

The Power of Goals

By

Stuart Goldsmith

Hold onto your hats! It's a **Stuart Goldsmith kick-ass special...**

In a recent article I told you to take things a little bit easier, to be kind on yourself, and to wind down a little. *I must have been crazy!* That's just the excuse you needed to put your great gallumping, mud-stained boots up on the table, light up a fat stogie, and contemplate the hideous size of your enormous beer-gut - and my male readers behaved even worse!

In fact I bet that since I told you to take things easy for a while your average morning schedule has been something like this:

11 a.m. Alarm clock rings for tenth time. Use one fat arm to throw the clock into the corner where its fall is cushioned by an enormous pile of Ferrer Rocher chocolate wrappers.

Disconnect intravenous gin feed from your arm, and make a mental note to put new two litre bottle into the optic before you go to bed again.

Slowly haul your hulking, lard-ass out of the sack and marvel at the way the sheets crack because you haven't changed them in two months.

Gingerly tiptoe your way through the minefield of two dozen half-empty 'Mr Wan' Chinese take-away food cartons, the oldest of which obligingly moves aside when it sees you coming.

Pause only to light candle in front of shrine containing gold-framed Stuart Goldsmith picture...

Dip a desultory finger into a rancid 1/2 pint glass of Thrapstons Olde Ale and wipe over teeth. (You may have let some of your other standards drop, but dental hygiene is very important to you.)

Something like that? I thought so.

But wait! A slow dragging footstep can be heard approaching up the gravel pathway. A menacing shadow has fallen over your front door. A long, bony finger is pointing a silent accusation whilst the other hand grips the handsomely tooled leather handle of a four foot long 'Cat O Nine Tails'.

With a start of horror you realise that you have an unexpected visitor. Trembling, you slowly open the door to reveal a hideous apparition. It is none other than the likewise handsomely tooled **Stuart Goldsmith**...and...ohmygod, he's **dressed from head to toe in a black leather skeleton suit, complete with skull mask**. He thrusts a note in your face.

"Read the note or feel the lash Tub O' Lard!" he hisses.



You decide to humour this frightful spectre. In a faltering voice, you read the note. *“Cruella’s visiting massage service. Your place or mine. Come on big boy show me what you’ve got and I’ll...”*

“Not that side! Other side, moron.”

You turn the leaflet over to reveal a hastily scrawled note in green biro. You struggle to read the writing.

“Um...P..potty’s... ever....”

“Party’s over!” He snaps, impatiently.

“Oh...sorry, Party’s over...um... pomplin hand?” You hazard.

“Pumpkin head! Pumpkin head!” He screams. *“Can’t you read?”*

“Uh...right, yeh... So... erm... Party’s over, pumpkin head. Um... It’s tune to gel your fat anse buck to....”

“Oh for god’s sake, give me that!” The note is rudely snatched from your hand. He points a skinny finger directly at you, and raises the whip for emphasis.

“Party’s over, pumpkin head. It’s time to get your fat arse back to work unless you want to remain a hopelessly broke and depressed schmuck like what you are now innit?”

“Is that it?” You ask.

“No. There’s one more thing I have to say.”

“What’s that?”

“Bwahahahahaha!!!” And with this hideous laugh he drops his whip with a clatter, turns and fades into the night... the night... the night...the night...the...

Hunh? W.wassat??

You awake with a start. Phew! Only a dream. The clatter was just the sound of the postman delivering the another issue of the Stuart Goldsmith newsletter. You rush down the stairs, knocking aside your spouse who crashes through the bannisters to land with a sickening thud on the floor below. You kick the dog out of the way, it flies through the air, smashes through the stained glass front window, and lands with a yelp in a shower of coloured glass fragments on the footpath. .. Nothing, but nothing stands between you and the Stuart Goldsmith newsletter. You make a mental note to kill your pet hamster for making its wheel squeak when you were reading last month’s edition; then, like a crazed drug-fiend, you tear off the outer envelope and grab the contents.

You settle down to read...

Goal Setting

Greetings!

In this issue I want to show you a few simple exercises which can **dramatically increase the level of wealth and happiness**.

These are not difficult exercises - each one only takes a few moments - but the point is you **actually have to do them in order to receive the benefits**. Simply reading the exercises is not enough.

The rewards of life come to those who *do*, not to those who merely read, talk or day dream. Action is the key.

Okay the first exercise is really simple. Just answer this question:

“In the last 12 months did you achieve all you set out to achieve?”

This is a ‘yes or no’ answer, so don't spend too long considering it.

The answer, of course, is 'no' - unless you are a pathological liar!

Next question: *“Did you set out to achieve anything in the last 12 months?”*

Aha! Now that's a more interesting question I think.

Deciding at the start of a year that you want to achieve a certain result by the end of that year, is an example of our old friend **goal-setting**.

