantras will I say instead of the negative things?***
- ***Who inspires me?***
- ***What can I learn from them?***
- ***AM I looking for someone else's permission to succeed....if so, WHY?***

## Secret 5) Your skills, and what you need to learn



Inevitably, striving towards a goal will mean learning new things. If it didn't, you'd already be there.

In this chapter, we'll look at how to evaluate your skills, make the most of the ones that you have, and figure out how to either develop the ones you haven't, or leverage the talent of other people to plug the gaps.

It's important to think as broadly as possible about your skills, and to ask other people for their thoughts as to where your abilities lie. Often, when it comes to our own core strengths and abilities, we are so familiar with these and they are so much part of who we are that it becomes impossible to imagine that other people can't do the same thing.

Because he'd been drawing and making things since he was a child, he thought that this was something that everybody did, and the reason they were asking him to design something for them was simply because they didn't have the time.

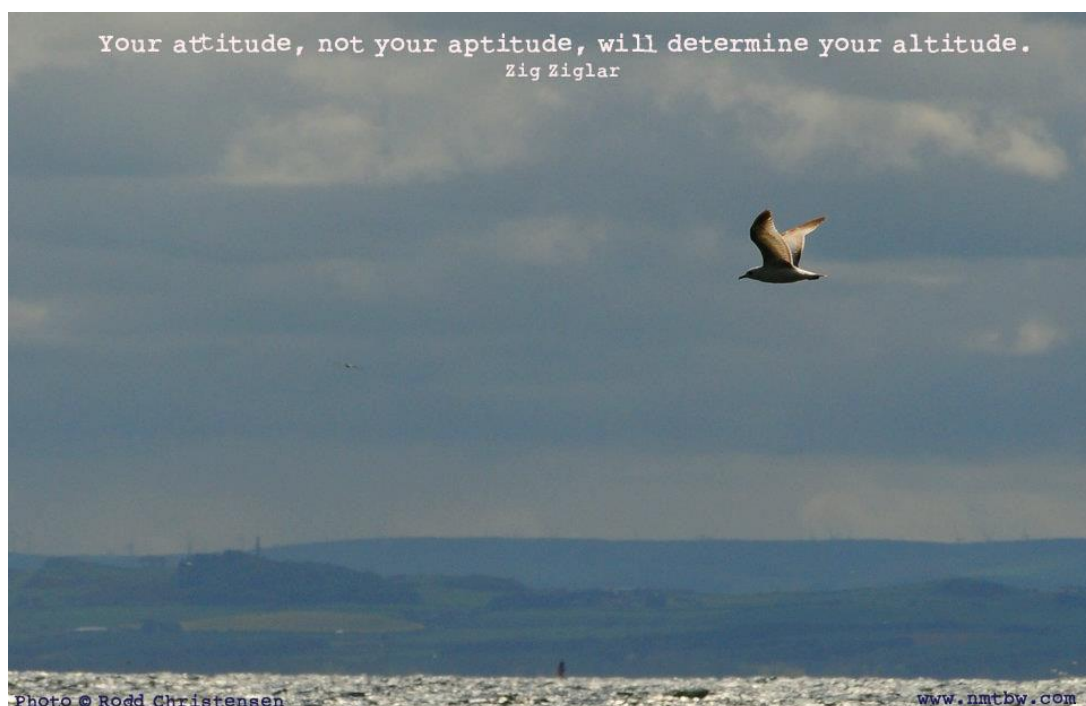
I had a similar 'wake-up' moment a year or so ago while I was talking to some of my colleagues in leadership training. One of them said that he had recently spent several hundred pounds purchasing business games that he could use in the training room with his participants.

If I need a game or activity for a training programme, I invent one myself – and I had thought that that's what all trainers do.

Think about the things that you do, how they are unique to you, and how you can leverage them as you move forward towards that goal.

Think about what other people value you for, and perhaps asks the opinions of trusted friends and family as to where your key strengths lie.

