

Avoid the bad habits that prevent success

Today is the third in a series of articles on goals, intentions, and success. In my previous articles I have covered some of the obstacles to achieving success and today I will continue to focus on that theme. Most of what handicaps success can be found in the perceived obstacles, not in the process itself. It is wise to first resolve bad habits before trying to take action. One bad habit is making goals too complex. The fulfillment of your dreams is best realized by keeping things simple.

One way to avoid complexity is take a process from start to finish and break it down into small steps. I recommend you try to keep cycles of action down to three steps. A quote from Steven Covey is, "By the inch it is a synch, but by the yard, it is hard." No matter what your goal is, break it down to three steps. You will then find yourself making incremental progress. For instance, when I write this column I do not try to complete the entire article in one day. I break it down into small steps. First I outline ideas. I usually do this on a Sunday afternoon. Next I write a rough draft. Finally, I type it into my computer. Outline, rough draft, word processing: three steps. My point is I do not pressure myself to do all that is required in one sitting. That would be too stressful. If I break it down into smaller steps, I am more relaxed and do a better job.

Another habit to change is distractions. Distractions cause us to veer off course and prevent goal achievement. My recommendation is to watch out for distractions and make the decision to eliminate them. Again, the example of writing an article is applicable. I write my articles on Tuesday mornings when I do not see patients. This allows me the time needed to fully accomplish the task at hand. It would be very difficult to see patients and write an article at the same time. One action would distract from the other, so I carve out time when I am free to concentrate. I inform my staff I am busy and I try not to take any phone calls or browse the internet, all of which are forms of distraction. So if you need to get something done, plan time undisturbed so that you can focus. By the way, the acronym for focus is: follow one course until successful.

Having the goals of someone else is another trap to identify. I call this having "mis-owned goals". Parents often do this. You become a lawyer or a doctor because your mother wanted you to be one. Sometimes we find ourselves fulfilling another person's agenda. It is a good idea before making a big decision to ask yourself if this is your intention or someone else's. Trust and follow your own heart.

To achieve success it is wise to avoid making demands. Demands and expectations lead to one thing, and that is, disappointment. I have often written about my struggle with infertility. During the process of treating infertility, I made demands on myself that were counter productive. I tried to force things to go my way. The more I forced and demanded of the process, the less successful the results. Finally, I changed my attitude from demanding the treatments would work, to letting it all go. I changed my intention into a prayer: I intend to become a father. The former attitude is rigid and forceful; the latter is calm and relaxed. I intend to become a father is open to all possibilities. This mental

adjustment reduced stress and gave me the strength to allow the situation to resolve on its own. My reward is, I am a father.

Humility is a great quality to have when it comes to removing what is blocking your success. A profound quote to remember is, "If you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans." It is good to have intentions, but it is unwise to make demands. To achieve success, keep it simple, avoid distractions, make certain it comes from your heart and not someone else, and don't make it a demand. These are the habits of true success. For more inspiration, visit the articles section of my web site at drmcquaid.com.

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