

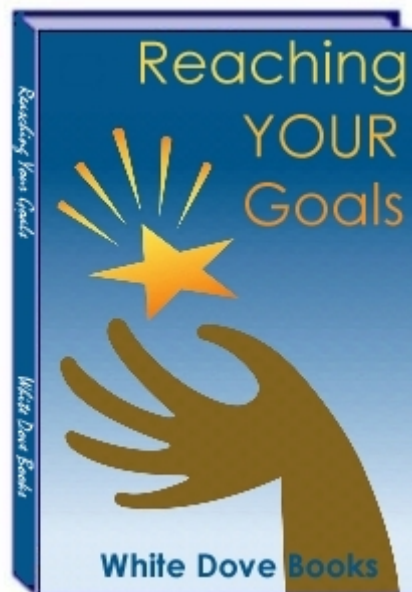
Reaching Your Goals

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Contents

- Introduction4
- Challenge #1 – Unclear Objectives6
- Challenge #2 – Unrealistic Expectations8
- Challenge #3 – It’s Too Hard!..... 10
- Challenge #4 – Not Doing the Inner Work 11
- Challenge #5 – Sacrifice vs. Gain 14
- Challenge #6 – Lack of Self-Belief..... 16
- Challenge #7 – Fear of Failure 18
- Challenge #8 – Fear of Success.....20
- Challenge #9 – Obstacles22
- Challenge #10 – Trying to Contro.....24
- Challenge #11 – Unclear Action Steps26
- Challenge #12 – Conflicting Priorities.....27
- Challenge #13 – Lack of Commitment29
- Challenge #14 – Lack of Willpower31
- Challenge #15 – Losing Motivation.....32
- Final Thoughts35

Introduction

So – not too long ago, you were all fired up and eager to move ahead on your New Year Resolutions. You put a lot of thought into your goals, got clear about the changes you wanted to make, conceived a genius plan that would undoubtedly change your life forever, and waited with bated breath for January 1st to arrive. When the clock struck midnight on December 31st, it was full steam ahead! You were off to a great start and confidently began taking the steps you knew would lead you directly to the life of your dreams!

And then . . . maybe a couple of weeks later, maybe even a month later, you began losing steam. At first it may have been small things, like bumping into a few minor obstacles or struggling to find time to work on your goals consistently; but before you knew it, you found yourself feeling unmotivated, tired, angry, frustrated . . . and finally wondered what you were thinking when you set these stupid goals anyway. You must have been out of your mind to think that you could achieve something so grand – you’ve never been able to do it before, right?

Whether the above scenario describes your situation exactly or not, it stands as a common example of how easy it is to set New Year Resolutions – and how difficult it can be to follow through and actually achieve them. If you are struggling in any way to stay committed to your New Year goals, this report is for you!

Did you know that there are many common reasons why people have trouble achieving their goals? So common, in fact, that there are dozens of books and countless workshops and seminars available on the subject. Why is that important to know? Because with such a widespread problem, you can be certain that there are also plenty of proven **STRATEGIES** that can help you gain control of your goals again.

This report will cover 15 common problems (we’ll call them “challenges” for the sake of keeping a positive outlook!) that people encounter while pursuing their goals, and offer helpful “remedies” for working through them effectively. Of course, there are far more than 15 possible reasons for struggling with goals, and it would be impossible to

list them all in a short report like this one. However, you'll notice through reading this report that all of the reasons have one thing in common: **something deeper is happening within you that prevents you from following through with something you intended to do.**

Armed with that insight, you will be able to use the information in this report to figure out what is REALLY going on - why you are not making the progress you hoped for - and determine the best course of action to bring your goals back on track, quickly and effectively.

Challenge #1 – Unclear Objectives

Do you know what you want - really? Many people will be tempted to skip over this section because it doesn't seem to apply to their situation. Do you feel the same temptation? Don't be fooled! The truth is, the majority of us tend to set goals (or resolutions) for things we **THINK** we want, but not necessarily what we **REALLY** want. Let me explain that idea a bit further.

How many times have you achieved a goal and then quickly realized that you weren't satisfied by it? Such an experience can be confusing, to say the least! You find yourself wondering how you could have chosen a goal that now seems not to matter at all to you. Or you point to one tiny aspect of the goal and say, "Well, if it wasn't for that, I'd be satisfied. It just didn't turn out like I hoped, that's all."

