

TAKE NINE STEPS AND COMMIT TO YOUR LIFE

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Success is often perceived as the result of luck. However, the real definition of luck is when preparation meets opportunity. Without preparation, opportunities are lost. Rather than waiting for luck or for tomorrow, actively work toward fulfilling your dreams NOW. Establishing commitments will help you climb that spiraling staircase toward success. The following steps will get you to the top.

1. IDENTIFY YOUR GOALS AND DREAMS.

Goals offer the starting point for most endeavors. As Woodrow Wilson once said, “We grow great by dreams. . . Some of us let these great dreams die, but others nourish and protect them, nurse them through bad days till they bring them to the sunshine and light.” When you identify your goals or dreams, you take your first step. Aspirations may be personal, professional, financial, or relational such as losing weight or giving up smoking, increasing income, improving a relationship, changing your attitude, renovating a house, learning a language, writing a book, or creating an invention.

2. MAKE THE GOALS SPECIFIC, CONCRETE, AND ACHIEVABLE.

Success needs focus. Breaking down a grand idea into smaller parts makes the target all that more achievable. Acquiring a million dollars is a wonderful dream. Taking concrete steps such as creating a monthly investment plan makes the dream less overwhelming. A timeline with weekly targets is a valuable tool to help you maintain your climb.

3. COMMIT YOURSELF TO YOUR DREAM.

The highest investment is to be passionate about your goal. That intensity of emotion will make you determined, dedicated, and disciplined. Michael Jordan clearly demonstrated passion for basketball as shown by his hard work and effort. As Bob Richards, two-time Olympic Gold Medallist once said, “You show me a boy or a girl with a desire to win, and I’ll show you a person who will work hard the thousands of hours it takes to win.” When you emotionally commit yourself to a project, you are halfway to the top.

4. WRITE DOWN YOUR IDEAS AND READ THEM DAILY.

Continually remind yourself of your aspirations by condensing them onto 3 X 5 cards and placing them in a number of conspicuous places such as your dresser, computer, or car. If your goals are out of sight, they will soon be out of your mind. Seeing them daily will remind you to continue your climb.

5. SHARE YOUR GOAL WITH OTHERS.

In his book, *Think and Grow Rich*, Napoleon Hill recommended establishing an alliance with others who will encourage you. Energy and power is derived from being part of a team as demonstrated in organized sports, businesses, and self-help groups. Involving yourself with like-minded people working toward a common goal will provide encouragement, support and challenge. Sharing your goals with them will increase your accountability. If you don't have a support team, create one, as they will be an integral part of your success.

6. VISUALIZE THE OUTCOME.

Imagine how you will look and feel when you fulfill your dream. Visualizing a positive outcome not only helps you remain focused but also reinforces the idea of success. See yourself more energized and joyful after achieving your goals. The imagined outcome will push you further up the staircase.

7. RECOGNIZE AND OVERCOME MENTAL OBSTACLES.

Negative habits often prevent us from accomplishments. Some of the common mental obstacles include procrastinating, complaining, expecting the worst, lacking confidence or resources, and not taking life seriously. Recognize the habits that plague you, then step up to consciously change them. Your support team will provide you with suggestions and encouragement.

8. PERSEVERE UNTIL GOALS ARE MET.

Persevere long enough and your prospects for success multiply. Napoleon Hill wrote that persistence changes a person's character as carbon changes brittle iron into invincible steel. He encouraged others to develop a definite purpose backed by burning desire. And if you ever think of giving up, be reminded of painter Grandma Moses who didn't start painting until she was 80 years old, after which she completed over 1500 paintings.

9. CELEBRATE YOUR VICTORIES.

Small victories lead to larger ones so acknowledge and celebrate your successes. Increase your motivation by creating rewards along the way as you achieve your targets. A movie, dinner, time at the beach or with friends will spur you forward as you add pleasure to your life. When you finally reach the top of the staircase, you can look back and truly appreciate the hard-earned effort that brought you success.