High-performance people set goals. Winners set goals. Losers never set goals. Why? Because it takes about 20 minutes of concentrated effort to write down your goals, and losers have **far more important things to do than this**. It interferes with valuable boozing time, for example. Such a task would take up **nearly a whole episode of a soap opera**. You could read a trash newspaper from cover to cover in this time.

But there is a more important reason why many people don't write goals. It is this. **Writing goals commits you to action**, otherwise there is little point in writing them.

Turning your dreams (goals) into reality will not happen automatically. It will require work and effort.

“Ohmygod!!! WORK, and EFFORT??? Forget it man! *I'm not writing down anything on a piece of paper which will commit me to that!”*

This is why people do not set goals (write down their dreams). They cannot bear to have that piece of paper leering at them in silent accusation as the months of the year tick by.

But what is at stake here? Nothing less than **wealth, happiness, and a fulfilled life**.

Perhaps more importantly, **you can meet your fear head on and live like a warrior, not a frightened rabbit.**

The older I get the more I wonder what the hell we're all so afraid of. Like you, I travel the world and see or hear about *real* problems; murder, torture, death, disease and starvation. Then I return to this grey, stuffy country to witness intelligent and privileged people wasting their lives away down the pub or propped in front of the TV screen for (on average) **four hours each night!** Unbelievable!

Achieving wealth and happiness starts with having a dream. Today's dreams are surely tomorrow's realities. So you blew it in last year? You have a chance to redeem yourself this year - if you have the guts of course.

Got any fight left in you, or have you thrown in the towel long ago? Are you a shivering, frightened little mouse or a human being prepared to fight and win? Are you going to spend the next twelve month bleating and moaning about how you cannot succeed? Or are you going to do something about making your own success a reality?

No matter how far down you are at the moment, I *promise* you that you can make a greater success of your life from here on in. Not only have I done this myself (remember, when I started out on this path I had over £100,000 in debts) but in the past few years **I have helped hundreds of people to improve their lives.** These are people similar to you. People who **were sick of the poverty and mediocrity of their lives.** They wanted a better life and were prepared to fight for it.

Are you prepared to fight?

The Goal Setting Exercise

Okay, here is the next exercise. Take a sheet of blank paper and write on the top “**This is what I want to achieve in the next 12 months.**” Now put the numbers 1-5 down the left-hand side of the paper. Next to those numbers I want you to write *five* things you want to achieve over the next 12 months.

Five things only.

I could have made this a list of 50 or even a hundred items, but this would take an hour or so to complete, and I **know from experience that this would result in most people not even starting the job.** So, five things only.

12 Month Goal List	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Since these are yearly goals, could I suggest that all five items are fairly major projects? I would like to make a further suggestion. **All five of these projects should take you a little further down the path of where you want to be in life.**

As an example, imagine that you have always fantasised about being a rich and famous author. A suitable goal might be: “**Complete synopsis and first chapter of novel.**”

Compare this with a task which would probably take *longer* to achieve, but would not move you one iota closer to your life's dream, e.g. **“Completely re-landscape garden and plant ornamental trees and shrubs.”** Although a useful job, unless your aim in life is to become a renowned landscape gardener, I think you will agree that this task does not move you closer to where you want to be in life.

Here's another example. Let us assume that you have always wanted to become a millionaire ‘one day,’ and that you fancy your chances in information publishing. One of your five goals might read: “Spend one day coming up with ten exciting information publishing projects, write each idea down on half a sheet of A4 paper.”

Now that goal will move you closer to your dreams of becoming wealthy, whereas this goal does not: “Take a week off work and spend it reading up on Greek mythology.” Assuming, of course, that this is an interest of yours. Notice that this goal also consumes seven days instead of one and does not advance you one inch closer to your dreams.

The point here is that if you are only going to set five goals for the year, then **make them goals which will move you toward your dreams.**

It All Starts With a Dream

But what *are* your dreams?

Aha! Another interesting question, and one which remarkably few people can answer.

Before you can successfully write goals, you need to have a dream. **You cannot make your dreams come true if you don't have any dreams!** Sounds obvious, but only a tiny percentage of people can name their dreams: one, two, three on request - and these are the people who will eventually achieve them.

I have deliberately presented this important topic of goal-setting in reverse order to make you think about it.

Effectively I have asked: “*Did you achieve your goals last year?*” Followed by: “*Did you set any goals last year?*” Then I suggested that you set five life-changing goals and finally I asked you to consider your dreams in order that you might successfully select these goals.

Now the *correct* order (the key to success if you like) is as follows:

1. Dream.
2. Break your dreams down into bite-sized chunks.
3. Set weekly, monthly, yearly goals which move you inexorably closer to your dreams.

