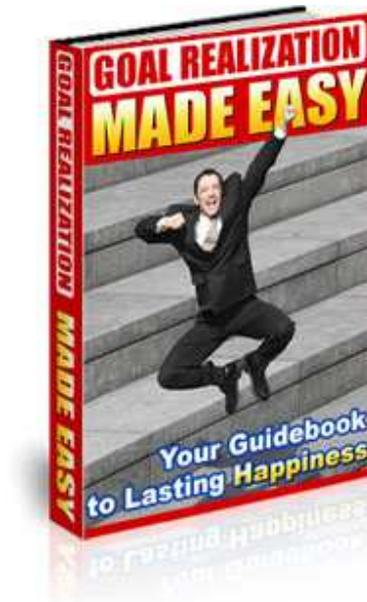


GOAL REALIZATION MADE EASY

Your Guidebook to Lasting Happiness

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Introduction

Just about every human being at one time or another has asked himself/herself the question: “What on earth am I here for?” This universal question has baffled humanity since time began and it is even more so today where we live a complex, fast-paced, constantly changing life. Everybody seems to be in a hurry, racing against time. Despite our busy schedule, this question keeps lingering on us, especially when we have time to stop, recollect, trying to find our inner self.

Some may have an answer or answers, others may have an answer but still doubtful if they have the right one, and still many of us have unanswered questions.

Whatever specific reason each of us have for existence, there is one universal reason: “to find happiness” and we owe it to ourselves.

Happiness comes in many forms, each is unique from the other. Happiness is embracing the Divine Providence in your life; It is having found your true love, raising a family. It is a life of fame, power, and/or wealth. It is good health. It is in serving others and countless more. Some of us may be happy for just one reason but often it is a combination of several.

However we perceive happiness to be, goal realization is a vital part of it. Great opportunities abound in life. It is entirely up to us to hold on to these opportunities and align them with our goal.

We cannot overemphasize the importance of goal realization in life in pursuit of happiness. Realizing a goal brings a feeling of fulfillment to oneself. Either way, we can choose to be one of these three: a goal achiever, a failure, or an in-between. Again, it is entirely up to us.

Personally, I think we stand to gain a lot if we choose to be an achiever (and we stand a good chance of being one), a gain most likely to exceed our expectation or imagination.

Speaking of imagination, imagine a person whose life is aimlessly drifted without a purpose. I figure you would say “what a waste”. Such is a life being spent without setting and attaining a goal.

Now, think of a person you know who has reached the ultimate goal in his/her life. Wouldn't you want to know his/her pathways to success? Wouldn't you want to follow in his/her footsteps?

Of course, you do. We all do. We all want to succeed in life and the way to do it is to set goals and attain them. There's no other way. As mentioned earlier, goal achievers as well as you and I know that it is one of the components to happiness in life.

For most of us though, setting and attaining goals seem to be a far-fetched, difficult task. We sometimes think that it is a task reserved only for the intellectually gifted, for the lucky few, for the affluent.

Indeed it is a difficult task, but to say that it is reserved only for the gifted, lucky, or affluent people is wrong. This is an excuse to fool ourselves. Actually, we are not being mindful of our own potentials. We just keep on drifting life away like a horse with eyes covered on the sides. We keep on concentrating in our daily routines and activities and life's short-lived pleasures that we tend to forget about, set aside, or even ignore our goals in life. However, this kind of lifestyle has something to do with our attitude and this is the attitude we need to change. We have to adopt a goal-oriented attitude. We have to get out of our comfort zone and venture into that jungle out there by leading an active life that will bring happiness not only to ourselves but to others as well. We are all apprehensive of change but this is one change for the better and it will be worth a hundred, maybe a thousand folds over.

Join me as we venture into the world of goal realization.

Chapter One

Now is the Best Time

There is no better time to focus our attention to goal realization than now.

Frankly speaking, yesterday was a better time. The day before yesterday was even better than yesterday. But the past is done. There's no point in groping over time spent. But to delay further would be a sin to oneself.

My father used to work for a company as head of its engineering department. His department is responsible for installation of machines and upkeep of all the engineering needs of the company including its utilities such as water, electricity, and communication. He told me one time over dinner that he gets his assignments from the company's Plant Manager. He said there were occasions (quite frequently though) wherein some jobs required urgency and that time was of the essence so they have to work on those jobs round the clock. He usually receives a `Job Order` form for each job and on the space for `Due Date` was written `yesterday` instead of urgent or ASAP or a definite date. It was the plant manager's way of jokingly asking that the job requires urgency because each hour that passes by would mean losses for the company not to mention the commitment to its client. They even have clients that penalize delays in their production delivery and it reflects a bad image for their company.

I can't overemphasize the importance of time when it comes to goal attainment. Each day, week, or month's delay may mean lost opportunities and this might derail the timeframe you set to attain your goal.

Though there is no specific or particular "due date" for goal attainment, we must not treat goal attainment half-heartedly. Give it full-time attention, effort, and energy and the rewards will

come to you more than you expect. There may be instances wherein delays are unavoidable. Be sure to give it a think over and exhaust all possibilities to minimize each delay. If still, delays are unavoidable, then we must patiently give way to it but under no circumstances must procrastination take its place in your pursuit.

Like any other endeavor, it is human nature that delays do happen. Nobody's perfect. Every time it does, we must pick up a lesson or two from each experience. As the saying goes: charge it to experience.

Talking of experience, it reminds me of the importance of history lessons. There is an adage: "Learn from the mistakes of others; you can't live long enough to make them all yourself". This is one of the reasons why we have history subjects in school.

You may wonder how history is related to goal realization. I also used to wonder why we have to study history lessons, what good it will do to the present and future generations. I used to think that we can't turn back the hands of time to correct mistakes and studying history is a waste of time and energy.

But then I realized that through history, we can learn from the achievements and failures of other people. We can imitate and analyze the traits and characters of great achievers and at the same time avoid the pitfalls of failures done in olden times. History will give us an insight where we can draw countless lessons that will greatly help us to make better decisions on certain aspects of life particularly those related to goal realization.

We all know that time is gold. Spending time to pursue our goal is time well invested. Even if after spending most of the time to goal attainment and we haven't cultivated it, we can become history ourselves. We can pass on to our next generation our experiences (be they good

or not so good) that will serve as lessons for them. In effect, this will save time for our successors to continue our pursuit.

One way or the other, we can say to ourselves that we have contributed or done our part, no matter how menial it is, as long as it is intended wholeheartedly to goal realization.

Chapter Two

Goals Know No Borderlines

At one time or another, we've come across articles that touch on issues like racial, age, and gender discrimination, suppression of beliefs or convictions, those sort of things. Those issues do not affect your pursuit to goal realization. Your target goal does not look at your color or race. You may be black or white, yellow, brown, red, or any color in-between or combination thereof. It does not discourage you just because you're not so young, or that you are a woman and your roll is only to do housework. We are not saying though that housework is unimportant. I do a lot of housework myself.

In short, goal realization has no limitations to race, age, sex, belief or conviction, religion, economic condition in life, educational attainment, experience, fame and influence in society; you name it. The only thing that might limit its potential is yourself, if you don't work on it.

I used to have a childhood friend whose father was a doctor who owned a modest community hospital. We used to play together, go roller-skating, biking (bikes were rented those days when we cannot afford to buy one), play with marbles, rubber bands, and cards.

