

Education Resource Center

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Plan Your Life



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How many times have you heard it said, “Plan your life and then work your plan”? There have been volumes written to expound the theory covering the keys to success. No doubt you have read some of these books. Many have hit the best-seller list, and yet the readers by and large fail to find the success they dreamed would be theirs if they only knew the answer.



Basically speaking all of the books tell the same story—for fact is fact, and the keys to success are very basic. The greatest cause of failure to find success lies in your willingness to expend the effort to determine what you want to do, be willing to make the sacrifices to accomplish

your goal, and have the persistence to persevere long enough to succeed.

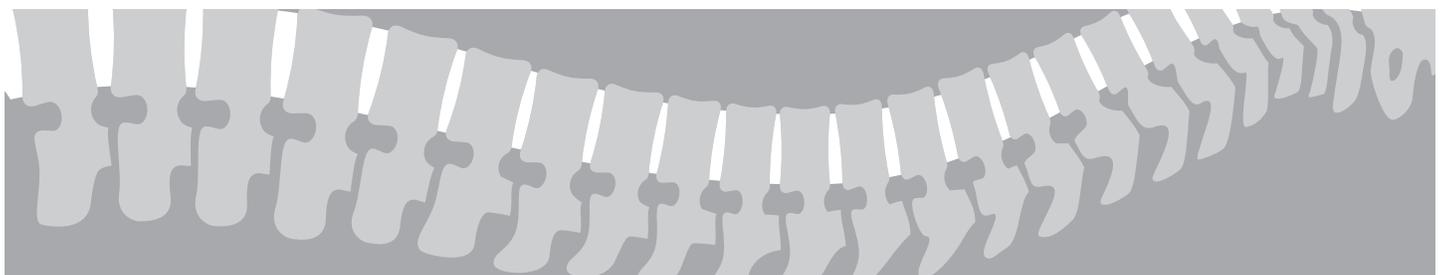
Define What Success Means to You

I believe one of the first questions that must be answered is, “Do I really want to be successful?” You know that there is nothing free in our world. You must give something to get something. In the case of achieving success you must first define what success means to you. You and only you can give the definition. You are the one to choose your priorities; you are the one to make the commitment as to what you want.

Before you read any further, stop and search within yourself to find the definition of what success means to you. There are some who feel that money and material things are all that makes for success. There are others who value friends, family, health and happiness above all else. Then there are those who find various combinations of the above make for true success. Whatever your decision may be, make certain it is an honest one. From this foundation you will build your success.

Change Bad Habits

We are all victims of habit; therefore, your habits are a factor for concern. Naturally you will want to keep your good habits; but those old bad habits present the real challenge. It takes two weeks to change a habit. During this period you must put forth a real effort when changing old bad habits to new good habits. When you place your hand on a hot stove your hand is withdrawn reflexively. Habits become reflexive in nature and are part of your way of life. “I don’t like it,” “I can’t,” “It won’t work” and numerous other negative responses are easy habits. In fact, a vast majority of people fall into these negative habit responses.



If you are not as successful as you want to be, chances are you are a victim of some or all of these very habits. Think about it for a moment and you'll realize the real difference between those who fail and those who succeed is their habit pattern.

Write Down Your Goals and Refer to Them Daily

A long time ago I read a book on positive thinking, and in it I found some jewels that have had a great influence on my life. It said, "Dare to believe and ye shall receive—seek and ye shall find—sask and it shall be given unto you." I'm reasonably certain that you will find these words in your Bible. I accepted these words as the truth. I wrote them down on a piece of paper, and on the other side of the paper I wrote down what I wanted. I read that paper every day, three or more times for thirty days. At the end of the thirty-day period not one of the things I had written down were realized.

The easy thing to have done at this time would have been to forget the whole thing. After all, it didn't work! I had every logical reason for forget it. However, for some reason I didn't give up. I decided to put down more wants or goals, only this time I put down smaller wants. You know, the kind I knew I could be able to get if I worked hard to get them. Believe it or not the next thirty days were better. I was able to mark off a number of my wants as they became reality.

The greatest lesson I learned from this experience was that it takes more than writing it down and reading your list. You must be realistic and you must put forth the effort to make them come true. You must believe that you can accomplish your goals. If you do not feel that you can and will accomplish your goals, you are defeated before you start. You can say "I believe," but you know you really don't believe. Be honest with yourself, you deserve it.

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Let's take a step at a time and make a plan. You are a Chiropractor and you want to be the best doctor of Chiropractic. It will be necessary for you to wear two hats: First and foremost, you want to be knowledgeable and capable of rendering the finest Chiropractic service; second, you will be required to be an executive. In other words, you must be a doctor and a businessman combined.

