



Action Blueprint

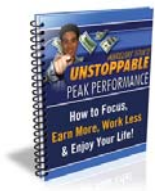
Step-by-Step Goal Goal Mastery

Plain & Simple...

If You Do Nothing... Expect Nothing

BLUEPRINT SERIES

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Dear There!

Have you ever wanted to accomplish something but been unsure how to get started? Or maybe you set a goal and then couldn't figure out the right actions to take? Or you set the goal, started taking action – and nothing happened. No results – zip, nada, zero.

Sometimes goal-setting is like trying to find your way out of a very large (and very confusing) maze. You know where you are, and you know where you want to be, but the area between “here” and “there” is shrouded in mystery and fear.

Well my friend, your fear and confusion are about to pack their bags and head off into the sunset because I'm going to take you by the hand and show you **STEP-BY-STEP** how to achieve any goal. That's right – **ANY GOAL!**

You see, goal achievement is very much a process of moving from one place to another, just like the above maze concept described. If you don't know the route that leads to your destination, you'll just keep wandering around in circles.

Ah, but what if someone gave you a map, a step-by-step guide that told you exactly where to turn, which route to take, and led you easily to the end of the maze? I bet you'd have no trouble succeeding then!

The problem is that a map written by someone else can only help you so much. Unless the creator of the map lives inside your head and knows your unique position in life, your skills, your strengths, your weaknesses - any guide they provide will be vague and general; untargeted to what YOU want to accomplish.

There is a solution, however. What if you could write your OWN map? What if you had a guide that could take you through a simple, step-by-step process that reveals the most focused action steps, how to prepare for dealing with obstacles, how to objectively evaluate your progress and change direction when necessary as you go along?

This **Step-by-Step Action Guide** can give you that, and more. Come along with me as I guide you in developing your own focused, targeted, personalized map – a map that will lead you wherever you choose to go!

Are you ready? Let's begin.

Step One: Specify the Goal

In order to achieve any goal, you have to first know **exactly** what you're trying to achieve. And you must be SPECIFIC!

Most of us make the mistake of being vague with our goals. We say things like:

I want to lose weight.

I want more money.

I want a better job.

I want to be happy.

That's like going into a restaurant and telling the waitress, "I want something to eat."

You'll need to be a LOT more specific when you set your goals. Each goal you set should include this information:

- ❖ What
- ❖ Where
- ❖ How
- ❖ Whom (if others are involved or affected)
- ❖ When
- ❖ Why

Here is brief explanation of each point:

What: this should identify the "meat" of your goal. What you want to accomplish.

Where: location, if applicable (like getting a job in your local area or moving to a new area).

How: you may have a preference as to "how" events will unfold (this may not always be within your control, but a having a general expectation is good).

Whom: if your goals involve others, you'll want to highlight your expectations.

When: a general timeline for the fulfillment of your goals.

Why: your reasons for wanting to achieve your goals. Be very specific on these reasons and try to focus on the BENEFITS (the positive gains), not just the avoidance of what you DON'T want. Instead of saying, "I don't want to be broke anymore" you should word it more positively: "I want to have an abundant flow of money."

WARNING: Do NOT proceed with the rest of the steps unless you are very clear about what you want to accomplish. Clarity is vital! A vague idea will not cut it; you'll just end up wasting your time. Not only will you be confused about how to accomplish such a vague goal, you also won't be able to generate the level of motivation and tenacity needed to see it through.

If you're having trouble figuring out what you want, take the time to find out.

Think about every area of your life and ask yourself what you would change if you could. What would you ADD to your life, and what would you TAKE AWAY? This line of thought will lead you in the right direction for creating better circumstances.

Once you are crystal clear about what you want to accomplish, put it into a neat, concise statement:

- ❖ I want to achieve _____ [what]
- ❖ at _____ [where]
- ❖ by _____ [how]
- ❖ by _____ [timeline]
- ❖ with _____ [other persons]
- ❖ because _____ [why].