Economic conditions in rural areas can be very tough. Many people cannot afford to pay hospital bills, so my neighbor's father must settle for payments in kind; whatever patients can afford. Because of this condition, the hospital including the lot on which it is located has to be mortgaged to a bank to keep it operational. It reached a point wherein the property was forfeited by the bank due to delayed or non-payment of mortgage. Because of the doctor's desire to serve the community, he was forced to rent a place which was used as a clinic instead. My friend, whose ambition to become a doctor to help other people like his father was derailed due to

economic conditions. Came the time when he has to begin his collegiate career. Since his father cannot support him financially, he has to do it by himself.

He tried to find work and luckily found one but it will take up most of his time leaving no time to study. He decided to quit school temporarily, hoping to study again someday when conditions improve.

His work led him to learn another trade which enabled him to set up his own business but leaving behind his original ambition to become a doctor. With winds blowing in his favor, he was able to scoop enough cash to build his own non-profit clinic which was managed by his father.

Let's see now what we have learned from this experience. My friend's original goal to become a doctor did not materialize but he was able to establish his own clinic through other means. His original intention to help other people came true. He need not be a doctor to help other people; he did it in an indirect way. You see, there is an added advantage to goal realization when it is doused with the intention to help other people. We will touch on this topic later. My friend's economic condition did not deter him to reach his goal (his ultimate goal to help other people). He hardly finished college (only gaining a couple of years of it), but he is satisfied anyway with the way things turned out to be.

Sometimes, it looks as if the potential to reach our goal is not enough. We must take a second look or even a third because we may not have exhausted every means or possibility.

When an opportunity is lost, another is usually born to those who persevere.

Chapter Three

It All Starts with a Dream

We all know what dreaming or dreams are all about. Some dreams are shady images of what seems to be part of what's happening in our life. These are dreams that occur while we are asleep. However, the dreams we are referring to, are dreams about what we perceive, or what we want to happen to us, or what we want or intend to be in the future.

Most boys, say aged three to six, would respond to the question of what they want or would like to be when they grow up with answers like: "I want to be a pilot or I want to be an astronaut or I want to be like 'Superman'". Girls of about the same age would probably respond to the same question with: "I want to be a doctor or I want to be a teacher".

Surely, these answers are part of young boys' and girls' dreams or ambitions of what they want to be when they grow up. Some answers may be too exaggerated. However, there are answers that are as realistic today as they will be when these children grow up to be adults that they stick to their wants or desires.

Did you notice though that every time these questions are raised to young boys and girls, the answer starts with an "I want to be..."? Wanting to be somebody or to do something is the start of creative or desired dreaming. Wanting is associated with dreaming that it somewhat starts to evolve on the goals we intend to set and attain. Wanting something can be so powerful that we start making plans to make things happen the way we want it to be. It even gets more powerful when that want will produce good deeds for the benefit of many. Somehow, a spark is ignited that it will start to kindle and glow in the dark, take its shape, and mold into something beneficial and worthwhile.

Though dreams that occur while we are asleep are different from dreams of what we perceive to be in the future, there is some degree of inter-relation between the two. When we persistently concentrate on our wants and desires, these wants and desires sometimes manifest themselves in our dreams while we are asleep and gives us a vivid vision of how we can make our ambition turn into reality. So much so that when we wake up, we have developed a direction or a plan on how to execute our ambition even when it previously seems to be vague or far-fetched from reality.

But even if our dreams are vague or seems impossible, we must keep them alive in our minds. By keeping them on our minds, we are somewhat injecting fuel that keeps the fire in our dreams aflame. What used to be a vague vision of our dreams will slowly but gradually turn vivid as we commit it to memory. What seems to be impossible is starting to look possible. And when we have reached this stage of possibility, we cannot resist the urge that will come to us to mold it into reality. We can't wait to start the wheels of development turning. Somehow this urge will propel these wheels to move, no matter how small the movements are, so long as it moves because we want to see how it develops. We want to see progress. We want to see improvements. Without even noticing it, the moves may start to pick up speed. And to think of it, it just started as dreams in our minds.

Creative dreaming is a burning desire that keeps our ambitions going and holding on to it, will turn it into reality. There is no stopping to goal realization for as long as there is creative dreaming.

Chapter Four

Act on It

A dream is a vision in our mind. Creative dreaming without action is a far-fetched realization to goal attainment.

Typical examples are the great wonders of the world, those landmarks that typify or define the greatness of nations. Landmarks like the Statue of Liberty of the United States of America, the Big Ben of England, the Taj Mahal of India, the Great Wall of China, and numerous more. Imagine if these great ideas, these dreams were not acted upon, will we ever have them to be enjoyed by people from every nation on earth? What kind of achievement will each nation have if great thinkers just sit on their ideas and never acted on it. Absolutely nothing. We would probably be facing each other blankly wondering why and what went wrong?

Probably you'd say: "Oh... well... we still have the natural wonders like Niagara Falls, Mt. Fuji, beautiful coral reefs everywhere on earth.". Yes... but these are God's creations. God did not create man in His own image if He thinks we won't be using our creativity and put it into action. He might as well take it away from us. He expects us to act on it.

So what's keeping us from acting on our ideas? We can name a few. Fear of failure is our biggest deterrent. Fear of being ridiculed, fear of sinking further to a depressed state than we presently are, fear of totally losing all we've got if we don't succeed, fear of taking risk.

We all have to take risk at one time or another. Risk may come to us in a variety of reasons, big or small. There are risks we can do without, but there are risks that leave us no option but to take and act on it.

As you can see, risks come in many forms. For comparison purposes, let us consider two: risk similar to winning or losing when we gamble and risk in pursuit of a goal.

The risk involved in gambling is for non-thinkers. This is tantamount to luck risk, not good judgment risk. Risk of this kind has no room in goal realization. It is like ignoring safety on the road, just for kicks, come what may, short-lived, to satisfy a craving.

However, risk in pursuit of a goal has a definite lasting purpose, a purpose that will bring untold benefits once you achieve your goals. It is a risk worth taking for thinkers, not for happy-go-lucky non-thinkers. Risk in pursuit of a goal will bring stability and security in life, ultimately leading to happiness.

Whenever fear grips us, think positively. Look at it this way. Will we ever get anywhere if we don't take the risk to act on our dreams? Will we be satisfied with our inaction, five, ten, or twenty years from now?

If you notice, there is one common denominator that is holding us back from acting on our dreams, that thing called fear. Fear is the biggest stumbling block to acting on a creative dream that it practically holds everything still. So it is imperative that we eliminate fear in our feelings to clear the way to our goal.

To overcome this fear, we have to face fear on the face, eye to eye, mano y mano. Let us take a typical example, say you have a fear of speaking in public. I guess a majority of us do. Worst scenario that could happen is you will get tongue-tied and spoil your entire speech in spite of having committed the entire speech into memory. You become the laughing stock of the audience. Don't let it prevent you from speaking in public the next time around because if you do, fear have won over you and you will be cowering in this kind of fear for the rest of your life. To win over fear, draw lessons from your failure and capitalize on it the next time around. Don't

stop till you have successfully made a good speech. Once you do, you have actually turned the table around. This time, it is fear that fears you.

Another example with a somewhat different twist, say you are a lifeguard and you failed to save a drowning person who apparently should have been saved. Now this is a big failure because a life was at stake here. In spite of this, don't give up being a lifeguard just because of one mistake. Think about the other lives you have saved before and will be saving if you continue to do so. Say you were able to save a person in an otherwise hopeless situation, doesn't this offset or overcome the previous failure that happened?