I'm talking here about big life-planning goals. There is a very real place for smaller goals of the ‘trim the hedge, paint the workshop, read up on Roman history’ variety, but these goals are not the topic of this article.

As Robert L Schwartz so aptly stated: *“The entrepreneur is essentially a visualiser and an actualiser... He can visualise something, and when he visualises it he sees exactly how to make it happen.”*

So, all of this starts with dreaming...

Dreaming is a type of visualisation - visualisation with passion. These are things that you *really* want to be, to have or to do. If you not achieve these things over (say) the next ten years, you are going to be seriously disillusioned and upset.

If you dignify yourself with name of 'human being' you should be able to write a list of six such things. If you cannot think of a single one then you are a **snivelling, apathetic, vapid, brainless little sheep who will be first against the wall come the revolution**. No offence.

Seriously though, it is notoriously hard to dream up a better life for yourself due to the decades of negative conditioning you have allowed yourself to accept.

Here is a little exercise which might help (thanks to master motivator Peter Thomson for this one).

Imagine walking into a room and meeting the 'you' of five years from now. What will you be wearing? Where will you be living? What will your lifestyle be like? What car will you be driving? Will you be running a business? If so, how successful will you be? What will your net worth be?

You really only have three choices here about how the 'you of the future' will look:

1. Somewhere in between how you are now, and a depressed, broke and scruffy tramp.
2. An exact clone of how you are now - absolutely nothing has changed in five years.
3. A happier, wealthier, healthier version of the 'you of today'.

Only a suicidal depressive would visualise number one. No 2 is even worse. You are effectively saying that nothing will change; you will not grow over the next ten years, you will not get richer, happier, wiser - anything. **The you of tomorrow will be indistinguishable from the you of today**. Scary. If this applies to your good self maybe it's time for a serious rethink?

So that just leaves number three, and it remains for you to back this glittering vision of the 'future you' with all the force of your imagination.

Having imagined how you will be in the next five years, here is a really neat trick to help you achieve it.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- “What do I need to achieve in the next 12 months in order to make my future dream a reality?”

- “What do I need to do in the next month to start myself on this journey?”
- “What can I do by next week to prepare myself for the journey?”
- “What can I do right now, today, in order to start this process off?”

Do you see how this works?

You need to dream, but this is not enough. **Dreams are too large to realise in one hit.** Our minds are finite, and so all large projects must be **broken down into bite-sized chunks otherwise we become discouraged by the scale of the endeavour.** This is one of the secret keys of successful people. They are undaunted by large projects, because they have the knack of breaking them down into simple steps. Each step is easily manageable, and can be completed in anything from a few hours to a few weeks.

In contrast, it is useful to analyse the mind processes of a loser, if only to allow you to avoid these errors. This is based on my personal experience of two decades of dealing with both winners and losers. (I’ve said this a hundred times in various writings but the terms ‘winner’ and ‘loser’ are not my judgements. They come from the people themselves. In other words, you are only a ‘loser’ or ‘winner’ by your own standards, not by someone else’s.)

1. They are frightened. Their lives are dominated by fear. They see the world as a scary, threatening place and crave security, dullness, mediocrity. **They long for every day to be the same as the last and become scared and upset if even a small change breaks the monotony of their days.**
2. They completely lack visualisation ability. If asked to visualise their future self, they would stare at you blankly. *They are not pretending.* They do not even understand what you mean by this exercise. If you force them to try, they’ll come back with - nothing.
3. Assuming that you could drag some sort of goal out of them (for example wanting to be worth one million pounds some day) then they would be wholly incapable of working backwards to the present, and suggesting actions they might have to take in order to make this come about. Again, *they are not faking.* There is now; there is the future; and in between, a yawning, fathomless chasm - a blank.
4. Even if you were to write the steps out, 1-100, with a check box next to each one, they **absolutely lack the discipline** even to start on the task, let alone complete the steps. At the first slight downfall, or negative comment from a friend, they will give up. In any choice situation between working for a better future, and instant gratification now, they will always, unfailingly choose the last.

But this is not you.

You are trying to develop the habits of a winner (again, ‘winner’ by your own standards, not mine). **You want to enjoy today, but have an even better tomorrow waiting for you.** To do this you must model yourself on winners - people who have achieved great things in their lives.

