

Removing the Obstacles to Success

This is a first in a series of articles on goals and intentions. I have written this column for over a year now with the focus on practical ways that relieve stress and bring happiness. The emphasis has also been on low cost solutions. This article will remain congruent with those values. The secret to success in these matters is to first remove the obstacles. Most people don't realize you must first clear out the past before you can successfully change the future. Old garbage in your mind can be a block to the fulfillment of your dreams.

A good place to start this process is to consider the etymology of the word goal. Understanding words gives us knowledge and knowledge is power. The Middle English etymology for goal is, "gol" which means boundary. The Old English word, "gal" means barrier. The key to achieving your dreams is to first examine and resolve what the obstacles or barriers are. Most of these limiting issues are in the past.

One obvious example of this is past mistakes and failures. Failures from the past represent unhandled upsets. When we make intentions that do not work out, it makes us hesitant to try again. However, the ability to be successful in any challenge rests in trial and error. All humans must waddle and fall in order to learn to walk. What I suggest is to shift the meaning of failure from something to be avoided, to something good.

There is an old Japanese expression, "Fall down seven times, stand up eight." Babe Ruth struck out hundreds of times more than he hit a home run. Thomas Edison failed over and over again before he succeeded with the light bulb. A well known self development author Brian Tracy said, "Success lies on the far side of failure. If you want to be successful, double your failure rate." There is no need to fear failure; it is in fact the way we learn how to succeed.

The next process I suggest is to complete any unfinished business or promises. I call this completing cycles of action. In my own experience I will share a story from my past that held me back until I cleared it out. In 1987, while in college, I was so broke one semester that I had no money to pay tuition. I called my aunt, Wendy, and asked for \$600 to pay the tuition. At the time I framed this request as, "Will you loan me \$600?" Wendy promptly sent me the money and told me not to worry about paying the money back.

Over the years my aunt forgot entirely about the episode. I did not forget, but always seemed to have some excuse for not paying her back. Many years later I was having financial difficulties again and realized somehow my unfulfilled promise to my aunt was blocking me. To clear this up, I paid Wendy \$1200 to cover the principal and interest to make good on my original commitment. I wrote her a letter with the check to remind her and thank her for her kindness. This is an example of identifying something from the past that is unfinished business. I found something that was hanging around in my mind that was incomplete. I discovered how important it was to keep my word and pay the money back. When this cycle of action was complete, I felt a great sense of relief. When you pay off an old debt (whether it is financial or an unfulfilled promise) it clears out your mind so you can focus on new creations.

Another obstacle to achieving your intentions is found in your house. Try this process and see if your mind becomes clearer: clean out your closet and garage. Clutter and unwanted stuff that is hanging around your living space will clutter your mind. Piled up junk causes stress. Since the focus of this week is cleaning up the past, I recommend you go around your house and look for anything you have not touched in the last twelve months and consider getting rid of it. Give it to hospice if you think it might have value to someone else. The idea is when you remove clutter from your living space you will remove clutter from your mind. If you do this, you will be amazed and how clearly you think. Now you are ready to focus on what it is you want to accomplish in your life. In conclusion, to remove the blocks to future success, it is wise to first clean up the past. For more inspiring ways to change your life, visit my web site at www.drmcquaid.com.

Matthew McQuaid, DPM is a board certified foot surgeon practicing in Lakeport. He has a particular interest in Mind/Body medicine and its impact on healing. He is an award winning author and teacher. Please share this article with a friend. For more information please call 707-263-3727 and visit www.drmcquaid.com