

Productive to the Max

Productivity

Performance

Profitability

Motivate Yourself to Go for the Gold

Many of us have been glued to our television sets over the past few weeks, watching the Olympic athletes push themselves to their limits to achieve Olympic success. Do you wonder what motivates people to spend 6 hours a day training on a freezing cold surface, enduring endless injuries and punishing physiotherapy sessions? Do you marvel at the capacity of human nature to deal with loss and rejection on a regular basis, to be constantly pushed and prodded verbally and physically in order to reach an ultimate goal? Are you amazed at the emotional, physical and mental capacity to endure constant travel, competition and failure? What motivates someone to Go for the Gold?

It certainly requires life changes, much thought, preparation and control over your emotions and physical health. There are basic requirements to be established, a process to be followed, and continuous maintenance to be carried out.

Basic requirements

1. A passion or indication of skill

My 6 year old grandson started skiing lessons this year. After just three sessions with the instructor, my daughter was encouraged to put him into the racing program. This is no surprise because there have been indications of both my grandsons' athletic abilities at a very early age. (My other grandson is 9 years old.) They certainly do not take after me!!!! Very often there are situations where a certain skill, passion or enthusiasm for a certain skill has been noticed. This provides encouragement to set a goal for achievement.

2. Setting a goal

Any change in situation requires this step. Write down your goal. Post it. Draw a picture. Make a collage or an inspiration board with all the steps towards your goal, Make sure it is S-pecific, M-easurable, A-chievable, R-ealistic and T-imely. Write the goal as if it has been achieved. Do not write "I would like to win a gold medal in 2018". This will not give you the proper inspiration to succeed. Write " I will stand on the podium for Canada in 2018 with a gold medal around my neck. I will win the figure-skating competition and proudly listen to Canada's national anthem. I will enjoy the adulation of the crowd and the respect of my peers." Put it all out there for everyone to see and hear. Aim to heights that you have never achieved. Ensure that this is a goal that YOU want to attain, not someone else's dream. Acknowledge your true desires.

3. Determining your motivation

Take a long, hard look at your purpose and rationale for attaining this objective. Why do you want to do this? Where do you get your enthusiasm and the impetus to keep going? What or who spurs you on to greater heights? Who is in your corner? Make sure that you are doing it only for your self-satisfaction and not to reward others.

On the other side of the coin, list what or who demotivates you? Who is not in your corner? Whenever there is a change in behaviour, it is not only ourselves that will be affected but others close to us. Your circle of friends, your partner, your relatives and associates are used to certain ways of interrelating and your quest for this goal may change those dynamics. It is best to anticipate how this will affect the relationship.

4. Choosing your rewards

What kinds of rewards will you offer yourself for completing this goal? Ensure that you choose many rewards because the key to success is not only seeing that light at the end of the tunnel but also savouring the stop-off points in between. Post pictures of your rewards and write them down on your action plans. Use small rewards for big achievements and big rewards for small achievements. This will entice you to move forward with your journey.

5. Writing down everything

One of the key components of getting where we want to go is writing down everything that will indicate how we proceed and what has happened along the way. Our mind is replete with a multitude of thoughts which are difficult to control. Writing things down brings order to these ruminations.

Process

Whether you are setting up a business and require a business plan, or want to climb Mount Kilimanjaro, a solid organizational structure is necessary. It will get you there faster and better enable you to determine the obstacles along the way.

Set up an action plan by breaking down your goal into tiny steps, milestones and dates.

Start with some "quick wins" and then proceed to larger mini-goals.

Indicate the reward after each section.

Identify resources and materials necessary.

Anticipate challenges along the way and determine how you will deal with them.

Be proactive in your approach.

Talk to others with the same skills and passion.

Read and research constantly to keep updated in your area of expertise.

Revamp your goals and action plans on a regular basis.

Maintenance

Although we all want the journey to be easy, reality will become apparent in very short order. There are many things out of our control that can affect the outcome. The death of the luge athlete at the beginning of the Olympics or the sudden death of Joannie Rochette's mother are clear indications that we do not have absolute control over the future. You will become discouraged, be criticized and rejected and feel failure. This is what you can do to get back on track:

Do not blame yourself when something does not work.

If one step of your action plan collapses, analyze why and use your creativity to discover alternative ways of approaching the issue. Go to another step if it fits into the process and achieve that. Then return to the issue and try again.

Break the steps down into smaller components to see if that would work.

Increase your rewards.

Take a break to change your focus, practice a hobby, journal or go to a movie.

Listen to motivational tapes and listen to audio books.

Meditate.

Spend time with positive people.

Exercise.

Write down the pleasure associated with the tasks and the pain of not completing them.

Work through your emotions or get help from professionals.

NEVER GIVE UP!

The journey to the top is never an easy one. It requires changes in emotion and behaviours. Continue to generate new ideas, solutions and goals by constantly reverting to the basic requirements, process and maintenance.