That looks a little confusing with all the blanks; let's use a couple of examples:

I want to obtain a job as a bank teller earning \$30,000 per year in my city of Arlington by July 30, 2007, by showing my potential and drive to the manager(s) and convincing them I am the best person for the job. I want this job because I am passionate about finance and I know I would enjoy a job in banking, while earning a good salary and providing for my family.

Here's another:

I want to lose 25 pounds by reducing my consumption of junk food, eating more fruit and veggies and starting a simple workout routine that is easy to stick with. I want to lose an average of 2 pounds per week for approximately 12 weeks. I want to do this because I will gain a better quality of life, increased energy and a sense of pride about my body.

Notice that these examples are very DETAILED; follow the same format and write your statement here:

Step Two: Breaking It Down

Every large goal is comprised of smaller parts. Sometimes these smaller parts are different facets of a bigger goal, and sometimes they are simply identical, measured increments of the big goal.

Here's what I mean:

A goal like earning a college degree will have many different facets that make up the final goal, such as researching and applying to degree programs, taking and completing the required credit courses in your chosen field, completing a research project or thesis, and finally graduation. These activities are all components of the larger goal.

A goal of losing 25 pounds will involve setting clear action steps such as eating less junk food, eating more veggies and fruit, exercising regularly – and simply repeating these SAME steps over and over until you reach your goal weight.

There are exceptions of course, depending on the specifics of your goal. How many parts each goal has will vary widely depending on the goal itself, as well as the amount of legwork and preparation you have already done.

However, aim for a minimum of 5 smaller parts of your goal. If you can think of more, go ahead and add them. But start with at least five, and be as detailed as you can.

Step Three: Identify Clear Action Steps

Now that you've specified your goal and broken it down into smaller components, it's time to think about the action steps that will move you toward the finish line.

Give your goal some thought, and consider which key activities would create the results you desire. Your answers will depend on the specifics of your goal, the type of goal, and what you need to do to get there.

There are typically two types of action steps. The first kind pertains to planning and preparation. This would include activities like research and education – laying the groundwork for the bigger action steps you'll take later. Obviously, if you haven't done this part yet your focus should be on this type of activity.

A word of warning: don't let yourself get stuck in the planning and preparation stage! You may feel inclined to do more and more and more research because you don't feel "ready" to take bolder action. Some people get stuck in this phase for years. Eventually you will have to concede that you've researched and planned enough and it's time to move forward. You will HAVE to move forward if you want to succeed.

If you've already laid the groundwork, it's important to focus on **PRODUCTIVE** actions; the actions that will carry the most power, the actions that will inspire the greatest results.

Additionally, you should identify action steps to be taken daily, weekly, and monthly.

Remember, goal achievement is a **process** – you can't take action just once and hope it works. Most goals will require consistent effort, specific action steps taken day after day, week after week, month after month! Identify the things you can do on a regular basis to keep your plans moving forward.

Daily actions are usually small to moderate in scale but hold the power of duplication and accumulation. The more you do them, the more effective they become.

Weekly actions are usually a bit larger in scale, take a little longer to complete, and involve an element of risk. They are usually the most proactive in the sense that they help you face your fears and push forward determinedly. They would include things like releasing your creations to the public, or increasing your business marketing efforts by attracting attention to your products or services. These bolder actions usually bring about bigger results.

Monthly actions are things you do to keep yourself on track, like evaluate your progress and readjust your plans if necessary. Monthly actions can also include extraneous activities not vital to your goal except in peripheral ways. This can include networking, expanding your market reach, working on your personal development, reading, learning, researching, etc.

For step three you'll want to list the most productive actions you can determine should be done daily, weekly and monthly.

It's important to note that you are not setting a schedule with this exercise; you are simply identifying key, productive action steps that you can take on a daily, weekly and monthly basis.

Don't get caught up wondering how you can find time to do all this, or whether a certain task should be done daily or weekly. Simply put down a **general** idea of the most productive actions that you can think of. You can always add to this list or change it later on.