But that's not usually what's happening in this type of situation. Rather, most often we tend to set goals on the surface circumstances that we **believe** will make us feel happy, rather than focusing on the underlying **ESSENCE** of what we really want.

For example, let's say that one of your goals is to work less so you have more time to enjoy life. You manage to rearrange your schedule so you have more time to yourself, but within a few weeks find yourself feeling bored and restless. You decide that freedom isn't all it's made out to be and eagerly bury yourself in work again – but still feel dissatisfied and yearn for something more. What happened with this goal?

There are numerous possibilities, but in my opinion I'd say that you were actually craving something else, not just "freedom" – but you never connected with exactly what you wanted. Perhaps you were actually craving a greater sense of creativity, which you could have satisfied by setting aside a few hours a week to explore your artistic side. Maybe you actually desired a deeper spiritual connection, which you could have achieved through daily meditation or journaling.

The point is that every goal you set will have a **deeper desire** attached to it. Rather than focusing on the external situation or circumstances

you are trying to create in your life – focus on the underlying FEELING you want to experience!

The Remedy:

Whenever you set a goal, your immediate question should be, “Why do I want this?” Don’t allow yourself to give a pat answer like, “It will make me happy.” WHY will it make you happy? What feelings will these new circumstances or experiences provide for you? Why are these feelings important to you? What deeper needs will they satisfy?

You may be surprised by what comes up when you start asking questions like this! You’ll become aware of needs you didn’t even know you had. But that’s a good thing, because only by knowing what you truly want can you get it!

Another side benefit is that by being super-clear on what you want, you may discover much easier and quicker ways to get it, maybe by making some small changes instead of rearranging your entire life circumstances. Sometimes we make things much harder than they need to be.

Challenge #2 – Unrealistic Expectations

If I had to choose one of the most difficult challenges in goal-setting, I'd choose this one.

How many times have you set a massive goal while thinking, “This will be a breeze”? You imagine yourself effortlessly undertaking your action steps each day, easily moving toward your chosen outcome, and reaching it in record time. Unfortunately, that's not the way it usually happens.

Instead, you find yourself struggling almost from the get-go, feeling overwhelmed and frustrated when you don't seem to be progressing as quickly as you planned. Rather than acknowledging that you may have set your sights too high, you may be tempted to give up altogether. Talk about a recipe for disaster!

Unfortunately, we often fail to realize that it is far easier to think about doing something than it is to actually DO it - especially if we're trying to achieve something radically different than what we're currently used to.

With every goal you set, understand that there is going to be a period of transition as you work toward it. You can't expect to make a giant leap from mailroom clerk to CEO in a matter of weeks, or lose 50 pounds in a month, or go from being a couch potato to a marathon runner without first undertaking months of training.

The Remedy:

The solution for this challenge is obvious: start smaller! Not many people will enjoy hearing that, but it's necessary unless you have an iron will and LOTS of patience.

There's nothing wrong with setting big goals, but you also want to set goals that are actually **achievable**. That means either: setting smaller goals to start with, or lowering your expectations of how and when your goal will come to fruition. Which one you choose will depend on your personal preferences.

There are people who can set a large goal and diligently work toward it for years until they achieve it. They never lose sight of what they're working toward, and they're willing to wait patiently until they get where they want to be.

Personally, that has never worked for me. I like to see results – and I want those results to come as quickly as possible! I'd rather see small and steady progress now instead of waiting for a payoff years from now. Maybe you're the same way. If so, you'll probably be happier setting smaller goals and enjoying moderate results as you go along.

Remember, you can expand your goal as you go along too! If your ultimate goal is to be earning \$100,000 a year with your own business but you feel too overwhelmed to try it, start with a smaller goal of \$20,000 and then raise the amount when you reach that first benchmark. If you want to lose 50 pounds, try focusing on 10 pounds at a time. Fifty pounds sounds like a lot, but when you consider that it's only 5 sets of 10 pounds, it seems a lot more achievable.

Nearly any large goal can be broken down into smaller pieces – and when you focus on achieving those smaller goals they eventually add up to big success!

Challenge #3 – It’s Too Hard!

Working toward any goal will seem hard at the beginning, but sometimes we underestimate just how hard! Sometimes it’s the result of unrealistic expectations as described in the previous challenge. Taking on a bigger goal than you’re ready for can definitely make the journey seem impossible.

But there’s also a more common reason for goal-achievement seeming difficult, and that is: you are building momentum!

