



**50 WAYS TO BREAK THROUGH BARRIERS
AND ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS**

From the Reaching Your Goals Series

By Jeff Davidson

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Dedicated to everyone who lives anywhere and wants to reach their goals!

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In the pursuit of any challenging goal, you are likely to face a fair share of second guessing and self-doubt. Despite how much you've planned your pathway to success, goals can quickly become unreachable as your situation changes over time. Lacking the proper resources can result in the goal being unreachable. If you set goals well, it would seem that operating with less than sufficient resources is a situation that doesn't come up often, so why worry about it?

The answer is that the best laid plans of mice and men often go awry -- sometimes all the planning in the world can't take into account unforeseen barriers to your progress. Even the most talented goal achievers experience doubt and concern, smooth pacing interspersed with a rocky road. You know this on many levels. In short, things change.

In pursuit of any one of your goals, you set things in motion. The potential for two or more of them rubbing up against each other is all but guaranteed. Hence, over time, all goals, but particularly maintenance goals, need continual monitoring. Perhaps you can refine your systems to the point where the monitoring is at greater intervals and requires less time and effort. Here's how to sail right on through to completion of your goals.

The Best Laid Plans...

Consider the following challenges:

* You're in charge of digging a tunnel through a mountain as part of a state's highway system. Halfway through you encounter more rock than the seismic engineers concluded that you'd find. This is going to throw the project off by at least two weeks, and put you at least \$350,000 over budget.

* You are the directing manager for the local symphony orchestra. Two days before the big concert, the whole woodwind section comes down with the flu -- apparently they passed it to one another. The concert hall has been rented out, the tickets have been printed and distributed, and the show must go on.

* You're in charge of producing a technical manual for a big client which is due in eleven days. Your own system crashes and will put you behind at least a day and a half.

These situations and about two and a half million others you could probably cite occur so frequently in pursuit of your goals, that you might as well not be surprised.

Obstacles to What People Want

Here's what Americans cited as the obstacles they fear will prevent from reaching their goals:

Catastrophic illness in family	41%
Environmental problems	39%
Cost of education	34%
War	34%
Rising taxes	33%
Stock market collapse	28%
Pension cuts	27%
Inflation	26%
Recession	20%
Loss of job	19%
Poor investment decisions	19%
Cuts in employee benefits	19%
Inability to sell house	16%
Substance abuse in family	12%
Personal debt problems	10%
Divorce	10%
Natural disasters	8%

Source: *Money and the Gallup Organization*

Minimizing the Shortfalls

While it's impractical to have contingency plans for every aspect of every project in pursuit of every goal that you seek to reach, there are some common denominator behaviors and strategies worth pursuing so that you minimize the incidents of finding yourself having less resources than is required to achieve the desired ends.

Keep the End in Sight

Many people feel if they don't enjoy the means, then the ends can't be worthwhile, so they stop short of reaching their goals. But what worthwhile goal doesn't have its share of drudgery in the quest for its attainment? The key is to revel in the drudgery.

Think back to an activity that you experienced over a prolonged period of time, such as attending and finally graduating from college. While you were in college, it seemed as if you would never get to the final semester and the final exam in the final course. Then one day it came, and poof, you were out. Aren't you thrilled to be out of college today with a degree (if that was the path you chose)? I'm betting strongly the answer is yes.

Whatever blood, sweat and tears you braved through on the path to what you wanted, revel in them, for they were yours. If you can't see that now, trust that one day you will.

Your Energy Will Be Uneven

Hardly anyone can maintain a constant pace in pursuit of anything. That's easily understood. What if you don't enjoy the particular task at the moment, i.e., you're going through the drudgery just described above? If so, notice your energy level:

- * How do you feel about your intended outcome?
- * How will you feel when you're there?
- * Did your energy rise a little?

Breathing is Not Optional

If you get wrapped up in your pursuit, sometimes you stray from the basics of what it takes to stay in the saddle. Still, you get to take a deep breath whenever you want. You get to drop back and relax on occasion. You get to take a shower, you get to take a nap, you get to go to sleep at night, and you get to start again. Why?

You're not some puppet dangling on a string, forced by a puppet master to proceed at breakneck speed with no sense of ownership of your goal. In fact, proper breathing techniques are essential for entertainers, trainers, speakers, athletes, orchestra conductors and piccolo players, mothers in labor, presidents giving State of the Union Addresses, and everyone in-between.