The idea here is to give your best. Once you give your best, it just doesn't get any better because it is already the best.

When you act on your dreams, think of your actions in a positive way. What you think is what will happen. What the mind can conceive, the body can achieve. Believe that the likely outcome of a thing that we do depends mostly on how we set our mind on it. Our actions originate from our thoughts and the ultimate result is dictated by our mind as well. If we think it will fail, it will. If we think it will succeed, it will. Mental thinking or attitude is the master of the actions we undertake.

Where your mental attitude is directed for a longer period of time, the more difficult it is to change to the opposite direction. If your mind is set on negative thoughts, the more difficult it will be to change to positive thoughts if you do not act on it immediately. However, if your mind is already set on positive thoughts for a long time, it will remain firm on this attitude as time goes by.

Defeat is imminent if your thoughts are in this direction. You may say: "I told you so" that an action has failed because you think it will, just to satisfy yourself when in fact, you are

just looking for an excuse or easy way out. The end result is still a failure and what does that make you, a failure. You are just fooling yourself.

On the other hand, success is imminent when your thoughts say it will. Even if it fails the first time, you will learn from your failure and when you try again, you will ultimately succeed as you gain more experience. Keep on trying and persevering. There should be no let up and when success is at hand, you would have defeated defeat.

On a family setting, it is extremely important that positive thoughts prevail over the entire household. With this attitude, every member of the family will experience this blessing and it will grow stronger in time. Therefore from childhood till adulthood, every member will carry with him or her this positive attitude for the rest of their lives, ultimately resulting into a successful and happy life. And unknowingly, we are bonding the family more closely to each other for a lasting relationship.

The same thing is true outside your household. We are all familiar with the phrases, “Show me your friends and I’ll tell you the kind of person you are” and “Birds of a feather, flock together”. We are what we keep as company. We are what we think we are.

A person, in time, can shift totally from one personality to another especially if that person is the type that follows a leader. If you have the qualities of leadership, you are in effect, the one who persuades the follower to change to your kind of attitude. The stronger personality has the stronger attitude to persuade. It is a good thing if the leader is the optimistic type, all followers will follow suit. The other way around is disaster.

So if you have children, make sure they are in good company. And you can do so by making yourself as an example. It is easy to turn bad, it is difficult to be good and stay good.

That is why turning bad doesn't need persuasion. It's like baking a cake; it takes a lot of time to bake one. Destroy the cake and it's done in no time.

Remember, think positive, act positive, and stay that way. You can do it because what you think is what's going to happen. This is a must in goal realization.

Chapter Five

Conditioning the Mind

The shortest distance between two points is a straight line. In goal achievement, the first point is indicative of our dream, the distance is the action we take to turn the dream into reality, and the second point is our goal. A straight line may mean zero obstacles or troubles but in reality, this is something next to impossible but that doesn't mean it's not possible. However, we must always be prepared for any possibility. We must try to keep our road to goal realization as trouble-free as possible.

When we set ourselves to achieve a goal, we need to fashion our mind to be attuned to it. We have to align our thoughts in the direction of our goal. We need to get to our goal in the easiest manner at the shortest possible time. In other words, we have to condition our minds.

Let us differentiate different attitudes, especially those attributed to the way we direct our thoughts to goal achievement.

It may sound contradictory at times that two characteristics are almost exact opposites yet we still want them both practiced.

Sometimes, some of us may quip: "I must not delay things but I need to be patient enough to wait". I am reminded of my grandmother who went to a cardiologist for a check-up. The doctor prescribed some medicines to keep her blood pressure within controllable limits plus recommendations on certain types of food she has to avoid. After a couple of weeks, there wasn't much improvement so she went back to the same doctor who referred her to another doctor in which she was diagnosed with a slight problem on her kidneys, which was the reason for her frequently changing blood pressure. So she was again prescribed some medicines and again was

recommended another set of food she mustn't eat. In short, some portions of the two recommendations on food she must avoid contradict each other and my grandmother wound up with a very strict limited diet making her miss vital needed nutrients. Dismayed, she ignored part of the recommendations, used practical sense and methods and took moderate amount of various nutritious foods. It turned out better for her.

By practicing practicality on the mental characteristics we need to adapt, we must lean on the positive and aggressive side of the action we have to take to achieve our goal. We need to persevere and be persistent no matter what. However, learn to stop to rest for a while if need be and continue again after regaining your strength. We must stop temporarily but not permanently. We must have a burning desire or passion to attain our goal but must not burn ourselves out. Don't let stress and tension affect you and your health. We must act on ideas immediately but must be patient enough to wait for results without unnecessary delays on our part. Some processes just take time. Not everything can be done in short cuts. We must work on goals we like and are familiar with, yet we must not stop to learn more about it especially those pertaining to new innovations and technologies. Be positive, practical, and aggressive in the pursuit of your goals.

There is no substitute to a peaceful mind. To be able to think straight and in a clear manner, a peaceful mind is essential. It is like a clutter-free household, we come home relaxed even after a hectic day.

Take a mind full of tense feelings and negative emotions, where do you think this will lead to in goal realization? Nowhere. This will lead to goal disintegration. You have to take all the garbage (negative impressions) out of your mind to give way to clear, tense-free positive thinking.

Success, failure, good times, bad times, they all happen. They are part of life. But when failures and bad times occur, sometimes we become so affected by these circumstances to the point of being slaves to them. We feel so bad that we become affected by them in almost everything we do. We lose control and so more trouble drops in. And all these, if we analyze it, are based on the way our minds respond to it, the negative way.

To counteract bad times, we need to think about good times and to do this, we need to capitalize on how it turned bad by drawing lessons from it. The positive answers will eventually pop out of our minds and we begin to feel good because we now know the answer to correct failure the next time around. And the next time around should be acted upon immediately thereby blanketing bad times with good times in a short period of time.

Let your mind control the situation in a positive manner. Do not let the situation control your mind.

The option of controlling is in your hands. You have power over failure. Exercise this option and you will surely be on your way to goal realization.

When we set to pursue a goal, we must consider goals that can be achieved in a manner wherein we have more hand in controlling the processes.

What we have just discussed a while ago is controlling a situation that has already happened, how we react to it. Now, we must consider how to control a situation we think may happen, sort of pre-empting what we think will happen. It seems similar although there is a difference between the two.

This type of controlling a situation tells us to concentrate on goals that we can maneuver, we can direct to the way we plan it. You may think this is monopolizing but it isn't.

An example, let's say you want to get into the business of making ready-to-cook 'french fries'. If you are going to buy potatoes from a planter who dictates the price in the market, you're bound to have problems beyond your control. One of the solutions to continue in this business is to look for more suppliers or better still, you must be knowledgeable in planting your own potatoes. These ways, you have a ready solution to a probable problem.

Get involved in goals wherein you have control of your own resources. In short, choose goals you are familiar, comfortable, and you have more experience in.

Another example would be, let's say you want to be a spiritual counselor. A counselor must be both a good listener and a good adviser. If you are good in listening to other people's problems but cannot give sound advice except reactions like: "Oh, that's too bad... that's awful... that's terrible", you cannot be a counselor. Consequently, if you're a good adviser but a bad listener, you cannot be a counselor either. Come to think of it, how can a person give sound advice if he/she doesn't listen well. Maybe instead of counseling, go into sales where good conversationalists are needed.

