

PODCAST #1: SETTING GOALS

Hello and welcome.

Have you ever dreamed of climbing Mt. Everest? How about buying that second home in the mountains? Maybe you just wish you could get your to-do list under control or even find the time to actually think about what you want to accomplish. We all have goals - - for work, for home, for family, for the future. The beginning of a new year is the perfect time to make a plan to achieve them.

This week we are talking about how to set realistic, meaningful goals for your business and your life. I will be giving you some ideas for how to set aside time to plan, how to focus on what is most important and how to ask yourself ten simple questions that could dramatically change your results, as they did for me when I first tried the method I will share with you.

First, let's look at this whole goal setting thing. Do goals really work? Research shows that setting goals takes people to new heights, both personally and professionally. In fact, in a study conducted among business school grads ten or more years after getting their MBA, those with some sense of their goals were earning three times more than those without goals and those with written goals earned ten times more than those with no goals at all. A compelling argument for setting goals, wouldn't you say? Learning how to set and achieve goals has dramatically changed not only my own results but that simple process is the foundation for the success my clients achieve as well, so I know what a difference they can make for you.

OK. Let's get started. In my experience, setting time aside to set your goals may be the biggest obstacle of all. Maybe you tried to take an hour or so out of your day at the first of the year for goal setting. That day you ended up going to a breakfast meeting, then moved on to a meeting with a client, had lunch with your partners or the rest of the executive team, had a difficult conversation with one of your direct reports, stopped by a client's open house, fought traffic and dodged road work all the way home. Whew! Then your kids met you at the door, ready to play. Now you are exhausted with not much left for planning the next year of your life. You may even resent that you always seem to be running from one meeting to the next, that you never get to sit back and reflect on what is most important right now, much less for the next twelve months. But that failure to plan, to keep the promises you make to yourself, has bigger consequences. Over time it erodes your confidence in your ability to make the changes that will produce the results you want. As Jinny Ditzler describes it in her book, "Your Best Year Yet", "We come to believe that we're not capable of making the changes that matter, and therefore we stop setting goals and planning ahead in any meaningful way. And the life we really want for

ourselves drifts out of reach.” OUCH! That’s exactly the situation I found myself in a few years ago.

An online search will turn up literally hundreds of goal setting programs, methods and techniques but I found that Jinny Ditzler’s “Best Year Yet” program with its straightforward how-to goal setting strategy has been the most useful and effective for me and the people I work with. What started as Jinny’s own personal goal setting system has gone on to become a standard for individuals and corporations world-wide. I think it is the sheer simplicity of it that is what makes it so effective. So, here goes . . .

BYY’s process starts with a one-time annual three-hour commitment you make to your self to answer just ten simple questions. Of course, you will have to make and keep that commitment to yourself for Jinny’s system to work. I find that carving out three hours on a Saturday morning with a definite purpose in mind makes the commitment pill go down a lot easier. Choose a day and time that works for you, perhaps incorporating it into something you already want to do like taking a break at your local bookstore, library or café. Next, you’ll be asking yourself ten questions. I’ll give you those questions here but before I do, if you’re driving, you don’t need to write them down now. You’ll find a transcript of this and all my podcasts on the Business To Business website.

Ready? Here goes . . .

The first four questions ask you to look back at last year. I’ll give you a few seconds to reflect before moving on to the next one. When you think about last year,

- What did you accomplish?
- What were your biggest disappointments?
- What did you learn?
- How do you limit yourself, and how can you stop?

Did one or more of those strike a nerve?

The next four questions ask you to take a look at yourself in terms of what is most important to you in the various roles you play in life based on your personal values. Again, I’ll give you a few seconds to reflect before moving on to the next question.

We all have values that guide us. Some examples of values include integrity, beauty, family, harmony, drive, accomplishment. When you think about what is most important to you,

- What are your personal values?

We all play many roles. Looking at those roles is a valuable way of integrating all the areas of your life while placing yourself and your personal values at the center. Some examples of roles you might play are business owner, attorney, husband, wife, manager, son, daughter, subordinate, team captain, volunteer and so forth.

- What roles do you play in your life?
- List all the roles you play and then narrow that list down to a maximum of eight. Write out no more than three goals for each of those roles.

Now drill down even further.

- Which role is your major focus for this year?

Now let's move into goal setting.

- What are your goals for this year?
- Write down all that you want to achieve this year.

Drilling down to what is most important will help you stay focused.

- What are your top ten goals for this year?

The next step is not a question, but an exercise. Once you have your ten goals selected, imagine yourself in a year's time having achieved each of them.

- How will you feel?
- How thrilled will you be with what you have accomplished?

But you're not finished yet. The final step in the goal setting process is the reality check. Ask yourself:

- Is meeting each of my goals possible?
- Can I do it?

Then check your list again to be sure that each role you play has a least one goal. This will assure your plan leads you to a more balanced life and lifestyle.

And finally, the kicker question . . . Question 10:

- How can you make sure you achieve your goals?

No need to think about that now. That's what we'll be talking about next time. Finally, let's wrap up what we talked about today.

1. People that set goals achieve more than those that don't.
2. Written goals with an action plan produce the best results.
3. Taking time to plan is often the biggest challenge.
4. The rewards for goal setting go far beyond the goals themselves. You will feel more confident and capable when you take the time to plan.
5. Choose a goal setting system that works for you. My favorite is the Best Year Yet. You can learn more about it online at bestyearyet.com
6. As important as setting goals is, planning how you will achieve them is what drives results. We'll talk about that next time.

As time-management guru Alan Lakein says, "Planning is bringing the future into the present so you can do something about it."

Until next time, I'm Robin Hensley, Raising the Bar, www.raisingthebar.com.

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