Many Goals Don't Require Perfection

In *How Good Do We Have to Be?*, Rabbi Harold S. Kushner says, "Life is not a trap set for us by God so that He can condemn us for failing. Life is not a spelling bee where no matter how many words you've gotten right, you're disqualified if you make one mistake. Life is more like a baseball season where even the best team loses one-third of its games and even the worst team has its days of brilliance.

Our goal is to win more games than we lose." Most of your goals don't require perfection either. They may require constant progress but something far less than perfection in the pursuit.

If you find yourself with an array of goals that seemingly require perfection, remember whose goals they are--they're yours. You can loosen the screws a tad and

give yourself some slack. Indeed, in some cases, you won't make it otherwise. If your goal is to lose X number of pounds in so many weeks, and only perfect discipline, perfect meals, perfect calorie intake, perfect exercise and so on will get you there, you WILL NOT get there.

You'd be better off to give yourself more time to allow for the fact that perfection not only isn't necessary in this case, it's not desirable, and worse, can prove to be counter-productive. Here are some clues as to when you may be striving for perfection and it isn't necessary:

- * You're frequently gritting your teeth.
- * You're not able to maintain your normal demeanor.
- * You feel easily frustrated.
- * You're not sleeping as well as usual.

Maintaining a "What-if?" Orientation

In his book, *Moving Mountains*, General William G. Pagonis notes that during the Persian Gulf War, the U.S Forces maintained a constant state of readiness. "We began and ended every day by asking, 'What do we do if Saddam attacks today?'" says the General. "I held large classes, open to anyone, but especially to our talented reserve forces, to discuss scenarios and potential solutions. I'd ask questions like, 'A ship docked at Ad Dammam this morning. It's ready to be unloaded, but the onboard crane breaks. What do you do?' Or, 'We suddenly find out we're receiving 15,000 troops today instead of the usual 5,000. How do we adjust to the increase?'"

The General constantly told troops that everyone needed to do the usual Monday-morning quarterbacking on Saturday night – before problems arose. Such dry runs over potential problems proved extremely helpful when, for example, the Allied forces did receive 15,000 people on one day.

"General Schwarzkopf and I were determined not to be hobbled by immobile fire bases like the ones in Viet Nam," the author said. "Any supply network would have to be flexible, movable, and responsive to the troops."

Identify Critical Suppliers and Vendors

Is there some piece of equipment in your office upon which you rely heavily? What if your computer, or some other vital, electronic gadget failed instantly and completely? Do you have a backup in place? If not, have you identified suppliers and vendors who could readily repair or replace the vital parts or equipment? Could you be back up to speed within a day? Within an hour?

Get Prepared or Suffer

Based on the nature of your work, you may already have systems in place. If you work in public safety, public health, transportation, health care and so on, your department, agency, or division may have learned the hard way over many years the vital importance of having backup systems in place.

If you work in the typical office, or work for yourself, you may not have taken the time and made the effort to establish a folder, a file, or a roster of key contact information should you need to replace something in a hurry.

Now is a perfect time to assemble such a file.

Name that Item

Buy a duplicate item if the initial item is that critical. What piece of equipment, tool, resource, or thing-a-ma-jig is so important in your work or life, or in pursuit of your goals, that perhaps you ought to have two, or three, or more? And, if it's so important, why are you reticent to shell out the relatively few dollars it would cost? You've blown money on

so many other things that were of little value comparatively speaking.

Here's your opportunity to reinforce your goal progress. You can steer clear of barriers, such as being under-resourced and not having a backup system in place. Hey, it's your career, and your goals.

Thou Shalt Not Comparest Thyself to Others

If the goal is truly your own, then you can proceed happily without being sidetracked by the accomplishments of others. All too often, people pursue things that they see other people have achieved.

For example, if you want a huge house simply because there are people in your town who live in huge homes, you may one day find yourself sitting in your mansion feeling very alone. The goal of wanting a large home has to be your own and has to be connected with positive reasoning. Perhaps you want room to build a large playroom for your children. Perhaps you've always wanted a guest bedroom. Perhaps you always wanted to have your own personal library and will need lots of room to store your thousands of volumes.

All About Ownership

Television commercials often talk about the pride of ownership. If you own a home, you're likely to treat it much better than if you were renting it. After all, it's a long-term investment. Any additions and improvements you make to the house can only add to your equity. Same thing with any other big ticket item, such as a car, a recreational vehicle, or a vacation condo.

When you take ownership of your goals, whether they are externally imposed or internally chosen, you tend to take

better care of them as well. Treat them as if they will contribute to your well-being and perhaps even add to your psychic equity.