### **Your attitudes and approach**



There are innumerable quotes that point to the fact that even if you don't yet have the skills to succeed, if you have an attitude and a mindset for success, it will weigh heavily in your favour.

The behaviour cycle that we looked at in chapter 4 come into play here. CHOOSE your attitude.

In chapter 6 we'll look in more detail at maintaining momentum and motivation as you move forward.

For now, take a few moments to think about your general attitude, on a scale of 1–10.

The form consists of four horizontal attitude scales, each with a 1-10 scale and descriptive text boxes at the ends.

- Scale 1:** "I'm a negative person" (1) to "I'm a positive person" (10)
- Scale 2:** "I instinctively think of practical reasons NOT to do new things" (1) to "I'm keen to try new things" (10)
- Scale 3:** "I instinctively think how it's someone / thing else's fault" (1) to "I take responsibility for what happens" (10)
- Scale 4:** "I tend to give up easily" (1) to "I'll stick at something, no matter what" (10)

Consider the same 1–10 scale for a range of factors, such as the ones below.  
Whereabouts are you on the line with each of these?

***I take a long time to recover from setbacks...bounce back from setbacks quickly I see the worst in people...I see the best in people***

***I look for reasons why...I look for reasons why not***

***I don't like change...change happens and I get on with it***

***I base my self esteem on what others think of me...I base it on my view of myself***

...and so on. This list is far from exhaustive, but it will help you consider your attitude and approach in general – and especially to consider what triggers you to falter.

Being aware of it can help you prepare mental strategies to keep you on track.

### **Your underlying personality traits**

These relate to your personality type. There are no rights or wrongs – it's just how you are. As you move towards your goal however, it's worthwhile being very aware of who YOU are, and of who you need to be in order to achieve your goal.

There are a wide number of personality questionnaires available online, many of them free of charge so invest a little time filling some of these out.

Some will provide results which will make you think “Ah YES, that's me!”, whilst others might have you questioning whether or not you really ARE like that.

I recently completed a questionnaire whose results claimed that ‘people often comment on your sense of calm’ – and yet little could be further from the truth! In reality I'm a bit of a drama queen!

Even if you're not convinced by the results that the questionnaire gives you, this

in itself can be telling. If you know that this ISN'T what you're like, that in itself is pointing you towards what you ARE like.

Fill out several questionnaires. Reflect back on personality profilers that you might have completed at work – Myers Briggs, Hogan Assessments, Gallup Strengths Finder – there are plenty to choose from. Look for patterns. If all the questionnaires are coming up with results that say how logical and pragmatic you are...they're probably right.

Don't allow yourself to be defined by personality questionnaires, though – they are there to inform you and build your self-awareness, and that is all. They're certainly not there to provide you with excuses for **not** doing certain things or developing in specific areas. Too often I've heard people do this: "I'm a logical analyst – I don't do all that touchy feely people stuff", or conversely "I'm spontaneous and creative, so don't ask me to be organised!". Wrong. That's NOT what these questionnaires are there for.

To my mind, one of the most useful and straightforward theories in this area is that of Social Styles, developed by Merrill and Reid. They defined four styles: Driver, Analytical, Amiable, and Expressive.

As with all of these things, most people will be a mix of the different types, but will have stronger tendencies in some areas than others. There are no rights and wrongs. Whilst we may all have a tendency to value our own style above others, in fact, we can all learn valuable things from each trait. Indeed, too much of any one of these could prove to work against us:

**Drivers** are instinctive and direct. They want to get on with things. They are focused on performance and the achievement of results, and probably like to be in control.

**Analyticals** are logical and process orientated. They like to analyse data, and to be clear about the facts before moving forward. They are likely to prepare carefully and thoroughly and will opt for planning above spontaneity.

**Amiables** are a 'people person' who thrives on working with others. They are keen to promote harmony and for this reason are more likely to conform. They value loyalty, and prefer work to be relationship orientated.