Daily Action Steps

These should be on the smaller side, easily attainable yet effective and focused:

Weekly Action Steps

These should be larger steps that involve an element of risk or aggressive forward movement:

Monthly Action Steps

These should be extraneous steps like evaluating your progress, networking, etc.:

[illegible]

Step Four: Set a General Timeline for Completion

This part of the process has the potential to fuel your efforts, or stall them completely.

On one hand, setting a deadline can be incredibly motivating. It can urge you to stay focused, push yourself to work harder and smarter, and be proactive in overcoming obstacles.

On the other hand, a deadline can cause immense impatience and frustration if things don't move along at the pace you expect.

Pay close attention to the last word I just said - **EXPECT**.

Our expectations get us into trouble more often than we'd like to admit. If we expect something to go well and it doesn't, we feel angry and disappointed. If we expect results by a certain date and it doesn't happen due to circumstances beyond our control, we can lose all hope and give up because it seems futile to continue. I'm sure you've experienced situations like these before – most of us have.

While it's favorable to set a **GENERAL TIMELINE** for completion of your goal, you would be wise to **DETACH EMOTIONALLY** from any firm expectations.

What do I mean by “detach emotionally”? I mean don't get **hooked** on the idea of certain things happening at a certain time – especially if those “things” are largely out of your control.

Instead, focus more on your actions than the results. Set a timeline for completion of each of your **ACTION STEPS**, rather than the results you see from your action steps.

Also, be sure not to set unrealistic timelines. Don't create more stress for yourself by taking on a massive project and expecting to complete it within a few days. Moderate, consistent actions will be more effective than getting burned out.

for step four you'll want to list your key action steps with an estimation of the time needed to complete them and then...

Action Steps:	Approximate date for completion:

You'll set a **GENERAL TIMELINE** for completion of your ultimate goal:

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Step Five: Plan B

If you've ever come to a screeching halt with a goal because you encountered a big obstacle, you know the importance of having an alternate plan. As much as we'd like to hope that things will always go according to plan, we know better.

Having a “Plan B” for every step of your journey can save you a lot of time, not to mention frustration! Imagine the difference between feeling immobilized because your path is blocked, or calmly switching gears and moving to Plan B. It can make or break the fulfillment of your goals.

It's easy to forget that there are numerous paths leading to any desired outcome. While we might be attracted to one path over another, ultimately the outcome is the most important thing, right?

In order to ensure stable momentum, take a few minutes to prepare an alternate plan for each part of your goal. Focus not only on alternate paths to the final goal, but alternate activities for each of your action steps.

Here is a simple way to identify viable alternate activities: as you review each step, consider the question, “What would I do if this step or activity was not possible?”

Examples:

If I didn't get accepted into a degree program, I could: enroll in non-credit courses to expand my knowledge of the topic, seek an entry-level position at a related organization, or explore volunteer opportunities at related organizations.

If my weight loss stalls for more than 4 weeks, I could: increase the intensity of my workouts, eliminate refined foods from my diet, or increase my water consumption.

For Step five list your key action steps and activities and identify some alternate plans:

[illegible]

Step Six: The Right Mind-Set for Success

By now you should have a clear, detailed plan for achieving your goal. You should know exactly what you want, have a solid idea of the smaller components that make up your larger goal, have a list of specific action steps to take, and a general expectation about both the completion of your activities and the culmination of your goal. You've even done your homework and formed alternate plans so you won't get sidetracked if something goes wrong.

How could you fail with a plan like this? You couldn't . . . unless your own thoughts begin to work against you.

There are three key things to keep in mind if you want to stay focused and motivated.

Commit to your goal.

You must be willing to keep working toward what you want no matter how difficult it may seem at times. You must be willing to ignore your inner critic (or actual criticism from people in your life) and push on in spite of any negative comments. You must make a strong promise to yourself that you will NOT give up, no matter what obstacles you encounter.