In case you think that goals imposed by an external source somehow can never be truly yours, think again. Some of the greatest goal achievers in recent times essentially were following the orders of their shareholders, board of directors, constituencies, and so forth.

Lee Iacocca, who was one of the most prominent personalities in America in the 1980's, was not an entrepreneur. He was the head of the Chrysler corporation. As head, he certainly had influence over the direction the company would take, but at the same time had to meet a bevy of goals imposed upon him by the people to whom he was responsible.

Even the President of the United States has a variety of externally imposed goals that he needs to embrace and make his own. In the United States, the president is beholden to his party's platform. Once he takes office, he has to deal with an inherited national budget.

Once the cabinet members are in place, they report back to the president regarding the various constraints and limitations of what they can achieve given the nature of their agency, its budget, social conditions and so on. In nearly every other nation on earth, heads of state must also deal with various goals imposed upon them.

Even at the highest levels of business and government, top achievers as a rule are dealing with a plethora of goals imposed from external sources.

You Lead, I'll Follow

Many goal achievers also are not innovators or

leaders in their field. Rather, they take their cues from some other highly influential person such as a religious leader, head of state, corporate CEO, and so on. Being a follower, particularly in American culture, is highly underrated. Yet, where is it written that what you want to achieve has to be your own original idea? It suffices to say that a goal you identify as being worthy of you and worth the pursuit is no less valid if it were externally imposed or influenced.

Ownership Language

Here are some phrases that spoken or thought can help bolster your efforts in pursuit of a goal derived by any means:

- * I choose to do this.
- * I fully accept it.
- * This can be done.
- * It's my responsibility now.
- * I'm up for the challenge.
- * I will deal with it.
- * Pass it over to me.
- * Let me get started.
- * It is my personal quest...
- * I am fully participating.
- * It is my intention...
- * It comes with the turf...
- * Point me in the right direction.
- * Just say when...
- * Put it on my plate.
- * You can count on me.
- * You've come to the right place.
- * I accept.
- * When do I start?
- * It's a done deal.
- * I'm on it.
- * Consider it done.

I'm Handling This

Whether you initially chose your goal or it was handed to you, there yet other indications as to when indeed, it is YOUR GOAL--you've adopted it and you want to achieve it.

Initiating Reciprocal Relationships

Suppose you and your spouse are married with small children and are getting started in your careers. You don't have much money, but you would like to go out on weekends occasionally. The thought of hiring a babysitter at \$8 an hour, and having to shell out about \$20 every time you want to go out for the night, on top of whatever you spend while you're out, leaves you cold. If one of your family or social goals is to enjoy your spouse and enjoy your life, how are you going to get around this barrier?

One solution is to have a reciprocal relationship with another couple who also has a small child. One Saturday evening, you look after their child, and the next, they look after yours. No money is exchanged. You get to go out at least half the time you wanted to.

In the course of a year you could be out on twenty-six Saturdays, saving \$520 in babysitting expenses, while enabling another couple to do the same.

You could refine your relationships so that you needn't look at the clock every minute that you're out. If you don't get back by ten, no big deal, it's understood that you'll be back by eleven. Or, of course, you could call. Instead of alternating every other Saturday, perhaps you could alternate Sundays and Saturdays within the same week.

Any way you devise it, there are many alternatives for making reciprocal relationships benefit both parties and help you to achieve your goals.

Who Else Can I Turn To?

What other types of reciprocal relationships can you devise that represent win/win relationships, enable you to avoid the trap of being under-resourced, and potentially enable you to gain a good, long-term friend? Here are some suggestions:

- * Someone you know is taking a course and needs help. You're strong in this area and weak in something else in which the other person can help you.

- * You don't want to buy expensive yard equipment to handle a job that you only need to tackle once every couple months. Your neighbor happens to have such equipment and is willing to loan it to you because you have other equipment that he would like to borrow occasionally.

- * At work, you're a whiz on the company's database system, and a co-worker is a whiz on conducting research via the Internet. So, you could serve as consultants to one another as the need arises.

Are You Having Fun Yet?

Somewhere along the trail, no matter how rough things get, if the goal is yours, you will experience some moments of deep satisfaction, if not outright fun. This is as good an indicator as any to let you know if you're striving for something that you do indeed desire.

Is Your Approach Organized?

When a goal is yours, you organize yourself in ways that support that goal. You know where the related files are. If somebody asks you how you're doing, you can pull out your files or your chart and point right to it and tell them where you are, and where you're going to be tomorrow.

This is a sample eBook.

The actual eBook contains many more content pages.