**Expressives** are creative and spontaneous. They are flexible, work at a fast pace and are keen on new ideas (perhaps more than following them through). They enjoy recognition.

As a start, consider the following pairs and which is most interesting to you.

***People or things?***

***Practical or theoretical?***

***Thinker or doer?***

***Spontaneous or planned?***

***Sequential or random?***

***Positive or negative?***

***Extrovert or introvert?***

***Logical or imaginative?***

***Change or status quo?***

***Starter or finisher?***

***Disciplined or haphazard?***

What does this tell you about your personality, those of the people around you, and how you relate to them?

How might your personality traits impact your goal and how you achieve it?

A useful model here is that of Daniel Ofman:



Your core quality is your strength – in this case, the characteristics of an Amiable person, but you can substitute in whatever is most relevant to you.

Your pitfall is what happens if you have too much of that quality: perhaps in this case you're so concerned in promoting harmony and making sure that everyone else is OK that you adopt passive behaviours and let people walk all over you.

Your challenge is the area that you need to work on: in this case, learning to be more assertive.

Your allergy is what you're afraid of becoming, and it's usually the polar opposite of what you are. The harmony promoting Amiable does not want to become what they perceive as the ruthless driver who'll stop at nothing and not consider the feelings of others as they storm relentlessly towards their goal.

The Analytical's 'allergy' might be becoming the sort of person who acts spontaneously on a whim rather than weighing up all the options in advance.... Conversely, the Expressive might hate to be the sort of person who analyses everything to death before taking a single step forward.

In fact, you're not ever going to become the person you are 'allergic' to. The key point is that all too often FEAR of becoming that person prevents you from making steps forward in your development area.

For example – I was delivering a training programme in the finance sector recently. As you can imagine, there are a LOT of analytical people in that line of work, and I was trying to encourage some creative thinking, with a view to fostering innovation.

One of the participants was uncomfortable with what I was asking him to do and said “we're bankers – we don't do ‘jazz hands’”. His concern was that I was asking him to be something that he was not.

In fact (as I pointed out) no-one was asking him to suddenly become a ‘jazz hands’ performer. We WERE, however, asking him to allow himself to think a little more creatively, rather than analytically, with a view to developing a more innovative culture at that organisation. His fear of ‘jazz hands’ – which was NEVER going to happen anyway – had been preventing him from developing the

skills he actually needed in his leadership role.