This is how a winner operates:

1. **They are brave.** Like all human beings they feel fear, but have mastered it and are able to rise above it. Whilst there are frightening people and places in the world, in general **they view the world as a benevolent place**, full of opportunities and wonderful people.
2. **They are good visualisers.** They have the ability to imagine the future, often in glorious Technicolor detail. They have high self-esteem, and know that they are worth more than they have at present. **Life to them is an exciting adventure to be lived to the full.**
3. **They are intelligent, rational and logical.** If they have a dream of the future, they know the secret technique for making this happen. Today's dreams are tomorrow's realities. They know that large projects cannot be tackled by finite human minds unless they are broken down into manageable pieces. It is a simple matter to step backwards from a future dream to the current day, and to list the **logical steps** required to make that dream come true.
4. Having written down the steps required to achieve their goals, they know what is required next. Action. Up until this point, all of their plans amount to little more than ethereal hot air. It is *action* which grounds the circuit and allows the current to flow. **They know that the journey will be long and hard.** (Any dream which is worthwhile achieving will cause you sweat, pain and suffering to attain.) They need one more quality. **Discipline.** This keeps them going during setbacks, when the list seems too long, and when others heap mirth and derision upon their efforts.

Let me summarise the 7 techniques used by highly effective people:

1. Be brave.
2. Dream of a brighter tomorrow. Dream big. Your yearning power is more important than your earning power.
3. Be *rational*. Mysticism is your mortal enemy. There are obvious, logical steps between here and your dreams. Write them down and follow them.
4. Act. All is dust without action. Action is the key.
5. Be disciplined. Life is tough. Fight. Others want you to fail. Ignore them.
6. Be all you are capable of being - don't settle for less.
7. Start *today*.

The Hierarchy of Needs

When planning your dreams, I want you to remember a concept called the **hierarchy of needs** - you might have come across this before. It goes like this:

When life is a desperate struggle, we are overwhelmingly consumed with the desire for food. Every waking moment is spent in pursuit of nourishment. Nothing else matters. We scabble the earth from dawn until dusk with little on our mind apart from the thrill of discovering another root or berry. **There is zero time for philosophy or self fulfilment.** We work, we sleep, we eat (if we're lucky).

Food is the first need, assuming we have basics such as air and water. If, due to human ingenuity, we manage to crack the food supply problem, our next need becomes **shelter and warmth** somewhere cosy to lay our heads at night. If we achieve this, the next thing we seek is *love*.

And after that?

Recognition.

This is a very important realisation for you. It is most likely that you will have air, water, sufficient food, a roof over your head, a modest amount of money, and a certain amount of love and friendship. Therefore you should realise that **your dreams are almost certainly going to reflect a desire for recognition** (admiration, respect, fame, achievement etc.).

For example, if you want ten million pounds, then this is almost certainly because you **want to be somebody** and have the respect and admiration of society, not because you desire a roof over your head or extra food.

As an interesting aside, the modern phenomenon of the serial killer coincides exactly with a period when, for the first time in history, most people have adequate food, shelter and warmth. Next in the hierarchy of needs comes recognition. Or, in the case of the criminal, notoriety. Most serial killers when caught and questioned, mentioned that one motivating factor was the **desire to be somebody** - a motive completely absent in crimes from previous centuries.

Paul John Knowles who embarked upon a random killing spree in 1972, claiming the lives of at least 24 victims, declared himself to be “the only successful member of my family” and positively basked in the media attention after his arrest. (He was shot dead by an FBI agent whilst trying to grab a gun after a court appearance.)

Recognising your desire for adulation, fame, call it what you will, helps to clear your head and focus your mind more firmly on your goals. It can also help you to disentangle incorrect goals.

For example, achieving a net worth of ten million pounds is actually a difficult task and one which will exercise you for the remainder of your life. Nothing wrong with this, **if it is what you really want**. But if this desire is being driven by a craving for recognition, then there may be an easier way of satisfying your desires without going through the hard slog required to amass that amount. Perhaps you can get the recognition you crave in some other simpler way (writing a book, appearing on TV). It's just a thought.

Once you understand that it is our need for recognition (or attention) which drives most people in an affluent Western society, you will be less puzzled by the things that are going on around you. The rise in crime and delinquency is caused by tens of thousands of petty crooks wanting ‘respect’ to ‘be somebody’, or ‘teach society a lesson’ - they are **ego crimes**. A century ago most crime was **survival crime**. People stole to eat. Vandalism was unknown. (A vandal leaves his or her mark on the furniture of society - it is a statement of ego.)

The stunning rise in divorce rate is driven by **people's desire for recognition**. They want to be appreciated. They are not prepared to suffer the drudgery of marriage without reward. A century ago this would have been unthinkable. You got on with it because the *survival* of

your family was at stake. Your precious thoughts of wanting appreciation were totally inconsequential.

Look at advertising on television. Most products are sold on the basis of **pandering to your self-esteem**, not on the benefits of the product.

In closing, let me share another thought with you (thanks to the amazing Randy Gage for this one): If lots of bad things happen to you, and life always seems to go wrong, ask yourself if there is any *one* person who is always at the scene of the crime... That person is, of course, you. Could you be to blame for many of the things which go wrong in your life?

Just asking...

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