

A Simple System To Achieve Your Goals

By Karen Cioffi

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Achieve Your Goals with Three Must-Have Psychological Assets

Goal setting, writing goals, marketing goals, business goals, life goals . . . everyone has heard of these terms, these strategies to creating and achieving goals. But, what's involved in actually creating and achieving them? How do you get from an idea or desire to its fulfillment?

To begin, you need to have the 'right stuff.' You need three essential elements. The first of which is confidence.

1. Confidence

In a report published in *Business Horizons*, Fred Luthans, Distinguished Professor of Management, University of Nebraska, explains that confidence is one of four positive psychological capital assets needed for success. This asset has a "strong positive relationship to work-related performance," and is considered the most important of the four assets. (1)

But, what if you find yourself on the low-end of confidence? What if you don't think you have the talent, skills, or other abilities needed to succeed at your goals? This happens to most everyone at one time or another, whether factual or perceived.

The good news is confidence can be learned and it can be increased.

In her article, "How to Build Confidence," Amy Gallo, contributing editor with *Harvard Business Review*, quotes Tony Schwartz and Deborah H. Gruenfeld, experts in the area of confidence and achieving goals. (2)

According to Schwartz, "The best way to build confidence in a given area is to invest energy in it and work hard at it."

Gruenfeld concurs with this and takes it a bit further, "Practice can be very useful, and is highly recommended because in addition to building confidence, it also tends to improve quality."

So, the old saying, 'practice makes perfect,' is a two-benefit strategy. It improves the quality of what you're practicing and it builds confidence in that area as you practice.

2. Hope / Optimism

Numbers two and three in Luthans' four positive psychological capital assets are hope and optimism. Since they're so closely related, I've combined them into this article's second must-have element needed for success.

According to an article at SharpBrains.com, "Hope is what you want to happen. Optimism is the belief that the outcome you hope for will happen." (3)

This is a wonderful explanation of optimism. It's not simply being upbeat and hoping for the best, it's believing your desired results will really happen.

The optimism ideology is closely associated with positive psychology and reminds me of the scripture in Hebrews 11:1, "faith is the assured expectation of things hoped for, the evident demonstration of realities though not beheld."

Martin Luther King, Jr. made it a bit more understandable when he said, "Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase."

This optimistic attitude goes hand-in-hand with a positive mindset. You must believe that your goals or hopes will be fulfilled in order for them to actually be fulfilled.

As mentioned above, you need to believe in a successful outcome in order for it to come about.

But, what if you don't feel optimistic? What if it's not in your nature?

If you don't 'feel' optimistic, you can use 'positive thinking' to become optimistic.

One strategy is to say and read positive affirmations. Another strategy is to create a vision board.

The key to both strategies is to keep them front and center – you need to see them, read them, and say them every day.

By doing this, you can actually teach your brain to think positive, to be optimistic.

Another strategy is meditation. Through this practice you can train yourself to think positive, to be optimistic. You can Google Deepak Chopra or other expert in this area for simple instructions on meditation.

3. Resilience / Perseverance

The Luthans report defines resilience as the "capacity to 'bounce back' from adversity or even dramatic positive changes." (1)

It goes on to explain that resilient people are recognized to have “(a) a staunch acceptance of reality, (b) a deep belief, often buttressed by strongly held values, that life is meaningful, and (c) an uncanny ability to improvise and adapt to significant change.”

Resilient people have their feet on the ground, have strong values, and are flexible and durable.

Within the category of resilience is perseverance. According to The Resilience Scale, it’s considered a characteristic or trait of resilience. (4)

Perseverance is the part of resilience that allows an individual to keep bouncing back, to keep getting up when knocked down.

The Free Dictionary defines perseverance as a “steady persistence in adhering to a course of action, belief, or a purpose.”

It might also be considered strong willed and steadfastness.

But, how does someone acquire the trait of perseverance?

In the Psychology Today article “The Neuroscience of Perseverance” by Christopher Bergland, it states: “Dopamine is the fuel that keeps people motivated to persevere and achieve a goal. You have the power to increase your production of dopamine by changing your attitude and behavior. Scientists have identified higher levels of dopamine -- also known as the ‘reward molecule’ -- as being linked to forming lifelong habits, such as perseverance.” (5)

Bergland gives seven steps to help you create and increase perseverance. What the seven steps boil down to is creating a positive habit that will move you toward your goal and sticking with it until it becomes routine and even desired. It’s the repetition that reinforces “a mindset of perseverance.” Once the desired effect is established, the goal is reached and the perseverance trait is reinforced again.

It’s also advisable, along your goal-reaching path, to create smaller, attainable goals that can boost your confidence and further cement the perseverance mindset.