Budget Money for Continuing Education

Continuing education is a must to keep abreast of new techniques. Our formal education in college serves only enough to give us the foundation upon which to expand and grow. Therefore, we will find it necessary to place in the budget money for continuing education seminars. Money has a way of being dissipated and feeling one cannot afford seminars can be easily rationalized. The truth is, YOU CANNOT AFFORD NOT TO ATTEND SEMINARS. Remember, you do not get something for nothing. You must

make the sacrifice. You must make the effort. You must give of your time to learn how to best utilize your new-found knowledge. With knowledge comes enthusiasm. With each new bit of knowledge gained you gain confidence. You will present an image of the doctor that patients will refer friends and relatives because they know you care enough to be the best. Thoughts are things and you become what you think about. Each and every one of us will find something of value in every seminar attended.



Put Your Good Intentions into Action

You will get good ideas at your seminars and know that you will want to make them a part of your practice. NOW COMES THE IMPORTANT PART: You must make these new ideas a part of your practice immediately upon your return to the office. The things you feel will never be forgotten can be lost very easily. Take a look at past history. You attend a seminar and gain a few really exciting new ideas. You intend to use them when you get back to the office; however, you do not write them down, you do not make the plan while you are attending the seminar, you do not find time to put your good intentions into action. Why?

When you attend a seminar your mind becomes active in a positive manner and your practice increases activity when you return. If you have studied shoulder injuries you find you have patients presenting shoulder problems. If you have attended a seminar on practice building you have more new patients and more old patients calling for appointments. Your mental attitude has changed and results in this change of activity in the office. What happens then is old history. You put your new good ideas on your desk with the thought that you will put them to use as soon as you have time. Important papers, new ideas, new plans pile high, so high the task becomes

insurmountable. You will never have time to go through the pile. Finally you decide to dispose of the pile and start over. You have every intent to make certain the pile does not build to this magnitude again. If you are not careful the pile will build again because you have failed to "DO IT NOW".

Here is a suggestion that has proven to be very helpful when attending a seminar. Each night after the seminar is complete, go the extra mile by taking the time to write down your plan. By doing this when you have the time you will be ready to put the plan into action when you arrive at your office. It is important that you make time to meet with your staff and brief them on the new plan. See that it is written out and then be certain to check to see that it is being followed.

Competent Staff

Your role as the doctor executive is absolutely necessary to achieve fulfillment of your goals. Many doctors have said that it is hard to get good help. Two facts must be faced: Number one, you must pay a fair wage; Number two, you must have a written plan and give directions after proper training. It is well to realize the people you have working with you are very much like you, and it is easy to forget. You must periodically check to see that the various duties are being performed. Communication is also very important. Talk with your office assistants and encourage them to make suggestions that will help increase the efficiency of your office. You will find that many good ideas can come from within your own organization. You will find that it is not the complicated, highly sophisticated methods of operation that give the best results. Many times the simple, uncomplicated approach is far better.

Delegate Responsibilities

Many doctors are understaffed. You cannot afford to perform tasks that ancillary personnel can perform equally as well. Rationalization can tell you that you don't need extra help when the patient load is low. One good reason the patient load fluctuates as it does can be the result of improper patient management. Let's look at a few examples:

The practice is down and you have time to get a good past history, a good present history, make a good examination, take X-rays and perform lab tests. You explain the problems to the patient and generally have the time to communicate. What results from this type of care? Your practice grows and you become busier. Then the inevitable happens: a new patient walks into the office and wants your care now. You don't want to lose the patient, so you accept him and work him into your schedule. You don't have time to get a good past history, you don't have time to get a good present history, you don't have time to perform a good examination, and you don't take the necessary X-rays or lab tests. You rush the patient into the adjusting room and give him an adjustment. Invariably the patient handled in this manner becomes disgruntled and quits before you can completely perform your task. This patient seldom makes referrals. Because of a lack of personnel you have not given this patient your best. Your practice begins to deteriorate and you are glad you don't have extra help.

The roller coaster practice is not at all uncommon. You can stop the roller coaster effect in your practice if you are the doctor executive. Delegate responsibilities. Let a CA take the past history and you can take the present history. You perform the physical, orthopedic and neurological examination. You can have an X-ray and lab tech take the X-rays and perform laboratory tests. This leaves you free to perform your duties as the doctor. If you organize your office to enable you to increase your service to the patients, your practice will increase.

Your life's plan can be subject to change as time passes. You will find the wants and desires are achieved as you work towards your goals.



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