A common analogy used to describe momentum is pushing a car. To get the car rolling, you have to exert a lot of force. But the longer you push, momentum begins to take over and you hardly have to push at all to keep the car moving along.

Goals are very much the same in that you have to work harder at them in the beginning than you do toward the end. If you work at them for long enough, you enter this “zone” where it just seems simple to take the action steps and make steady progress each day.

Another good example is starting a new fitness routine. Your first workout will probably seem a little bit like torture. Your muscles will burn and ache; you’ll be drenched in sweat and end up wondering if a sedentary life might not be so bad after all . . .

But what happens if you keep pushing through your workouts every day? You build muscle and get stronger. You feel more energetic. You’ll probably even begin to enjoy working out! The stronger you get, the more easily you are able to keep up the momentum.

Every goal will have this in common!

The Remedy:

Obviously, the remedy for this one is simple: keep pushing yourself until you reach the point where it doesn’t seem so hard anymore.

Remind yourself that it won't always be so hard. While that sounds simple, it may not always be easy to convince yourself.

Therefore, here are a couple more remedies that may help you through the rough spots:

- Relish the challenge.

One thing that seems to work surprisingly well for me is choosing to enjoy the challenge. Rather than mentally whining that “it’s too hard,” I engage in some self-talk like this, “I thrive on challenges. Bring it on, baby! I can handle this, no problem! No pain, no gain! I refuse to give up!”

Use whatever phrases work for you, but the idea is to convince yourself that you have what it takes to push through any difficulties. Often, just believing you do is enough to make it so!

- Baby steps.

If you're really struggling and unable to talk yourself into believing it's easier, try focusing on ONE tiny aspect of your goal. Every goal will probably have numerous action steps that you'll take each day as you work toward it, but trying to do all of them at once might prove overwhelming.

If that's the case, try doing just ONE of the action steps until it gets easier. Then add another one, and another, until you are doing all of them with less struggle.

Challenge #4 – Not Doing the Inner Work

We typically think of goal-achievement as an external process. We are here at Point A, and we want to move to Point B. While we do indeed make external changes, we also need to remember that we **become** a different person through the achievement of our goals. Therefore, we

will undergo an internal adjustment even as we're making external transitions!

How does this pose a challenge?

If you don't prepare yourself for the new circumstances you're trying to create, you won't be mentally and emotionally ready to handle them!

Let's use an example to expand on this idea.

Imagine that your goal is to lose 50 pounds. If you simply focus on "losing weight," you'll overlook the fact that you gained weight in the first place because of specific reasons – and you'll be tempted to gain it all back unless you make some inner changes.

Doing some inner work might reveal that you gained weight because of low self-esteem, believing that you don't deserve time for self-care, or emotional vulnerability. You can bet that these kinds of beliefs need to be resolved – or they will keep limiting your ability to lose weight, keep it off and live a happier life.

The same thing happens with other types of goals. You can set a goal to be more successful in business, but if you don't first understand what has limited your success thus far, you might simply repeat the cycle at a later time. Do you have trouble believing in your own abilities? Are you afraid of taking risks? Do you have a fear of selling that limits how much you promote your products and services?

Addressing these underlying issues may make the difference between failure and success.

The Remedy:

One of the most effective strategies I've found for this challenge is to consider the qualities you'd need to handle the achievement of your goal, and begin building them now.

For example, if your goal is greater business success, ask yourself what qualities a successful business person would have – such as confidence, courage, creativity, flexibility, and so on. Once you've got a list of these

qualities, begin developing them within yourself. Practice being more confident and courageous, express your creative side more often, work on being flexible as often as possible, etc.

If your goal is to live a healthier lifestyle, consider why you haven't been living such a lifestyle until now. Do you have trouble believing that you deserve to be healthy and happy? Does much of your diet consist of "comfort food" that covers emotional issues you could be resolving in a healthier way?

If you work on these inner issues while you're also doing the outer work, your chances of lasting success will double!

Challenge #5 – Sacrifice vs. Gain

Every goal will require sacrifice of some kind, and it's easy to forget this sometimes!

Most often we tend to focus on what we stand to GAIN from the achievement of our goals, not what we stand to lose. However, failing to acknowledge and prepare for the sacrifices can set us up for a rude awakening – and even threaten our eventual success.

What kind of sacrifices have you had to make for your goals in the past?

Did you have to give up some of your favorite television shows so you could make time to work on your goals? Did you give up your favorite dessert when you started a new health regime?

What kind of sacrifices have you been making (or struggling to make) with your current goals?