You must make the achievement of your goal the most important thing in your life. Without this level of commitment, you will find it very easy to slack off, get distracted, or give up altogether.

Take action!

The most detailed and effective plan is worthless if you never put it into action. Make a promise to yourself that you will take action immediately and consistently, despite any feelings of fear or hesitation.

Remember that your results are dependent upon the intensity and frequency of your actions. If you want big results, take big actions. If you don't mind smaller results while you're building up your confidence, then start with smaller actions. But ACT.

Let go.

Don't get mired in frustration about things you can't control. Don't worry about seeing results right away. Don't try to force things to happen in response to your efforts - just focus on taking action, following your plan and keeping your eyes on the prize.

Focus more on enhancing your own performance, stretching your limits and refining your approach. Detach from unrealistic expectations and instead keep your attention squarely on what you CAN control, which is your own actions.

Step Seven: Evaluate Your Progress

You might think that evaluation is pointless because you'll either see results or you won't. Not necessarily! Remember that goal achievement is a process and nothing is carved in stone.

Sometimes you'll notice small results, but not as much as you'd like so you need to tweak your plans slightly to adjust the outcome. Or you'll figure out that changing your approach on one simple thing will explode your results like crazy!

Evaluation is a worthwhile activity because it can help keep you honest about your efforts, it can reveal holes in your plans and it can inspire you to keep going when you notice even moderate results happening.

There are two types of evaluation you should do periodically. The first involves frequent evaluation of your daily actions.

Every one to two weeks, take a few moments to answer these questions:

- ❖ Are you sticking to your original plans?
- ❖ Could you improve upon your actions in any way?
- ❖ Have you had to move to Plan B at any time?
- ❖ If so, how did that work out for you?
- ❖ Can you see room for improvement in your original plans?
- ❖ Have you made any modifications?
- ❖ If so, are they working better for you?
- ❖ Have your results met your expectations so far?
- ❖ If not, why not?
- ❖ What can you do to improve your results?

The other type of evaluation can be done monthly or even quarterly; and it should focus more on your long-term progress rather than your daily actions.

Answer these questions:

- ❖ Are your plans moving you in the right direction?
- ❖ Is your ultimate goal still the same, or are you considering a change in direction?
- ❖ Can you think of any ways to improve upon your original plans?
- ❖ What are you learning about yourself through this process?
- ❖ Have you developed a stronger appreciation of any aspect of yourself?
- ❖ Which of your qualities and habits still need improvement?
- ❖ How can you begin to expand your potential and stretch your limits?
- ❖ Are you beginning to think of even larger goals you can achieve now?

Step Eight: Repeat, Repeat, Repeat!

Do you see now that every goal has a clearly defined route leading to its realization? Do you see how with a fair amount of planning and foresight, you can easily achieve any objective?

No matter what goals you set now or in the future, you have an easy-to-duplicate formula that will help you achieve them. Let's recap the steps:

- ❖ Specify the goal.
- ❖ Break it down into smaller parts.
- ❖ Set clear action steps.
- ❖ Set a general timeline for completion.
- ❖ Form a "Plan B" for each action step.
- ❖ Train your mind to commit, take action, and let go.
- ❖ Evaluate your progress frequently.
- ❖ Repeat, repeat, repeat.

Once you become comfortable with these steps, goal achievement will become a simple and pleasant experience for you – no matter WHAT you want to attain.

You'll know how to conquer your inner demons (like fear and confusion), face challenges head-on, and move quickly and precisely to your chosen outcome.

Through the process of choosing your own outcomes and making it your mission to achieve them, you will strengthen and empower yourself more than you would believe is possible.

You'll realize that your quality of life is completely within your control, and you need only follow a specific route to reach any destination you desire.

Then simply repeat the process to get to your next destination, and the next, and the next!

It's as easy as lacing up your walking shoes and taking a stroll around the neighborhood. You may encounter some hills and valleys, perhaps a bit of smog or an aggressive dog or two, but just keep walking and you'll get where you want to go.