

WORK THOUGHTS

By Candis Carr, Ed.D., LPC, LMFT, CEAP Associate Executive Director

Goal Digging

Have you observed that when life is the toughest, people often perform at their best? In fact, someone has said, *“The major reason for setting a goal is for what it makes of you to accomplish it. What it makes of you will always be the far greater value than what you get.”*

Yes, but we also set goals to enjoy what is at the end of our imaginary rainbows – those specific treasures valued by us, our family, and society. Fortunately, there is a magic formula (of sorts) for getting what we want.

To begin, recall the classics on goal-setting: Napoleon Hill's *Think and Grow Rich*; Claude Bristol's *The Magic of Believing*; James Allen's *As a Man Thinketh*; and David Schwartz's *The Magic of Thinking Big*. Every author proposes the same beginning point for success: *“The first and essential step in reaching your goal is to write it down.”* It's not real until it's on paper.

Okay, are you willing to experience success? Start by moving your goals from inside your head to visible words on paper. Write as fast as you can and *be specific*. When defeating thoughts try to stop you, set them aside. Continue writing for as long and in as much detail as you can. Don't hold back. Want to endow a university or a hospital? Build a new home? Become a better parent? Get a patent? Lose 50 pounds? Rebuild your neighborhood? *Whatever you imagine* you want to achieve... write it down.

Next, put the list somewhere private. In time you will want to go back and amaze yourself with how much you have accomplished. Writing goals on paper invites the reticular activating system (RAS) to get busy. And get busy, it will!

The RAS is a group of cells at the base of your brain stem responsible for sorting and evaluating incoming data. It sends urgent data to the active part of your brain and non-urgent data to your unconscious. (An example of the RAS in action is the common experience of hearing your name spoken across a crowded room when you can barely hear the conversation of the person standing next to you.) Once set in motion, your brain will even begin sending you *new* material... innovative, energizing ideas for planning and expanding your original ambitions. Wow!

This really works. Endless examples exist, but consider someone famous. Lou Holtz, the renowned football coach, made his list in 1966 when he was 28 years old. It contained 170 possible personal and professional goals, and at the time he composed it, he had no job, no money, and his wife was eight months pregnant with their third child! He has achieved 81 of those original goals, which included having dinner at the White House, meeting the pope, becoming head coach at Notre Dame, winning a national championship, making a hole in one, and jumping out of an airplane! So give yourself permission to go for it! Don't use what must be the saddest line in the world... *“Oh, come on now... be realistic!”* Instead, grab some paper and start writing.

For information about goal setting, email candis@fyca.org.



Performance Employee Assistance and Business Services
A program of Family & Youth
220 Louie St., Lake Charles, LA, 70601
337-436-9533