Are you having a hard time avoiding the vending machine at work? Are you having trouble making daily meditation a priority when your family needs attention? Are you struggling to stick to your new savings plan because that gorgeous pair of shoes knocked on the window as you passed by and you just had to have them?

Let's face it; sacrifices usually aren't fun. It means giving up something you enjoy, even if temporarily. Unfortunately, few gains can come without sacrifices. Acknowledging this is a good first step in preparing for any discomfort you may face as you progress on your goals.

The Remedy:

When it comes to sacrifices, only two things matter:

- Is it worth it?

With every goal, you need to know that what you stand to gain is worth the cost of what you'll have to give up. Rarely are these

rigid concepts; more often they will change according to your perceptions.

For example, when you first set your goals and start working toward them you may believe that your sacrifices are well worth it. Your motivation is strong and you're feeling optimistic that you can overcome any temptations to slide back into old habits. But as time goes on and you begin to miss the things that once provided a sense of comfort or pleasure, you may wonder whether you can continue making these sacrifices. In fact, this question (Is it worth it?) is one you'll probably have to answer over and over again until you reach a point where your new habits have overridden the old.

- Are you willing to do it?

Even more important than the first question, this one helps you get clear on whether your goal is truly important to you – or not. If you decide you're not willing to make sacrifices at this time, you may need to choose a lesser goal until you feel ready to take on bigger challenges in the future.

If you find that you are willing, all you need to do is simply keep reinforcing that decision mentally every time you feel tempted to act in ways that are counterproductive to your goals.

Challenge #6 – Lack of Self-Belief

Lack of belief in one's own abilities is also a common problem in goal-setting. Let's face it; if you really believed you could achieve your goal, you probably would have done it already! (Unless your goal is a brand new one, of course. But most people set the same goals multiple times before they actually achieve them.)

How can you tell if you don't have a strong belief in yourself?

Probably the most telling clue is that you'll hesitate when it comes to taking risks. You may find yourself holding back on something you really want to do, or you might procrastinate on taking the action steps needed to achieve your goals.

In order to achieve any goal, you first need to believe you CAN. This involves much more than hoping or wishing – it requires an unshakable core belief in your own ability to work through challenges, stay committed and do whatever it takes to be successful.

But how do you build such a belief? Most of us are not born with this level of confidence; we have to build it little by little.

The Remedy:

Ironically, the most effective way to build a solid belief in yourself and your capabilities is to simply . . . TAKE ACTION. The more you do something, the more confident you'll become with it, right?

It's just like anything else in life. The first time you drove a car you were probably shaky and nervous. The first time you gave a speech you were probably standing in a puddle of sweat. It's the old "fight or flight" response to a perceived threat – and it's completely normal! It's your mind's way of telling your body that it may be entering a dangerous situation. But if you can keep pushing through that fear, it will eventually go away because you'll condition yourself to believe that there is truly nothing to fear.

You may also find it helpful to recite some powerful affirmations like these:

“I’ll never know for sure if I can do this until I try.”

“I’m willing to believe that I can handle this challenge.”

“I’m nervous, but I’m going to do it anyway.”

“I grow in confidence with every step I take!”

“With enough practice, everything becomes easy.”

Additionally, you may also want to take a few minutes each day to think about some previous accomplishments. What other activities did you once feel nervous about, but have since mastered? Relive those old fears and feel proud about your ability to overcome them! Remind yourself that you can do the same thing with your current goals.

Challenge #7 – Fear of Failure

Fear of failure is one big reason why many people can't seem to move forward in life. They constantly set big goals, only to find themselves procrastinating and holding back. A fear of failure isn't always obvious, either. Our minds have ways of tricking us that are very convincing!

For example, let's say you set a goal to lose weight and get into better shape for the New Year. You start out very well, sticking to your workouts and eating right. The numbers on the scale are beginning to creep downward – when all of a sudden you find yourself in situations that are ripe with temptation. You forget to bring your nutritious lunch to work one day, visit the cafeteria and choose the most fattening meal on the menu – then wonder why you did that? Or you call a friend and invite him or her to dinner at a restaurant and use the outing as an excuse to eat more than you should, effectively blowing your healthy eating plan for the day.

You may not realize right away that you're sabotaging your own efforts. In fact, it's usually quite the opposite: you feel frustrated because these outer influences are interfering with your plan to lose weight!

However, if you dig deeply enough and look closely at what's really going on, you'll usually find some fears lurking beneath the surface.