Part of everyday living and in the course of setting and realizing our goal, we are usually faced with different kinds of troubles or obstacles that hinder our growth, our development. Such troubles may directly affect the goal we aim for, others indirectly, and still others have nothing to do with them except that they take up some of our time and make us feel bad, they just slow us down, as if we want to give up.

From these troubles, we can either become cowards as a result or a stronger, wiser person, learning from them. It all depends on how we handle trouble. Many times, people with problems tend to look for faults blaming other people instead of finding solutions.

To be on the winning side, we can draw support and advice from our family and friends. But the best support we can get is the one coming from the Almighty through the power of prayer, which you will read later on in this book. Ask the Almighty to come to your aid. Do so with intense depth and sincerity. He will clear your mind to find a solution to your trouble.

The Almighty works in wondrous ways, that is why we must keep our minds clear so that He may have access into us to be able to aid us. We must free ourselves from all the clutter of fear, anger, hatred, envy and all traits that hinder our mind to think clearly and replace it with growth-developing faith, hope, courage, and care.

Some of us may treat trouble by ignoring it. Yes, there are troubles that fade in time and ignoring it could be the solution. But most troubles persist despite time, some may even develop into bigger troubles in time. In such cases, we have to face them head-on, we have to persist and persevere in finding solutions that will free us back to our road to goal realization

Seek help whenever necessary. Keep in mind, Divine intervention or human assistance always comes to people with a good purpose.

One time, I was watching a television newscast of a grandmother whose house was gutted by fire. Her house is located in a depressed area of a city, a rather crowded place, with narrow alleys, making it difficult for fire trucks to go through. The fire broke out from one of the neighboring houses due to an overheated electric fan. It was a hot summer day and it happened when she wasn't at home.

From a distance, she could hear and see fire trucks responding in the direction where she lives. Suddenly, fear gripped her. She frantically rushed home. She was right. Her house is on fire along with the other houses. She has two grandchildren whom she left to her neighbor who were able to escape unhurt.

When interviewed by a news reporter, she cried terribly for having lost her house. What makes things worst, she wasn't able to save anything, this being her fourth fire. "Tough luck", said the reporter. When she was asked if anybody in her family was hurt or perished in any of those four fires, her crying from despair changed to tears of joy. All of a sudden, she realized that in spite of having experienced four fires, nobody died or got hurt in her family. Realizing this, she became grateful and thankful.

This grandmother came to realize that despite the setback, she is actually a lucky lady; a demonstration of how the mind works on a negative state compared to a mind with a positive approach.

So if your goal seems to be on fire, burning to the ground, get a candle and light it from the fire. Keep that candle lighted, you're going to need it to continue your journey to your original goal.

It is a matter of how we view the situation. How we will react to a situation makes all the difference. We can either feel frustrated, accept defeat, and feel remorseful or analyze the situation, try to find the best solution and approach it positively by keeping faith in God and yourself.

Now I'm not saying that problems are nothing. They can at times be very devastating and shattering, and sometimes, they are so horrific that we feel they crush us to the ground. But problems are part of life. We can't escape them and we just have to deal with them. Hiding from them won't solve anything.

Obstacles, problems, troubles, or setbacks can be blessings in disguise. Maybe God wants us to experience them to make us stronger. Consider this scenario. Two new drivers just learned how to drive a car. One driver drives along a straight path while the other on a zigzag road. After

having driven a number of miles, they both gain more experience. Who became a better driver? I believe you will agree that the one who traveled the road of obstacles, the zigzag road was the better one.

Come back after a setback or drawback. Draw lessons from problems so that you and I can become better persons the next time. Like we mentioned earlier about history, draw lessons from it by learning from your mistakes and the mistakes of others. Turn disadvantages to advantages. Turn a gloom into a bloom.

All this depends on the way we think. If we think defeated, then we are. So if you feel like you've lost almost everything, stop thinking negatively, regain your senses, and start to think positively. Refuse defeat. You have everything to gain if you win over the situation by developing a positive outlook.

Never give up, never say sorry to yourself, never surrender. Throw away that white flag and keep the flag of faith waving. If you have to surrender, surrender only to God.

Remember that your mind is a very powerful tool. Use it the way God designed it to be; positively, wisely, intelligently.

Chapter Six

Goals that Care

The word care as defined in the dictionary, implies many meanings. Care can mean worry or a troubled state of mind. It can also mean close attention, a heed, liking, protection, or responsibility. And it can also mean a feeling of concern or love. The last meaning is the care we need to infuse into our goals.

Care is a strong word when it comes to human characteristics, so strong that it can move mountains, so to speak. It can drive a tough, heartless, no-nonsense guy into tears even if he is not the recipient.

Even in a world where the law of self-preservation prevails, people could usually see through the motive of a goal or project if care is injected into it and results are always favorable to all concerned. Even those who are not directly concerned, when they learn about a care project through some form of media, would comment that it is a worthwhile project worthy of emulation. Human nature has a way of reciprocating kindness or care by giving it its full support when they see a worthy cause at work. It's like a two-way traffic, give and take so to speak. Sometimes, it even turns rivals into friends earning admiration because of the care they see and feel in the project.

When we focus on a goal with a touch of care, it is care that serves as the catalyst that drives us to make this goal succeed. We get so excited, we cannot wait for it to materialize. The result or outcome will give us an air of satisfaction or contentment.

In an overall context, when care is part of everything we do, it leaves a lasting impression to the person receiving it. Even if the receiver unintentionally or effortlessly thinks about it, the

effect lingers for a very long period of time. And care usually multiplies by itself because beneficiaries or recipients cannot help but gladly talk about it. It's practically a word-of-mouth advertisement.

Now, imagine a world dominated by people who care. Let us say half of life's problems are human-made and the other half are natural. Imagine further that half of human-made problems are preventable. Because of care or concern, preventable human-made problems can be eradicated. If half of natural problems can likewise be prevented by people who would care enough to find ways to avert or reduce them, that leaves only fifty percent overall problems in the world. Isn't that a good bargain? Wouldn't life be much better?

Everybody could use some care once in a while. It boosts spirits to a higher level. In terms of goal selection, care is a big factor so much so that if incorporated into the choice of the goal we intend to pursue, it will propel the goal to sure success.

A serve-all idea is a sure-win-for-all situation. It amplifies the benefits that can be derived from it.

The environment is another factor that can affect our aim to goal realization. Just how is the issue of environment related to achieving a goal?

One of the areas wherein goal selection could use a lot of attention and care is the environment. When goals are concerned to keep the environment to its original beauty, people usually support and laud it. Even more so are projects that restore severed environment to its original state. And an even higher level of support will come to projects that restore severed environments to their original state, beautified further than the original.

Now, the last one may seem that we are competing with God and that we have done better than God and He might not like the idea. On the contrary, God will be pleased with the

result because the seed of care He has planted in our brain is bearing fruit and did not go to waste. God may have intentionally reserved that level for us to prove our worth on earth.

Let us now look on another aspect of environment. Goal realization is basically dependent on our mental attitudes. And the way we think can in turn be affected by the environmental condition. In other words, environmental condition around which the goal evolves plays a vital part to make it successful.

Let's face it; some environments have some degree of hostility, man-made or natural, so we have to incorporate some precautionary measures to prevent unfavorable events from happening, events that may hamper or hinder the progress of our goal.

Get to know your environment, the weather condition the whole year round, the neighborhood. Make adjustments whenever necessary. Ask around and be a good observant. The earlier you can pre-empt a condition, the better it is. This will better the chance of success to your endeavor by cutting wasted time and turn it into productive use.