### **And now back to your plans...**

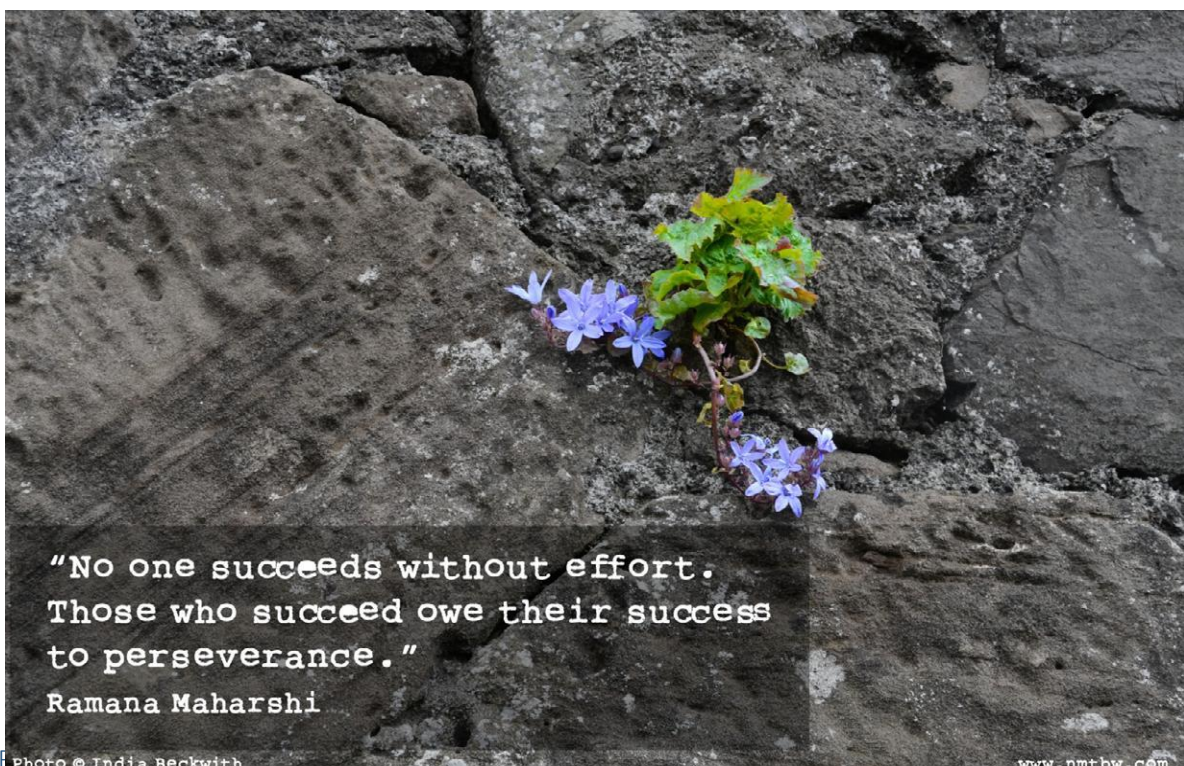
Once you've identified any development areas – and indeed any ideas that might make even more of the abilities that you already have – you'll need to work these into your plans, and develop some SMART goals.

- ***What exactly do you need to learn?***
- ***How will you know when you've developed these skills enough?***
- ***Do they involve you actually doing something, rather than things just happening?***
- ***Are these skills really relevant to your overall goal?***
- ***WHEN will you learn this?***

Once you've added what you want to learn and your development points to your overall plan, it's a matter of working the plan.

In the next chapter, we'll look at how to maintain motivation and momentum as you do so.

### **Secret 6) Maintaining momentum and motivation**



It goes almost without saying that in order to reach your goals, there are times when you're going to have to be determined, resourceful and motivated to get there.

Everyone is gung-ho and raring to go when it comes to starting their journey towards their goal. Many falter along the way. Sadly, many give up and settle for something less than they set out to achieve.

Those who DO give up are likely to rationalise this to make it feel like the right thing to do. Common rationalisations are:

- Thinking you got your goals wrong in the first place (if you've spent as long working on defining, researching and building your goals as I've suggested in this book, you won't have) -- Thinking 'it just wasn't meant to be'
  - Thinking 'my obligations to my family/spouse/kids/job make it impossible to continue' -- Thinking (subconsciously) 'I'm not sure I deserve it'

If you ever get to a point where you're seriously considering letting go of your goals, do not do so lightly.

Remember the words of Winston Churchill " we will never never never give up"...and of Chumbawumba: "I get knocked down, but I get up again. You're never gonna keep me down...."

## GOAL MINDSET # 6

### DEVELOP RESILIENCE FOR THE LONG HAUL

#### **Know why – the bedrock**

As I've already said in previous chapters, knowing WHY you want to achieve

something and thinking back to your desired outcome can provide a reason to go on when difficult challenges arise.

Revisit your goals often to remind yourself where you're going, and why. If you've gathered images of your goal, look at them often, just to remind you what you're aiming for.

### **Know your 'triggers'**

There's a well known quotation that states "it's not the mountain that will stop you – it's the stone in your shoe".

Ask yourself: what's the stone in YOUR shoe? What's the little, annoying thing that might just have you throwing your hands up in frustration and saying "Oh just FORGET the whole thing!!!"

Seriously, think about things that annoy you. If you are aware of what your triggers are, then you're more likely to recognise them when they come along, and to be able to deal with them logically, rather than make a knee-jerk, emotional response.