You may realize that your shrinking size brings up feelings of fear because you know that other people are going to start noticing, which will put more pressure on you to keep going. You may be afraid of reaching a plateau and getting stuck there – so you invent external situations that you can point to and say, “I failed because of that.”

There are many possible ways for a fear of failure to make itself known, but you'll usually notice it because of an inner sense of hesitation or dread, just like a lack of self-belief described in the previous challenge.

The Remedy:

In order to overcome a fear of failure, you have to first understand that goal achievement is not a “one shot deal”. Rarely are situations so black and white. In fact, the only way you can truly fail is if you stop trying!

You may fear slipping up with your healthy eating plan because it will mean “failure” – but the only person who can decide whether you’ve failed or not is YOU. If you decide that one slip is not a big deal and get right back on plan, have you failed? Of course not.

The concept of “failure” is based solely on your own perceptions! If you refuse to buy into a rigid concept of failure and success and instead just take the process one day at a time – one moment at a time – you can’t fail. You will simply keep making positive choices and enjoying the progress that comes along with them.

Challenge #8 – Fear of Success

Closely related to the fear of failure is the fear of success. It may seem that these two challenges are complete opposites, but they are more similar than you may think! Both of them involve one common belief: that you won't be able to handle the consequences of the outcome.

A fear of failure raises worries about the consequences of not achieving your goal, while a fear of success raises worries about the consequences of succeeding at your goal. In both cases, you doubt your ability to handle the results.

Using the same weight loss example from above, a fear of success may cause you to worry that your friends and family will treat you differently if you lose weight. Or you may wonder how you'll ever be able to have a good time at parties if you can't enjoy your favorite foods – after all, a “skinny” person doesn't pig out on junk food! You may worry about the expense of buying a new wardrobe to fit your smaller size – or any number of other fears related to the outcome of your goal.

Once again, you are operating under the assumption that you won't be able to handle such a possibility, or that it would be somehow “bad” if it happened.

The Remedy:

Overcoming this fear is simple if you come up with some coping strategies ahead of time. Start by making a list of your specific fears, along with things you could do to cope with them if they happened.

Fear:

I won't know how to relate to men when I'm thin and attractive.

Strategy:

I would relate to them exactly as I do now, but I could also work more on building my self-confidence to deal with unwanted advances, etc.

Fear:

I really can't afford to buy a new wardrobe right now; maybe I should hold off on this goal until spring.

Strategy:

I won't need smaller sizes for at least a few months. Between now and then I can set aside the money I used to spend on junk food, cut back in other areas, and even check out some consignment or thrift shops – they always have great deals on clothing!

Whatever your specific fears are, addressing them will convince you that you CAN handle the outcome, no matter what it may be. Besides, most often the things you fear don't even happen! There's no harm in preparing for the possibilities, but keep reminding yourself that your fears are probably groundless for the most part.

Challenge #9 – Obstacles

It's happened to the best of us; we're moving steadily along toward our goals, feeling motivated and determined – when all of a sudden there's an obstacle in our path and we freeze like a deer caught in the headlights of a car! What do we do? How do we get around this? Yikes!

Unexpected obstacles are responsible for many unrealized goals, simply for one reason: the goal seeker didn't have a plan in place to deal with it. Preparing for obstacles is one of the most important parts of goal-setting – but few people take the time to do it. When most of us set a goal, we're optimistic and confident that we can succeed. We don't like to think about possible obstacles that may threaten our dreams.

However, not planning ahead for obstacles practically guarantees that we won't know how to handle them when they appear – and appear they usually will!

The Remedy:

The solution to this challenge is clear: prepare for obstacles ahead of time! But how?

One of the best ways is to go over each of the action steps you've set to achieve your goal, and think about possible blockages or problems that could come up as you go along. Consider the outcome you desire from each phase of your goal and ask yourself what you will do if a particular phase doesn't work out like you planned. Are there alternative steps you could take to get back on track?

For example: if your goal is to quit smoking, what possible obstacles could come up after you've quit? You might find yourself in a social situation where everyone else is smoking and you'll feel tempted to light up too. How can you effectively handle such a situation if it comes up? What other possible obstacles could you face, and how would you handle them?

Of course, there is no way to predict every possible obstacle, but simply thinking ahead and doing your best to plan and prepare for obstacles places you into a mind-set of empowerment, control and responsibility – which is exactly what you need when you face ANY obstacle, whether you've planned for it or not.