Ever heard of the advertisement: "The garbage you throw inadvertently or carelessly will come back to you." This used to be shown on television in an Asian country where some people throw garbage carelessly resulting to floods during the rainy season. When the flood enters the household, so does the garbage. It was a message of concern from one of the agencies of its government and it is very true.

You see, our environment cannot and does not complain. You won't hear a word of complaint from it, so we must make it an obligation to ourselves to care for it. The outcome of the condition of the environment may or may not affect us now but definitely, it will in the generations to come. And definitely, this will be of vital importance or concern to the goals of our children and their children.

Care, it's a strong word with a wide scope, from human characteristics to environmental concerns.

Chapter Seven

That Thing Called Prayer

Whenever we hear or talk about prayer, we equate the word with the Almighty Creator. Prayer is the means of communication between man and his Creator. It is the medium by which man transmits his intentions to God.

All over the world, people of different races, beliefs, and cultures embrace different religions. Depending on the country, some religion may be dominant than the others. Dominance of one over the others does not mean unequal rights to exercise each religion. Respect for each other prevails in most situations. This is the principle that the great Pope John Paul II wants delivered to the world. Men/women have equal rights to embrace his/her choice of religion without prejudice to the others. After all, all religions are centered to belief in God. A non-religious person does not mean he/she does not believe in God.

We cannot discount though that there are a few of us who doubt that the Almighty Creator exist. Perhaps this might help change their perception from a doubter to a believer.

I think at one time or another, it had occurred to all of us to try to find answers to questions such as:

How did life originate?

Where did the earth and the universe and everything in them come from or

Who made them?

In short, who started all of these?

Personally, I think we will not find the answer if we stick to our sense of reasoning on natural laws even if we live nine lives. That leaves us only one option - that the Almighty Creator started all these.

The wonderful thing about these creations, living or otherwise, including us, is that they are all unique. Even identical twins are not alike. No one thing is an exact replica of the other. DNA will prove this.

For the purpose of this subject, we will use God as the center of our faith. But what if you're not a Christian? The same principle goes.

It doesn't matter what religion you're in. The important thing is that you have deep spiritual faith.

Studies have shown that having this kind of faith actually prolongs your life. The inner peace that your faith brings can contribute significantly to good mental & emotional health.

If you have deep spiritual faith, you have the power to conquer all obstacles that come along the way.

In the context of goal realization, prayer plays one of the most important, if not the most important part. Taking away prayer from the pursuit of our goal is like taking the spine away from a human body. Everything collapses. The importance of prayer cannot be overstated.

A goal originated from an idea while an idea originated from our mind. What originates from our mind originates from God. I believe that is a fair concept. Since God is the original source of our idea to a goal, it is natural that we ask God to guide us all the way in our pursuit, to aid us in times of need, to thank Him for every success no matter how big or small, and to offer back to Him whatever we have accomplished. And the medium we can use to have access to God is through prayer.

When two or more persons want to discuss something, they talk and listen through their lips and ears with the brains as the central processing units. Looks like we're going high tech. It's slightly different when we communicate with God through prayers, telling Him our personal intentions. We do the talking, God does the listening. We tell Him our problems or intentions. He listens and finds solutions or answers to them. He acts and tells us His responses through our thoughts, our minds. The rest is up to us.

Sometimes, two persons argue due to differences in opinions. Again with God, it is slightly different. He won't complain like we usually do nor argue with us even if we pour out our aches and pains to Him and start to blame Him for all these. He will just be silently listening and wait till we come to our senses. One way or the other, He knows we will. Once our senses are back on the right track, He will start to work through our thoughts, just like before and let us know what we need to know.

For as long as our intentions are attuned to things that will bring good to us and to our neighbors, expect full support from Him.

Remember that we need God in our lives. In return, He responds to our needs as proof of His love for us. With this in mind, whenever we approach Him, be honest and sincere. Approach Him with a humble and contrite heart.

I am a Catholic by religion. And in our religion, we have fixed prayers like the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be. When we pray the rosary (I hope you are familiar with it), these three prayers are used and repeatedly said a number of times.

I used to wonder why prayers are repeated many times over. Over and over again, day after day, week after week, and so on, it's the same prayers. I mentioned 'used to' because I believe I found the answer. I don't know if you'll agree but I'll share it with you anyway.

A prayer is repeatedly said, not for God's benefit, but for our own. God wants to instill in us the value and habit of practice. As we all know, practice makes perfect. He uses prayers as an instrument of forming this habit of practice in us. The question is "what for"?

By practicing positive attitudes in life over and over again, we may ultimately develop these attitudes and keep them in us for good. It's like learning to drive a car, you get to be a good driver only through practice.

If we want to instill positive values/attitudes needed for goal realization but you find it difficult to start doing so, it will even be more difficult to sustain it in time and the only way to do it is by practice. This is tantamount to conditioning our mind, body, and spirit into this habit. Once we are used to it, it will remain in us for good.

At times, we have problems that seem to surmount us and we approach God for help but He seems to be nowhere in sight, we feel that God is neglecting us. We begin to shy away from Him and start to blame Him for all the problems we have. It is as if we have built a wall separating God from us. When other people notice this condition in us and we tell them the reason why, they would say: "God has His reasons. He knows what is best for us." However, we are not convinced. This has some similarity to the story "Footprints in the Sand" if you're familiar with it. Anyway, in the story, a man could see two sets of footprints on the sand during his good times. One set belonged to the man, the other to the Lord. During bad times, the man could see only one set of footprints and he would wonder why the Lord would leave him during his lowest moments in life. The Lord replied: "I would never leave you. Every time you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."

Here are some food for thought and soul which I believe is the reason or reasons why the Lord is silent to our problems (some of the answers are in the form of questions that reflects back to us):

1. Did I approach the Lord without a ready pre-condition? Is it possible that I told myself: "If the Lord does not help me on this, I will loose faith in Him. It's His lost, not mine."
2. If the Lord acted favorably to solve my problem, will His actions make me a stronger person?
3. Keep in mind that the Lord will not let your prayer go unanswered in your lifetime. I have encountered this personally.

Remember that prayer is the ultimate solution to our troubles and problems.

Prayers need not be the last resort or option if we encounter difficulties. It can be the first.

Make it a habit to pray to God, not only during bad times but also during simple times. Treat Him as your friend. God could use some company too. And don't forget to thank Him for good times.

Chapter Eight

Enthusiasm Drives the Goal

If enthusiasm can be bought as an item from a store, do you think it will sell? And if it does, just how much are you willing to pay for it?

I believe your response will be: “You must be kidding. It’ll be a sellout. The store might probably run out of stock, you’ll have to wait in queue for a long time before you can get your order no matter the price.

Just how important is enthusiasm in goal realization; in one’s life? It is so important that it occupies one of the top slots in the list of elements needed for successful living. It is so important that it is one of the deciding factors to realize one’s goal.

There is no doubt that everyone likes talking to enthusiastic people, unless a person likes to be in a gloomy state, which I doubt that person does. Enthusiastic people keep the conversation alive and upbeat. You feel like you are partying. And when you feel like partying, you’d wish the night will never end.

Image yourself in the middle of an argument or a debate of two opposing sides on an issue. When the mood gets rough, even when you are not at first, you get to feel rough and in an argumentative mood. Your mood swings in accordance to the situation. It is like when you hear a song you like, you feel like singing along. And that mood will usually prevail for quite a while long after you’ve left the scene where it took place and it will only change when something else prevails over it.

