

Chapter One

HAVE A CLEAR, WELL-DEFINED GOAL

Earl Nightingale put it simply: “People with goals succeed because they know where they’re going.” It all starts with the simple, yet very difficult step of setting a goal or knowing what you want. Simple, because you are defining one purpose for your life; difficult, because you have to decide what that purpose is. Napoleon Hill, author of the classic *Think and Grow Rich* said in the book he wrote with W. Clement Stone, *Success Through a Positive Mental Attitude*, “The starting point of all achievement is definiteness of purpose with a positive mental attitude. Remember this statement and ask yourself, what is my goal? What do I really want?”

For many years, I have been a pastor, life coach, and trainer; and during that time, I have heard many life questions with which people struggle. I would say that the most common question I have heard from people in all walks of life and from all socioeconomic backgrounds is: “*What am I supposed to do with my life?*” I believe that each of us was created with a purpose, a task to perform. Each

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of us is part of a great master plan for humankind and no one is here to be useless. God had no quota to fill, so each of us is here by design. I believe that most of us never seek out our purpose, and therefore never fulfill it.

Each person has the potential to be good and productive, yet I also know that many people never begin to tap their true potential. It is human nature to surrender to the lowest common denominator. We must purposely strive to move ahead and achieve, like a fish that fights to go upstream rather than float downstream with the rest. Being the hopeful person that I am, I believe that many will strive to be the best they can be. The world is filled with good and caring people who are positive about life and believe they can do great things. I call them **Success-Minded People**.

When asked, "*What am I to do with my life?*" my answer is always the same: "*What do you want to do?*" I believe that there is placed in us not only a purpose but also a desire to fulfill that purpose. This is the dream. Look deep within yourself, and what do you see? What is it that you have always had a desire to do? When you relax and allow your mind to wander, what is it that you keep coming back to? I believe that dream you hold is your purpose. That dream is the very thing that will complete and fulfill you.

What Do You Want?

Set aside about three hours that you can have to yourself, alone and undisturbed. Schedule it in your calendar if you must, but find the time and make sure you do not allow anything else to creep in. This focused, alone time is vital to your success in setting a clear goal. You need the time to think and to focus.

Allow your thoughts to go with the question "*What am I created to do?*" Do not think about what you will make for dinner or all that you need to do at work. Keep focused on your dream. Lis-

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ten to what your heart is telling you. The dream is there and it will speak to you if you take some time to listen.

Some may find this easy. You have known your dream for years but you never really thought you could go for it. You needed someone to give you permission to achieve your heart's desire. I give you that permission. Some of you are already doing what you love and want to go deeper and be better. Hold on to that, and do not change just to change. If you are already pursuing your dream, this will help you make it clear.

There will be some who have a million things going around in their heads and can't identify their purpose because of it. Here is an exercise that can help. List all the ideas in your head—everything you want to do or think you are called to do. Make one big list. Next, go through and cross off anything that you know just sounds like fun but is not something you would do. Next, go through and cross off the things for which you have no talent or skill. Now, with what is left, ask yourself these three questions:

1. Have I wanted to do this for most of my life?
2. Am I willing to pay any price in order to achieve this?
3. Is there something that I want to do even more than this?

Be sure to cross off anything on your list that does not fit the questions. What you have left will be your answer. If there is nothing left on the list, go back and think some more.

There is something very important you must know: Your dream will always be impossible. That's right; it will be too big for you to do. In fact, if it's not impossible, it is too small. Think of all the great things we have today that were once thought to be impossible. We must see that all things are possible to those who believe. I love the words of Robert H. Schuller, who said, "It is difficult to

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say what is impossible, for the dream of yesterday is the hope of today and the reality of tomorrow.” We will talk more about this later, but I do not want you bypassing your dream just because it’s too big. You too can agree with Walt Disney who said, “It’s kind of fun to do the impossible.”

Once you have discovered your dream, this will be your main goal. Not your only goal, but the one to which all others will lead. Every goal you set should move you toward this goal. If they do not, even if they are good goals, put them aside and focus on your main goal. We will make this clearer later on in *the seven areas of goal setting*.

Right now, while you are still in your alone time, describe your dream in detail. Write it down. When this dream is achieved, what will it look like? Who will you be? What things will you have? How will it feel, smell, taste, and look? Get as much detail as you can. As you write this out, feel it, allow your emotions to be involved. See it so clearly that you will know it the moment you come across it. Do not worry about how it looks on paper, how long it is, or if you spell everything right. This is for you and you alone. The one thing you must be sure of is that it is recorded in detail.

Do not skip this exercise thinking you have it all in your head. The most common goal-setting mistake people make is *not writing it down*. By writing it down you make it real and you give your dream substance. Noted goal-setting expert Brian Tracy said, “People with clear, written goals accomplish far more in a shorter period of time than people without them ever could imagine.”

Once you have written down your dream in detail, read it to yourself aloud. Now you can go back and edit it, make it clearer, remove things that don’t work and end up with something you can read and feel every day. You have completed the first element of goal setting. Be happy, relax, and move on to part two.

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YOUR ACTION STEPS

1. Write down what you really want to do.

2. Write in detail your main goal or dream.

3. Whom do you need to become and what changes do you need to make in your life to achieve this dream?

End Result: Have a clearly defined, written goal you can hold in your hand and read.