Challenge #10 – Trying to Contro

Speaking of control, this is a good time to mention another common challenge: trying to control the uncontrollable! What does this mean?

Have you ever set a goal to accomplish something where much of the outcome was out of your control?

For example, let's say you set a goal to secure 10 new clients each month for your consulting business. That sounds like a fine goal, but it focuses on what the CLIENTS do, not what YOU can do. You can't force new clients to seek your services. You can't control whether they sign on with you or not.

The Remedy:

A better way to word this goal is to focus on the things you CAN control, such as, "I will present my services to one hundred potential clients per month, with the intention to secure 10 new clients or more."

That may seem like a small difference, but you'll notice that you're placing the most emphasis on what YOU can do to achieve this goal. You can then set clear action steps for achieving this goal of reaching 100 potential new clients, such as networking more, advertising in related trade publications, and so on.

Notice too that in the reworked goal you still state your intention to secure 10 new clients a month, but you're not basing your perception of failure or success on it anymore. Would you consider your goal a failure if you did reach 100 potential new clients – but only 6 of them sought your services in the first month? Probably not. You'd probably feel encouraged to keep going and do better the next month – simply because you feel in CONTROL of what's happening in your business. You're taking the steps you've planned and getting results because of it.

This concept applies to every kind of goal. Be sure you're placing most of your energy and attention on things that you can control, and you'll avoid feeling like the outcome is out of your control!

Challenge #11 – Unclear Action Steps

And speaking of action steps, here's another big problem that can arise when pursuing goals! In order to reach any goal, you'll need to have a clear, detailed plan for getting there. Sounds like common sense, right? But you'd be amazed at how many people skip this part of goal-setting.

It's fine and dandy to set a goal to lose 20 pounds, but how are you going to do it? "Eating right and working out" is pretty vague, and may not provide the structure you need to succeed.

If you instead designate clear action steps like the ones below, you'll know EXACTLY how you're going to achieve your goal.

- Eat no more than 1400 calories per day.
- Do aerobic and weights workouts for 30 minutes each day.
- Eat 5 servings of fruit and vegetables each day.
- Replace white bread and white rice with whole grain bread and brown rice.
- Drink 64 oz. of water each day.

The Remedy:

Not only should every goal have clear, specific action steps, I also suggest making those action steps themselves the goal! When you think about it, following a clear plan will lead you to your chosen outcome anyway. You don't have to focus so much on the outcome as long as you are taking the steps that lead to it. It's just like traveling from one place to another. You don't have to keep focusing on your destination, just the route that leads you there!

Goals are the same way. Simply clarify exactly which steps you need to take to reach your goal, and then make it your mission to take them every day.

Challenge #12 – Conflicting Priorities

This is another big challenge that can derail your resolutions, simply because you must make them a high priority! You know what you want and you know what you need to do to get it, but following through can sometimes be difficult.

You may have demands in other areas of your life, such as family or work that threaten your ability to stick to your plans. You may also have a lot of distractions that make it hard to stay focused.

Conflicting priorities can cause such a heavy sense of defeat that you may be tempted to give up on your goals altogether.

The Remedy:

The good news is that there are several ways to handle these challenges.

- First, consider whether your distractions might actually be coming from YOU. You may be creating chaos without realizing it. For example, if you have a fear of success or failure related to your goals, you may find yourself agreeing to extra obligations so you can avoid working on them. Or you may procrastinate to the point where everything comes due at once so you're scrambling to meet deadlines at the last minute. Sometimes what seem to be outer distractions may actually be caused by **inner conflict**. That would be the first place to look, and resolve any issues you find.
- If you discover that you're not sabotaging your efforts but still have a lot of chaos and disorder in your life, do what you can to get balanced and organized again. You may need to cancel a few unnecessary obligations so you'll have more time to work on your goals, or speak to your family members and ask for their support and cooperation.
- Understand that "priority" means taking precedence in order of importance. That means you'll probably have to decide what's most important to you, moment to moment. Just how important is

your goal? Is it more or less important than your other obligations and commitments? If your goal is truly important to you, you will do what it takes to make time for working on it – no matter how much juggling you may have to do.

As you work on improving your ability to prioritize and focus better, you'll probably notice that the two seem to complement each other. Having a strong focus enables you to better prioritize your activities, while a balanced and properly prioritized life also makes it easier to stay focused!

Challenge #13 – Lack of Commitment

This challenge goes hand in hand with prioritizing because if you are not truly committed to your goal, you simply won't make it a priority in your life.