Image yourself in the middle of a discussion with enthusiastic people. Even when you are not the enthusiastic type, you begin to turn enthusiastic yourself. Even when you are not familiar

with the topic at hand, your tendency is to be inquisitive, you keep asking questions. The more questions you ask, the more alive the conversation gets. And you get to learn more, broadening your knowledge on certain issues. Quite educational, isn't it?

Enthusiasm brings out the hyper character in us. It is like adding more wood to a bonfire making you feel like you want to roast marshmallows in it. Honestly, as I am writing this, I'm beginning to be more enthusiastic myself.

The point is, enthusiasm is contagious like a disease. This is one contagious disease that has a desirable effect. Matter of fact, enthusiasm is the only disease everybody wants to contract. If there is a category in the Guinness Book of World Records of being the contagious disease most people would like to have with them, it is enthusiasm. Law enforcers would probably ban quarantine of this disease.

Now, just how do you get enthusiastic especially when your surroundings, the weather condition, and the general situation feels down and out?

Here are some helpful tips to develop enthusiasm:

1. Adopt the "as if" principle. It is believed that this was first stated by Professor William James, at times known as the father of American Psychological Science. This is an effective time and people tested principle. Consider this scenario: let us say you frequently or almost always see a particular actor play the role of a comedian in movies and television shows. You would always identify or equate this actor with comedy even if he is not in real life. The good news is the actor himself may also feel the effects of being in a laughing mood most of the time even if his life is full of dramatic experiences. Ultimately, this actor may wind up to be a happy person because

of his role, a confirmation that laughter is the best medicine. If he portrays other types of roles, to you, he seems to be out of place, you're just not used to seeing him portray other roles other than a comedian.

At one time or another in your childhood years, I believe you've come across superhero characters in comic books or magazines. And I believe that you've imagined to be like these superheroes, saving people from disastrous situations or winning over the bad guys. This is an "as if" principle in fantasized form. Do you remember?

I would suggest at this point that you try to apply the "as if" principle with someone near or beside you to confirm its effectiveness. Think creatively.

Another similar principle is the "what if". If you are in the business of developing products of specialized use, you are most likely exposed to a lot of experimentation. When you come up with an idea on a product you'd like to try even if the idea seems unconventional, would you try it? Would you be saying to yourself: "What if I try to..."

2. Adapt enthusiasm into the "practice makes perfect" principle. In other words, be enthusiastic on almost everything you do every day no matter how insignificant they are, no matter how small they are. All those small things when added up become big. This is the "as if" principle in small ways.
3. You are familiar with the expression: "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder". Even if a sight, a scene, or anything does not look too beautiful or enthusiastic, try to see its beauty and be enthusiastic about it. On the not-so-beautiful side, try to be enthusiastic in finding ways to improve it.

4. As you wake up each morning, be enthusiastic about the things you are going to do that day. Bring enthusiasm to even the routinely morning chores like taking a shower, getting dressed, eating breakfast, taking the bus or driving your car (even in heavy traffic), in the office up to the time you reach home for dinner till you go to bed, enthusiastically looking forward to tomorrow.
5. In the course of the day, you may experience non-enthusiastic traits from other people. Don't be carried away and don't be non-enthusiastic as they are. Instead, show enthusiasm to these people and they may become enthusiastic too because of you. Lead, don't just follow. That will give you the feeling of you setting a good example for the benefit of all.
6. Remember that each day in your life is God's gift to you. Show your appreciation to Him for the gift you receive by being nice to other people, helping others and thanking Him through prayers.

Chapter Nine

Goal Achievers

Achievement assumes many faces. How will you rate yourself once you have achieved your goal?

Achievers One are achievers who have accumulated fame and fortune but remain unhappy in spite of it. It sounds logical but illogical as well. They have reached the top of their career, the pinnacle of their goal but somehow remain unhappy. They may have everything but the feeling of emptiness looms in their hearts. Perhaps along the way, they may have neglected to look after the welfare of their fellowmen, or worst, may have used their fellowmen to their personal advantage. They may be aware that they did not give their best performance yet still got to the top, a feeling of “I don’t deserve all these” or “I’d rather be poor and happy than rich but unhappy”. They may have forgotten the Almighty Creator played a vital role in their achievement and now they feel loveless, alone; idiomatically and literally speaking.

Achievers Two are achievers who have consolidated everything they have acquired in the course of their endeavor to a rather small in size but vast reservoir of knowledge; their head. Sounds like a wrong place to keep an achievement. They boast about their achievement drawing awe from people they come in contact with. They have virtually enslave themselves to their achievement that nothing else matters to them.

What then are real achievers made of?

A real achiever is defined as one who:

1. Is truly happy and contented with the result or outcome of the goal he/she has aimed to attain no matter how small it is.

2. In spite the contentment, continues to further improve his/her skill and knowledge.
3. Aims for excellence and makes it a limitless endeavor.
4. Remains steadfast and humble or even humbler than he/she used to be in spite of his/her achievement.
5. Have served and will continue to serve his/her fellowmen.
6. Shares his/her talents with others in furtherance of improvement and development.
7. Have not stepped on other's toes while in the pursuit of their goal.
8. Who remain grateful to the people who have helped him/her attain success.
9. Does not boast of their accomplishment.
10. Have complete faith and trust in God, thanking Him and affirming that his/her achievement is a product of God's calling he/she acted on.

This seems to be a long list of criteria that is difficult to follow. Actually, it isn't. Only the achiever can confirm this through his/her honest feeling of how the events led to their success. It is a feeling that no exact word will suffice to describe it, the closest is perhaps gratefulness.

Grateful achievers keep an open mind focused on returning favors they received, not necessarily to the ones who one way or the other have contributed to their success but also to persons unknown to them so long as they see that such persons are truly in need of help in their struggle to succeed. These achievers see themselves in the shoes of the striving persons when they were still striving then and they know how it feels to encounter difficulties along the way.

Helping others, one of the things in achievers, makes life easier for all of us. There is no point in making life difficult for each other. It's just a waste of time.

Actions like this have a multiplicity effect that contributes to the progress of the nation as a whole. Just like enthusiasm, helping each other is contagious. Because of achievers, what started as a seed is now a tree. No matter how small the help of one person is, it contributes to the success of a nation. Each achiever becomes an asset to his/her country. This is the stuff great nations are made of. Wouldn't you want to be part of it?

Chapter Ten

Goal to Good Health

To be able to achieve your goal, a healthy body is a must. Health is wealth. This is as important as your mind and spiritual health.

Nowadays, hospital bills are beyond reach for some of us that we may not be able to afford it. Not everybody has insurance and even if we do, there are times it doesn't cover some of the medical cost. Don't wait to get ill and apply corrective measures. It is more prudent to practice preventive measures.

It makes life difficult when we get ill. We must do our best to prevent illnesses so as not to hamper our quest to goal realization. To do this, we need to practice healthy habits; taking nutritious food, proper exercise, clean surroundings, an overall healthy lifestyle.

There is an ad in a developing country of an internationally known vitamin/mineral supplement that has something to do with one's health. It is advertised in its native tongue, when translated into the English language literally means: "It is against the law to get sick" or "You are not allowed to get sick". Exaggerated as it is, it makes sense. When economic conditions are so sensitive, it can make a big difference when one gets sick. Medical bills are beyond reach for majority of its citizens.

My medical know-how is confined to basics and practical thinking. What you are reading are personal preferences reflective of my own views.