4. Focused Effort

While the article title says ‘three’ must-have psychological assets, without *focused effort*, no amount of confidence or optimism will get you from point A to point B, so I’ve added this fourth goal-achieving element.

It’s not enough to talk-the-talk. You must also walk-the-walk.

Simply wanting something won’t make it happen. You need to create a focused plan that includes focused action steps to take you where you want to be, where you see yourself –

achieving your goals or desired outcome. Then you need to implement those action steps and keep your eye on the goal.

In other words, you need to work for what you want.

If you want to become a writer, your first action step will be to learn the craft. You'll need to take classes, listen to lectures, and read lots on the topic. And, you'll need to practice by writing, writing, and writing more.

Along with creating a plan to get you from point A to point B, you need to review, evaluate, and even analyze your progress along the way.

This is important so you can see which of your actions are moving you forward and which are simply wasting your time, energy, and possibly your resources. Revise your plan as needed.

Confidence, optimism, perseverance, and focused effort are interwoven. Together they create a solid conscious and subconscious mind and body environment that will move you toward accomplishing what you set out to.

References:

- (1) Business Horizons 47/1 January-February 2004 (45-50)
- (2) <http://blogs.hbr.org/hmu/2011/04/how-to-build-confidence.html>
- (3) <http://sharpbrains.com/blog/2013/01/22/the-science-of-optimism-a-conversation-on-the-optimism-bias-with-neuroscientist-tali-sharot/>
- (4) http://www.resiliencescale.com/papers/resilience_core.html (sorry, link doesn't work)
- (4) <http://www.resiliencescale.com/category/articles/>
- (5) <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-athletes-way/201112/the-neuroscience-perseverance>

Additional Reading

Writing Success – Do You Really Have the Power?

<http://karencioffiwritingforchildren.com/2017/12/03/writing-success-do-you-have-the-power/>

7 Steps to Writing Success Through Positive Thinking

<https://karencioffiwritingforchildren.com/2019/07/14/7-steps-to-writing-success-through-positive-thinking/>

Perseverance Pays Off

<https://www.writersonthemove.com/2019/07/perseverance-pays-off.html>

Focus, Determination, and Perseverance = Writing Success

<http://karencioffiwritingforchildren.com/2016/06/05/writing-success-focus-determination-and-perseverance/>

Quotes

I love quotes. Here are some I hope will motivate you, inspire you, and make you think!

“There is nothing impossible to him who will try.” ~ Attributed to Alexander the Great

Don't worry about failures, worry about the chances you miss when you don't even try.
- Jack Canfield

“To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe.” ~ Anatole France

“You'll never change your life until you change something you do daily. The secret of your success is found in your daily routine.” ~ John C. Maxwell

“Your attitude, not your aptitude, will determine your altitude.” ~ Zig Ziglar

"Whether you think you can, or you think you can't – you're right." ~ Henry Ford

“Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do.” ~ Goethe

"Remember, today is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday." ~ Dale Carnegie

“Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there.” ~ Will Rogers

“You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself in any direction you choose.” ~ Dr. Seuss

“Don't let your learning lead to knowledge; let your learning lead to action.” ~ Jim Rohn

Don't say you don't have enough time. You have exactly the same number of hours per day that were given to Helen Keller, Pasteur, Michelangelo, Mother Teresa, Leonardo da Vinci, Thomas Jefferson, and Albert Einstein. ~ *H. Jackson Brown*

"Nobody succeeds beyond his or her wildest expectations unless he or she begins with some wild expectations." ~ Ralph Charell, author

“If you don't start somewhere, you're gonna go nowhere.” ~ Bob Marley

Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant.
~ Robert Louis Stevenson

"Tomorrow is the first blank page of a 365 page book. Write a good one." ~ Brad Paisley

"It always seems impossible, until it's done." ~ Nelson Mandela

“I've discovered in a hundred percent of the cases, no exceptions, people who won't take step number one, never take step number two.” ~ Zig Ziglar

“People often say that motivation doesn't last. Well, neither does bathing – that's why we recommend it daily.” ~ Zig Ziglar

"Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world." ~ Albert Einstein

"Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe."
~ Abraham Lincoln

Genius is one per cent inspiration, ninety-nine per cent perspiration.
~ Thomas A. Edison

Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls & looks like work.
~Thomas A. Edison

If a man empties his purse into his head no one can take it away from him. An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest. ~ Benjamin Franklin,

And, one for the teachers out there:

A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops. ~ Henry B Adams

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One of my all-time favorite quotes is by Mark Twain:

“It’s not what you’ve done that matters - it’s what you haven’t done.”

This quote, to me, is one of hope and motivation. No matter your age, your heritage, your chosen path, or your upbringing, your path lies in front of you, not behind you. If you’ve accomplished something, you can continue to build on it. If you haven’t gotten started yet, don’t procrastinate - today’s a great day to begin your journey!