When you first set a resolution, you are “resolving” to do something. That means pledging, or swearing to the fact that you will follow through. But how often do you really mean this when you set goals?

What many of us do instead is attach little addendums to our pledge, like staying committed until we lose interest or obstacles threaten our confidence. That's why getting crystal clear about what you really want (as covered in Challenge #1) is so important. You're much more likely to go the distance for something you want badly rather than a vague desire.

Still, no matter your objective, you'll need to make a firm commitment to achieving it – NO MATTER WHAT. That's what commitment is; a pledge of constancy and loyalty.

The Remedy:

So how do you get committed, and STAY committed to a goal? The number one way is to make your goal so vitally important that quitting is simply NOT an option. Imagine what it would be like to have a goal that you simply couldn't give up on; a goal that you would work toward for years on end if you had to. Are your goals that important? If not, you've got two choices:

- Make them that important! Take some time to think about the negative consequences of abandoning your goal. What would the likely outcome be? Poor health and reduced lifespan? Professional stagnation? Depression and emptiness? Are you willing to accept those outcomes? You've got to convince yourself that it's “do or die” when it comes to your goals. You'll either succeed, or die trying.

- Choose a better goal. If you just can't summon the level of commitment needed to achieve your goal, it's probably not as important as you'd like it to be. Take some time to think about what you really want, and set a goal that **WILL** be vitally important; important enough to inspire a rock-solid level of commitment.

Challenge #14 – Lack of Willpower

Closely related to commitment is willpower. Willpower could accurately be described as the unyielding determination to follow through with an intention. This is a little different than being committed to a goal. Willpower focuses more on the moment to moment decisions we make in relation to our intentions. Let's face it; you can set all the intentions you want but if you don't have the willpower to stick to them you won't get far!

Most of us have strong willpower until it's tested by temptation. We'll be sticking to a new healthy eating plan, feeling fine – until a coworker brings in a box of donuts. We're committed to working on our goals every day – until we decide we're not seeing results as quickly as we'd like.

The Remedy:

How do you strengthen your willpower? The best way I've found is simply to practice. Set an intention and stick to it like glue. You could start with smaller intentions if you feel overwhelmed by the bigger ones; for example, set an intention to avoid eating sugar for one day. If you're used to eating sugar every day, you'll have plenty of opportunities to strengthen your willpower!

The most important thing is to not give up when you slip. If you give in to temptation once, simply strengthen your resolve and start again. The more you do that, the stronger your willpower is going to get. It is a process, however, so don't expect yourself to display tremendous willpower right away. Just keep practicing setting intentions and following through with them and before long it will get easier to laugh at any temptations that come your way.

Challenge #15 – Losing Motivation

I purposely saved this challenge for last because it's probably the most common problem that people face when it comes to pursuing their goals. It seems impossible to keep pushing forward when you lose that inner fire, doesn't it?

Feeling motivated is easy when you first set your resolutions, because you're feeling inspired and excited about the positive changes you're going to make in your life. However, at that point you're overly optimistic about the ease of achieving your goals. You're not dealing with obstacles, distractions, stress and frustration yet.

Once you begin working toward your goals, your motivation begins to wane.

Maybe you get frustrated because you're not seeing results right away, or you wonder if you took on too big a goal with all of your other responsibilities. Even worse, you may start doubting your own capabilities. All of these things act like big droplets of water on your inner fire of motivation.

Before you know it, you're running out of steam and don't know what to do to get moving again.

The Remedy:

There are many ways to re-ignite your motivation, but I'll share some of the ones that have been most effective for me below:

- Take a break. Believe it or not, stepping back for a day or two can do wonders for your state of mind! If you notice that you're feeling irritable and frustrated a lot, you may be pushing too hard and burning yourself out. This is especially true when you're trying to FORCE results to happen. Step back and take some time off to recharge your batteries. Before long you'll probably be itching to get back to it again!

