



Is Your Ladder Leaning Against the Wrong Wall?

The Secret Of The Slight Edge
By Bob Moawad/TJ Hoisington

On your path to achievement, have you ever experienced inner civil war? Have you been at work wanting to be at home or vice versa? Have you ever found yourself sabotaging your success? Have you ever worked hard to achieve a goal, only to be disappointed upon its completion? Have you been so focused that you lost balance? Have you ever climbed the ladder to success only to discover that it's leaning against the wrong wall?

If you are anything like the many people we at Edge Learning work with on an annual basis, then I'm sure you have felt this once or twice in your life. Each of these examples demonstrates the classic case of not knowing your values and not aligning your goals accordingly.

Understand that your values literally affect what type of clothes you wear, where you live, how you spend your time, and the type of car you drive. The type of work you do to how you raise your children are all determined by your values. From an organizational perspective, it works the same way. The collective and communicated values within the organization will determine the organization's behaviors and actions. In other words, whatever is defined as, "what matters most" to an individual or team will be given attention and focus.

Your values determine your decisions, your decisions determine your direction, and your direction determines your destination. For example, if you value security over adventure, then what will likely be your decision if you are asked to go whitewater rafting down the Grand Canyon where the waves reach as high as 30 feet? You're right! You're likely to decline the invitation. If your number one value is spending time with your family and your boss approaches and gives you the option to work some overtime, what do you do? Even if working overtime means you'll make extra money, if the money has a lower value than spending time with your family, then your decision will be to find a way to avoid working.

From an organizational perspective, Jack Welch, in his book, *Winning*, illustrates the impact values have on performance. He says Arthur Anderson LLP was founded 100 years ago with a "mission to become the most trusted auditing firm in the world. It was a company that prided itself on the ability to say 'no,' even if it lost business." It also had the reputation for hiring the best CPA's and accountants in the world, which earned the confidence of regulators around the world. Jack continues, "Then in the 1980's they decided to start a consulting business. . . that's where the excitement was." Consequently, they started hiring MBA's and split into two divisions: accounting and consulting.

In the 1900's, "Rather than valuing conscientiousness, consulting firms generally encouraged creativity and rewarded aggressive sales behavior – taking a company from one project to the next." He said this created a "cowboy mentality." Consequently, "Some consultants let go of the fundamental values that guided them for so long." In essence, Jack concludes, "Arthur Anderson LLP was at war with itself." There was a mission-and-Values conflict that caused the organization to collapse.

The challenge is that frequently people don't have a clue what their values are in the first place. They attempt to achieve specific goals that simultaneously run contrary to what is really important to them.

For these reasons, value clarification proceeds goal identification if you're to have balance and congruence in your life. Once you've clarified your values, you'll want to set specific goals in alignment with your values and identify steps to attain them.

Bob Richards, former Olympic pole-vaulter and inspirational author, said, "Goals give purpose. Purpose gives faith. Faith gives courage. Courage gives enthusiasm. Enthusiasm gives energy. Energy gives life. Life lifts you over the bar!" How true!

When we set exciting, worthwhile goals for ourselves, they work in two ways: We work on them, and they work on us! What about your goals? Are they written and reviewed often? Until you've written a goal, it's just a vague dream with no real picture. Ink 'em and think 'em! Something inexplicable happens with written goals that are reviewed and imagined vividly. They become a part of your reality, and you begin moving toward them.

By nature, you are a goal-seeking mechanism, and you move toward those exciting images and beliefs you hold uppermost in your mind. As a goal setter, you'll be more able to deal positively with setbacks. When disappointments come your way, reformulate your goals and keep on keepin' on. It's difficult to be distracted by temporary setbacks when you're busy achieving!

Author, Josie Bissett, said, "Dreams whet your appetite, but goals make you hungry!" Exciting goals fuel your passion! They keep you green and growing (instead of ripe and rotting)! Set goals in all areas of your life: personal, professional, spiritual, family, recreational, and financial. Be certain they're consistent with your values, but remember, they're only paper and ink (or computer screen and keyboard). Update them frequently!