Diet and exercise are the two main areas directly responsible to physical health. What we eat is what we are. Maintain proper diet. Your doctor, dietician and/or nutritionist is your best source of information, coupled with practical sense. The amount and type of food we eat directly

affects our body system. While snacks between meals are not encouraged, taking something when you feel hungry is better than stuffing yourself full at mealtime. Age is likewise an issue when it comes to physical health. Younger people tend to eat more than middle-aged or seniors due to body metabolism. Older people who eat as much as youngsters tend to get fat for this reason. They cannot burn the calories as fast as the young. On the other hand, the young need more food to keep up with their active lifestyle.

Exercise regularly. Keep your body moving as much as possible. The gym and fitness center are not the only places where you can get exercise. Some of us may not agree that working is exercise. Working that requires physical exertion is a good form of exercise. Your home is a good place to do this. There are lots of housework that requires physical exertion so much so that if you do them, you are actually exercising and saving. Walking is one of the best forms of exercise. You may walk to and from your place of work as long as conditions permit like weather, distance, and time. Again, you are saving.

It is written in the Bible that God made man in His own image. From all indications, our physical body was designed by God to move, to be mobile. He designed it in such a way that our hands and feet, limbs, joints, among others will give us utmost mobility. If we don't use them as they are suppose to be, does that mean we are not satisfied with the way they were designed? It is like receiving a gift from a friend and we don't find it useful so we just put it in a corner to gather dust. The Lord may interpret it as if we don't need them anymore so He might as well give them to someone else who needs them. That way, they won't go to waste.

Seriously, get moving as much as you can. We never know when our tools of mobility will cease to be useful.

Even an automobile or generator laid idle for a considerable amount of time usually gets stuck. We need to heat it up once in a while even if we don't need it. Even an electronic equipment with hardly any moving parts has to be used every now and then to keep it in tip-top condition. Positive thinking stimulates our minds while physical exercise stimulates our body.

Depending on where you live (temperate or cold climate), sweating contributes to good health. What you are actually sweating out of your system are toxins and excess body salt, sugar, and fats (that is why our sweat tastes a little salty, slightly sweet, and feels oily). And sweating keeps you looking fit and trim as well. After a good sweat, do you notice that your joints feel more loose and relaxed as if they have just been lubricated. Be sure to replenish your body with fluids like water, fruit juices, and the like. Don't let your sweat-soiled clothes dry on your body. Change to fresh clothing.

To induce sweating in cold climate can be difficult. Try using a sauna. It may be available in your location. If it isn't, you can have your own sauna at home if your budget allows it. A spa helps to improve blood circulation to relax and tone both mind and body. There are various types of spas and your spa specialist is your best adviser. Hand massages done by masseurs are sometimes available in malls to loosen stiff joints and relieve aching and tired muscles.

A clean surrounding is also essential to good health so that we can breathe quality air. We are aware though that urban places have a higher level of pollutants compared to countryside locations even when the level is within tolerable limits. Vitamin/mineral supplements can help to counteract the effects of these pollutants. Keep in mind though to seek medical advice first to determine what kind of supplements will suit you. Each of us is unique in many ways. A good practice is not to overdo things like taking excessive vitamins and minerals. We may be right in

saying that excess vitamins simply leave our system through body fluids or waste. Recent medical findings reveal that supplements taken excessively, in time, can damage some vital organs. Some minerals must be proportionate with certain vitamins when taken so that it is better absorbed by our bodies. Various reactions occur under various conditions. There is a good motto I follow (because I think it makes sense): “Take things in moderation, for even a good thing turns bad when taken otherwise”. Food rich in anti-oxidants can replace certain supplements. Again, your doctor has the final say.

Medical research proves that there is a direct link between mental attitude and the body as a whole. A positive mental attitude results to a healthy body. For instance, when we are under stress, our body produces excessive amounts of cortisol which is a steroid. Some cells which are vital to our immune system are blocked, making our body susceptible to infection.

In other instances, which we are more familiar with, we know that blood pressure in our body shoots up when our mind is subjected to tension and worries without any physical exertion. Why is it we cry after hearing a sad story; why is it we laugh after seeing a funny situation; indications that thinking alone can affect health condition and body reactions.

Our mind was designed by God to think. Keep it active with innovative and creative ideas. Stress, self-pity, and defeatism are just some of the negative attitude that result to poor body health. Replace this with enthusiasm, self-confidence, and win-ability, you are on your way to a fit healthy body. Negative thinking are like debits on a bank account, positive thinking are credits. Don't wait till your accounts are on the red.

Equally important is an active spiritual outlook. It is food for the soul. Starve your soul and you starve your body and mind. Feed it with faith, hope, and confidence in the Lord and you will cultivate a healthy you.

Mind , body, and spirit; one is essential to the other; they are inter-related; make it work as a team.

With a willful spirit, what your mind can conceive, no doubt your body can achieve.

Chapter Eleven

Ageless Goal

Age need not be a deterrent to the pursuit of our goal. Nor should it hamper our enthusiasm in furtherance to continue improvement or excellence of it. Matter of fact is, we can even start venturing on new ideas. Starting young or not-so-young in aiming for a goal makes negligible or no difference. What matters is our attitude towards our aim, that it be positive. We must not deduce thinking that we might not realize our goal due to our age. We must leave everything in the hands of the Almighty Creator whom we trust. He is in the best position to know what is best for us. God did not plant an idea into our mind with a pre-condition that we must be young to aim for a certain goal. Otherwise, He wouldn't have done so.

Faith and trust in the Almighty should be the factors that determine our decision to continue pursuing our goal, not our age.

Growing old is all in the mind if we let it be. Yes, it's visible when we grow old. But these changes are only on our physique. Our actions and reflexes may be slower than before. Our hair may be thinner and gray. Our skin may be dry and wrinkled. But our mind and spirit will remain young and vibrant as ever, even wiser than ever.

Speaking of old age, allow me to tickle your funny bone. There's this funny thing about growing old, we can't move our hands and feet when we want them to (if we've got arthritis), but they keep on moving when we don't want them to (uncontrolled shaking and trembling). Speaking of thinning hair when we grow old, we beg our hair to stay on our head. It's the opposite when we were young, we beg our thick and unruly hair to leave our head.

Only the physical side of us gets old, the mental and spiritual sides are as young as ever.

Age or aging, as defined in the dictionary is synonymous to growing old. 'Growing' is a progressive word, so there is every reason for us to go with the flow, to be optimistic.

With age comes wisdom, maturity, and experience. How we choose to mature depends on how we think of ourselves. If we think we are non-productive, worn-out, and ruggedly unattractive, ridden with health problems, we will what we think we are. However, if we welcome age with a positive outlook, having emerged a wiser and more experienced person, full of wisdom and vitality in spite of age, this chapter of our life will bring even more excitement, looking forward to share our experiences with our grandchildren, the younger generation. What we choose to be, we will be. Only we can control ourselves. I see no reason why we would choose to be gloomy, feeling self-pity, and unproductive in senior age when we have the option to emerge bright and upbeat.

For this, we must be thankful to the Lord for giving us years of fruitful life. Obviously, the Lord has His reasons for keeping us productive and these reasons should keep us focused to excel in our goals. Let us not disappoint Him. Share experiences with the younger generation. Tell them both the good ones and even the not-so-good ones. Both ways, they will draw lessons from them. We are, in essence a living history library whom they can research from, being able to answer their inquisitive questions in person, sharing experiences which are far better than machine-produced information. And you know what makes our information unique compared to machine-produced ones? It can be filled with emotion and excitement. That will surely draw a 'cool' comment from youngsters. Cool, isn't it?