- Change your approach. You may be feeling bored or uninspired by the action steps you were once so certain would lead you to your goal – and now you’re wishing you’d never set the goal at all. But remember that you don’t have to stick with your original plan if it’s not working for you. Change it up! Go back over your objectives and see if there’s a better way to proceed. Engage your creative thinking and see if you can come up with alternate steps that you would enjoy more. The changes themselves don’t matter except for one thing: that they get you fired up and eager to proceed once again.
- Get angry. Anger can be incredibly motivating at times! One good way to fuel your motivation again is to take a look at your current life circumstances. Think about what you’ve accomplished in your life so far, and ask yourself whether you could have done better. Can you also do better in the future? Can you do better right now? Are you sick and tired of holding yourself back? Get mad about it! Get mad at your self-limiting beliefs, at your self-doubt, and your fear. Use your anger to fuel an iron determination. It really works!
- Build yourself up. This is similar to the above suggestion, but a little more on the positive side. Rather than stimulating your anger, stimulate your confidence, inner strength and power. Think about the things you’ve done in the past that you were proud of, and imagine all that you can still accomplish. Imagine feeling satisfied and fulfilled with your life circumstances, being proud of who you are and all you’ve done (and will do yet). Affirm that you are much stronger than you usually think you are, and inspire yourself to push right through feelings of lethargy and boredom.
- Rekindle your excitement. When you first set your goals, you were fired up just by the idea of achieving them, and you can easily get that fire back by mentally revisiting what you want to accomplish. If you can’t seem to get a clear mental image of your desired outcome, write it down. Put as much detail as you can into it, and be sure to infuse it with feelings of excitement and happiness. Even better, write it in present tense – as if you’ve already achieved it! Express your feelings of joy and satisfaction

for having this new experience in your life, whatever the achievement of your goal will create.

With a fitness goal, for example, you could write about how great you feel, how much more energy and focus you have, how your business is booming because you now have more energy and enthusiasm when you work, how you're buying a brand new wardrobe to celebrate your achievement, and so on.

There are no right or wrong ways to do this; simply write what you WANT to happen as a result of achieving your goal!

Once you've got it all written down, be sure to keep it nearby and read it when you need a boost – several times a day, if necessary!

Final Thoughts

More than any specific problems you may encounter as you pursue your goals understand that success is a simple matter of **making conscious decisions** that align with your desired outcome.

Anyone can decide to achieve a goal once – it's your commitment to the ongoing process of growth and self-mastery that will determine your eventual success, or failure. When you think about it that way, goal achievement is really more of a system of **gradual shifting** from one state to another.

To be successful in your objectives, be willing to see New Year Resolutions (or any goals) as intentions to make the right decisions; decisions that will lead you to where you want to be, wherever you decide that is, now or in the future.

By doing so, you'll quickly realize that there is no "success or failure." There are only choices that support your goals or detract from them. This is very good news because it means that it's never too late to get back on track! Even if you've spent years making "bad choices" (those that don't support your ultimate goals), you can easily begin making "good choices" that **DO** support your goals – right now!

Here's wishing you immense success in all you do.

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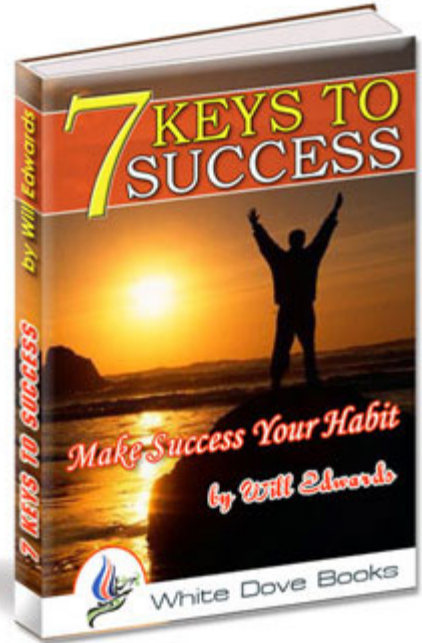
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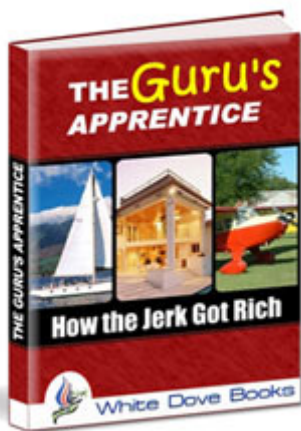
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Will Edwards is the founder of [White Dove Books](#) - the internet's leading website for Self Improvement and Personal Development. A graduate of the University of Birmingham, he develops and teaches Personal

Development workshops and is a published author.

Within its first three years, White Dove Books was recognised as one of the internet's leading sites for self help and personal development; breaking into the top 100,000 sites on the internet at the end of 2005.

The INSPIRATION newsletter was started in 2005 as a way of providing helpful information including tips, articles and free inspirational eBooks to our visitors.

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