Recognise when you start to become angry or frustrated and ask yourself "am I going to let this thing/ person/circumstance stop me?"

If it's a person who's annoying you, you're certainly not going to let them get the better of you.

In the light of this question, a jammed printer when you're trying to produce an important report or a traffic jam on the way to a meeting becomes less significant. You're more inclined to find a way round it than to sit down and give up.

(And let's face it, do you REALLY want to be saying to yourself in years to come "I gave up because the printer jammed and I'd been having a bad day"??)

## **Coping with challenges**

### **1. Recognise the signs**

Become aware of what your body is telling you. When you face challenges and hurdles and your start to become tense, try to identify where physically you become tense.

I tend to clench my teeth: I've a friend who starts drumming her hand on the table. Other people might feel a tightness about the chest, or feel a prickly heat on their scalp.

If you can recognise these early physical symptoms of stress and bring them from the subconscious to the conscious, then you'll be able to do something about them

Starting with breathing and relaxation techniques is best. Take a few moments. At the very least, STOP, BREATHE and THINK...in that order!

### **2. Stop...breathe...THINK!**

Challenges will arise. And you can overcome them, or work round them.

Remember the belief cycle from Chapter 4? As challenges arise, choose carefully what you choose to think and what you choose to say to yourself about them. CONSCIOUSLY tell yourself something positive instead. If you catch yourself in a negative frame of mind, STOP, BREATHE and THINK...in that order!

Re-frame the negative thought into something more useful: I'm not suggesting you go from "I just can't get to grips with this issue!" to forcing yourself to think "hurray – I'm an expert in this". If it's an unconvincing lie, then there really is no point.

However, you COULD re-frame this negative thought into something more useful like “I’m going to learn how to do this” or “I can figure this out” or “I’m going to get through this”.

My personal favourite is to consciously ask myself: “Is it rocket science? No. Is it brain surgery? No. Then how hard can it be?!”

Ask yourself:

***WHY do I want to achieve this goal?***

***What will it mean to me when I get there?***

***What really motivates me?***

***Who really motivates me?***

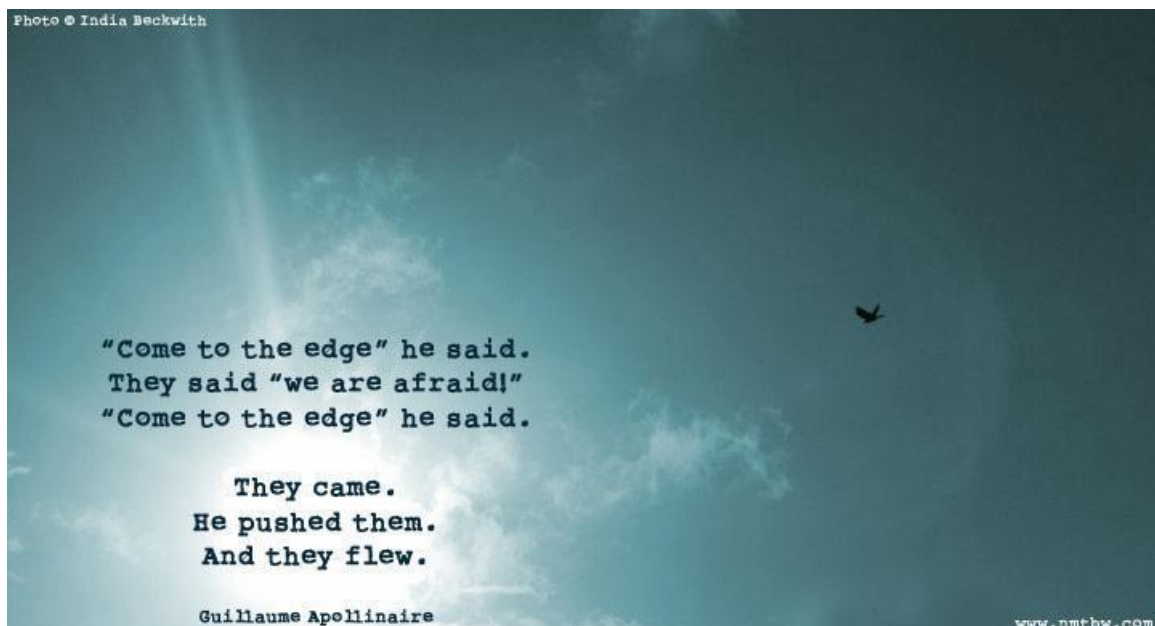
***In the past, what’s caused me to give up?***