When we have grandchildren and they start to call us grandpa or grandma, how we react to it is entirely up to us. It's a choice between: the sound of useless, cranky, good-for-nothing,

step-aside grandpa or grandma; or the sound of fun-filled, welcome, looking-forward-to, sunshine-drenched grandpa or grandma. What will your choice be?

If we choose to be negative, I will assure you, we would be banging our head against the wall, later on telling ourselves: “that was dumb, dumb, dumb”. A positive choice will leave our head with no lump (because we won’t be banging it against the wall), but a smile within our heart, a feeling that will make us say: “Lord, I’m a happy person. You can take me anytime you want to.”

I would like to use this space to leave a message to the children and grandchildren of seniors. Picture yourselves when you become grandparents someday. Would you like to be left alone living by yourselves, sent off to senior homes, feeling lonely and desolate, taken for granted as if you don’t exist anymore? Or do you want to be riddled with questions from wide-eyed children, running like a child as if childhood came the second time around (not the mental second childhood stuff), walking hand-in-hand with your loved ones on a flower-filled countryside and simply be happy? You can make a difference on how seniors feel.

Growing old can be rewarding.

Chapter Twelve

Finalizing the Goal

In this final chapter, I would like to impart disciplines to you that will serve as guidelines to goal realization. I believe you will find them very useful as they did to others. Some of them have been mentioned earlier, most others will be mentioned as we go along.

To pursue our goal, we need to have:

1. A sound mind with an absolute positive attitude
2. A healthy body
3. A deep spiritual faith

How do we initiate the process of goal realization?

Deep within us is an inherent God-given skill we need to call up and bring into the open. This skill cannot deliver positive results, not until we have polished it to its full potential. It takes hard work and dedication to turn it into a workable, efficient machine that will deliver results aimed at the goal we envision to achieve.

Hard work which is reflective of all the positive attitudes we have earlier discussed will serve as the backbone in building our goal. Despite all the hardships we will encounter, we must stand firm and emerge victorious, stop at nothing until we have our goal at hand.

Ask ourselves these questions:

Have I reached my full potential in life?

Am I really satisfied with the way I am?

Have I achieved anything in life so far?

Have I contributed to the well-being of my fellowmen?

Am I an asset to society?

Am I really happy?

A “No” answer to most of the questions should encourage us to aim for our goal.

The following disciplines can serve as guidelines:

1. Feel in your heart and mind the goal you love or want to attain.

Feel and search within your heart and mind the kind of things you love to do and have the skill or know-how in doing. When you follow your heart and mind’s desires, you have gained your first step towards goal realization. You will always be enthusiastic about it and this gives you an advantage. Doing something you are familiar with and love to do will make things easier to accomplish so there will be lesser obstacles.

Even in the absence of things needed to realize a goal you love to pursue, you will somehow exhaust all the means to make it come true. This trait is inherent within us.

A rather simple example, say you want to see a concert of your favorite band group but don’t have enough cash to spend for it, you’ll try to save from other less important expenses.

In the event you cannot feel in your heart and mind the goal you want to pursue, here’s a simple rule you can follow: “Find a need and fill it”. These words, credited to the great industrialist Henry Kaiser have been the guiding principle of many successful entrepreneurs.

2. Hone your thinking.

Hone or sharpen your thinking. Distinguish short term, medium term, and long term goals. See if the short term goal will benefit your medium term which in turn can be an advantage for your long term goal. Keep them co-related as much as possible.

Know the capacity you can handle. Be fantastic but be realistic. When you set the plan, timetable, and scope, try to envision in your mind the sequence of event as that are probable to happen, how to go about it, possible solutions to obstacles, right approach to situations, among others.

3. Aim for the best result.

Whatever outcome comes out of your quest to pursue your goal, make sure you do your best. This will eliminate saying to yourself: “if only I did my best” in case things turn out second best or third best or worst, even a failure. However, you don’t stop if it’s a failure. Capitalize by drawing a lesson or two from it so that you won’t commit the same mistake when you do it again. “Next time, it will be ...” is what you must say to yourself. This kind of experience will make you a more skillful, knowledgeable, learned person.

4. Differentiate goals from wishes.

Wishes are daydreams or fantasies of what you want to achieve in life but if not acted upon, will remain as fantasies and never turn to realistic goals. To achieve your goal, you have to act, move, work hard on it. Make a definite plan and timetable to reach the ultimate result. Life is not a garden or bed of roses ready for us to pick and enjoy. You have to plant them, nurture them constantly, water them, give them enough sunshine, fertilize them, talk to them if you have to, harvest them by the time the roses are in full bloom.

5. To achieve your primary goal, you may need secondary goals.

Sometimes, success in goal realization may seem beyond reach. There seem to be an overwhelming gap in-between. Be as it may, don’t let that discourage you. Take it as

a challenge, a challenge to your intelligence. You may need secondary goals as stepping stones to your primary goal, a bridge to connect the gap. It is like taking several flights from different airlines to different places until you finally reach your intended destination. In this case, you may even have to mix air travel with sea and land travel.

6. Focus on goals that will benefit others as well.

Your goal may be self-serving, but more so, it must benefit as many as possible. Compared to a self-centered goal, which restricts the flow of success, a serve-all goal releases an aura of confidence and trust gained from other people. Let's face it, people can somehow see through if your intention is self-serving or all-serving. Try to aim for a goal that will make you an asset to society, a goal that people will appreciate what you contribute. Goals that will make life easier, goals that will make people smile, goals that will make this world a better place to live in, now and for generations to come.

7. Be humble every step of the way in achieving your goal

For every secondary goal you achieve, exercise humility. Never be boastful of your small goals. Never brag about small goals and tell people you are assured to achieve your ultimate goal because of your small successes. I am not discouraging you to aim for your ultimate goal. In fact, the more I am encouraging you to go forth and do it with all humility. As we all know, humility is a virtue and a goal graced with virtue is sure to succeed.

8. In realizing your goal, put God first.

In everything you do, put God first and He will utilize all the facilities necessary to aid you into success.

As we have mentioned before, the way to God is through prayer. Whenever we pray, we must do it fervently, with all sincerity and intensity. You will know and feel the aid that God will send forth to realize your goal through ideas that will permeate in your mind. God will plant them in your goal. Welcome it with an embrace and be sure to thank Him for it.

And you know what makes it even more beautiful? That you cannot go wrong because your idea is inspired by God, it comes from God and everything that comes from Him is sure to succeed.

Whenever you set to realize a goal, you must hold on to it tenaciously. Make your goal as clear and as vivid as you can.

By the time you have achieved your goal, you will feel an air of satisfaction, contentment; to be exact, a feeling of happiness. Doesn't this feeling turn the "No" answers to our earlier questions to "Yes"?

Let us go back to these questions.

Have I reached my full potential in life? Yes, I have.

Am I really satisfied with the way I am? I am now.

Have I achieved anything in life so far? Yes, I have.

Have I contributed to the well-being of my fellowmen? I firmly believe I do.

Am I an asset to society? I believe I am.

Am I really happy? Yes, I am.

And you know what's good about achieving your goal aside from happiness?

You will feel an air of confidence, self-esteem, and respect for yourself, you can't help but congratulate yourself. You will be stronger not only mentally but spiritually as well.

Wait no more. Start your goal realization now.

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