

The Why, the What, and the How....

September is the second biggest goal-setting time in the year. The guests fade away, the days become shorter and cooler, the kids go back to school, and I actually feel like I could have my life back. So, what am I going to do about it? Like millions of others I could just let life take over and move me with its relentless flow. Two visions, however, prevent me from doing this.

The first vision is of me sitting on my front step as an old lady, thinking about the things I wanted to do or even try, but for some reason, I never had the courage. (That is the truth-the excuse I really like to use is I was too busy doing laundry or going to accordion festivals.)

The second vision has to do with an illegal activity I engage in regularly (all you readers who like rules, skip over this part). My goal again is to be an old lady in good enough shape that I can jay-walk and safely make it across the street. Indeed, I want to be able to run across the street just as the walk sign has changed (especially at Ellis and Harvey) and make it across before the traffic starts to flow. If any of you have tried to cross at this intersection, you will know that this is truly something to aspire to!

What this all translates to, however, is there are certain things I need to do now as a “very young!” middle-aged person to make these visions come true. Thus, it is time for Goal Setting, or as I prefer to call it, Goal Getting.

For me, these visions are my “**big why**”, my rationale, my reasons for getting up at 5:30 in the morning to go for a run and do all the other challenging tasks I set for myself. What are your big whys? What is important enough to you to propel you into action in ways you previously thought impossible? Is it a desire to test yourself? To complete an unfinished goal? Before you set any goal, you need to know why you are wanting it. The bigger the why, the more motivated you will be to go beyond goal setting to **goal getting**.

Take some time. Think about this before you move on to the next steps of actually determining **the whats**. Determining the whats is done by evaluating all aspects of our lives-think about relationships, career, self-development, finances, well-being. I usually write a separate page for each of these categories.

Often the whats seem overwhelming, but if, over the course of a year, you just improved in all five areas of goal getting by just 10%, there could be significant change in your life! One of my goals is to be more connected with my siblings, that translates into calling them once a month. Maybe my husband and I really could go on a weekly date. I could take one more course to learn about myself and start a “Pay me first” bank account. I could take the dogs for a walk three times a week with a friend.

To get my **how** organized, I decided that this year I needed a theme. My theme is going to be “What gets measured, gets done.” I know this works. I have run two half-marathons and trained for a third (and then got pneumonia) and I did it by carefully planning **the how**. So, I have often asked myself, why am I not as effective at the “how” of the rest of my life? I decided that I really did not care what the answer to that question was; it may be deeper than I want to go! Regardless, I have recognized this as a weakness and I am going to change it. “What gets measured gets done.”

What could be the theme for your year? “The walk of a thousand miles begins with the first step?” That was my theme for my first year out of university. “Be like a dog with a rag (persistent)” That was my theme for my first year in commissioned sales. Choose something that resonates with who you are and where you are right now.

All of these small changes add up over the years to having a wonderful fulfilling life. So, as September approaches, take some time during the colourful fall days and think about the why, the what, and the how of your life. “If it is to be, it is up to me.”

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