***Who drags me down?***

***What actions can I take to motivate myself?***

***How will I aim to respond if things don’t go the way I planned?***

Secret 7) Go for it!



With this short chapter – more of a post-script really – the clue really is in the title. I'm sure you've heard it said that if you fail to plan, you plan to fail...and that's been the reason behind this e-book.

By now, you'll have a notebook full of goals, ideas, plans, observations of your strengths and development areas, a note of people whose help you could use, and lists of tasks to accomplish.

You'll have set yourself SMART goals that relate directly to your goals, and which are the blueprint that will enable you to achieve them.

And of course, you've got this e-book and the questions in it to refocus at any point as you journey towards your goal.

I'm already on my journey towards my life and career goals. I'd be delighted if you'd join me, right now. There's nothing stopping you...is there?

Ask yourself:

- ***What will I do first?***
- ***When?***
- ***How will I track my progress?***
- ***...what will I do...NOW??***
- **Don't wait any longer – it's time to take action!**

## Recommended Resources



[\(Click Here For Access\)](#)

How do the world's wealthiest, happiest and most privileged people manage to get an "unfair advantage" over everyone else on every deal, every competition... and everything else they set their minds to?

Until now, we could only speculate... But a brave Harvard psychologist just blew the whistle to reveal their secret, in every mind-blowing detail!

Unveil the secret in the Amazing You ultimate bundle kit!



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It's simple, fun, easy... and guaranteed to work for you!

The moment you flip The Instant Switch, you feel confident, inspired and in control for maybe the first time in your life.

And before you know it, everything that was once out of reach... now falls easily into your lap.

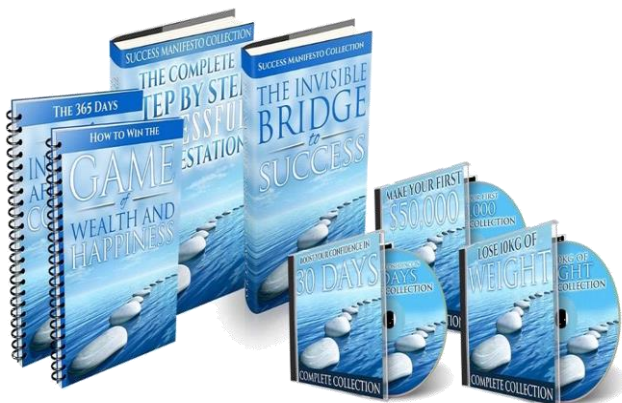
This is one serious switch you MUST flip if you're serious about achieving financial abundance!



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The Manifestation Miracle bundle will literally force the universe to give you all the tools that you need to create financial, emotional and spiritual abundance... Without hard work or struggle.

You'll achieve your wealth, health, relationships, and other personal goals, and life will all of a sudden get super exciting, you'll find it hard to sleep as you'll be so excited about each new day to come!



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What you're going through right now, all the things that at the end of the day just don't come out your way, no matter how much you struggle...

None of this is your fault.

It's not because you DID something wrong.

It's not because you are not determined enough.

But it has a lot to do with a SNEAKY brain mechanism that makes you attract exactly what you EXPECT. Discover that mechanism in this Ultimate Success Manifesto!



To Your Ultimate Success  
Your Prosperity Coach  
[Think-Grow-Prosper.com](http://Think-Grow-Prosper.com)