Have you ever set a Saturday morning goal to sleep in until 9:30 A.M.? At 6:00 A.M. you wake out of habit. You smile, roll over, and think to yourself – "I set a goal to get up at 9:30 A.M., and I'm going to make it! However, every 20 minutes you wake and check the clock. By 7:20, your sinuses are clogged, and you have a pain behind your left eye. By 8:00, your chest is congested, and your back aches. BUT, your goal is set for 9:30, and you're going to get there! At 9:30, you pull yourself out of bed like a water-soaked log. You slowly go into the kitchen, grab toast, juice or whatever, go into the TV room, and watch cartoons. (My wife and I are empty nesters, and now I get to watch my favorite cartoons). At noon you make a sandwich, grab a few cookies, and sit down again to watch your favorite movie or sporting event AND fall asleep for two hours. Your spouse may ask, "Are you going to sleep all day? Let's go dancing or for a hike." And your response? "I'd love to, but I'm too tired."

Here's another scenario. You've worked your head (and other parts of your anatomy) off all week. You've set your alarm for 4:30 A.M. Saturday to go skiing, fishing, something else you really want to do. You wake ten seconds before the alarm; you're up and at 'em and full of energy all day, and into the evening too! Goals energize! Bob Hope, Frank Sinatra, and Carol Channing all continued to make movies, sing their hearts out, and appear on Broadway into their 70s and 80s! Why? They need the bucks! No, seriously! They loved what they did!

People often say to me, "Wow, Bob, you've addressed 9,000 audiences and more than three million people! How long are you going to stay active in the business?"

I looked them in the eye, and said, "Well, I have identified to what age I intend to work full time."

"How old?" they asked, with some apprehension in their voice.

My response, "Ninety-five."

They looked at me—"WHAT!?"

"And with all the breakthroughs in medicine and health practices, I'll probably be working at 115. I love what I do, and I'm setting one of those long-range goals to keep on keepin' on! I share the same sentiments of pro-baseball player, Willie Stargell, who said, "I never went to work; I always went to play!"

What are you getting out of what you are currently doing? Then again, what are you putting into it? Here's a story that illustrates my point. One day, a train stopped beside a work crew in the middle of a state. Out stepped the president of the railroad, looking for a particular worker. "Is there a Pete Gugich here?"

One of the workers said, "Gugich, answer him. Talk to the guy."

Gugich, a long-time employee of the railroad responded, "Yeah, yeah, I'm Pete Gugich. Who are you?"

"Pete, this is going to take you back a while, but my name is Larry LaHodge. Do you remember me?"

"Yeah, I remember a Larry LaHodge. I stood with him in an employment line a long time ago. Are you the same Larry LaHodge?"

"Are you the same Pete Gugich?"

"I sure am. Nice to see ya again."

"Well, today is a special day. Come on up here, Pete. You're having lunch with me."

Gugich spit on his hands and dried them on his worn jeans. He cleaned his steel-toed shoes and joined the company president for lunch.

Everybody was in awe when Gugich came back and the train headed down the track. "Gug, what was that all about? Why the heck would the president of the railroad want to have lunch with you?"

"Well, " he said, "The 'prez' and I go back a while. In fact, we go back quite a while!"

"What are you talking about, you 'go back a while'?"

"Well, it was 25 years ago today that we went through the employment line together."

"You what?"

"Yeah, we hired in on the same day. Do you believe that?"

A co-worker responded, "Well, I've been here two years, and I'd like to have the kind of upward mobility that he had instead of what you've had over the past 25 years."

"Well," says Gugich, "I think I've known the difference for some time." Then everybody leaned forward, eager to hear his story.

"Listen carefully. Some of you are going to figure this out, and some of you aren't. But 25 years ago today, I went to work for \$3.00 an hour."

"Okay, \$3.00 an hour. What about him, the guy who's president today?"

"The best I can determine, 25 years ago today he went to work for the railroad!"

Fall in love with what you do and you'll never have "just a job."

Joe Kittinger was never one to let doubt and indecision keep him from achieving his goals. He set many goals and holds records for the following:

- Longest parachute jump of 102,800 feet;
- Longest parachute free-fall of four minutes and 36 seconds;
- First American to reach the edge of space and exceed the speed of sound without an aircraft or space vehicle. (He accomplished this as he plummeted from a test balloon, traveling through space like a human torpedo at speeds exceeding 700 mph.);
- He also survived flying three combat tours as a fighter pilot in Vietnam between 1963 and 1972 and 11 months in a North Vietnamese prisoner of war camp.

"Talk about goals," Joe says, "During the time I spent in the POW camp, I didn't just dream of going home, I spend hours contemplating what I was going to do after I got home." Kittinger dreamed of making the first trans-Atlantic solo balloon voyage. Not only was he certain he would survive his ordeal in prison camp, but he was certain he would find a place in history as well. Here's what one journalist said about Kittinger, "If there is one salient characteristic about the auburn-haired: 56-year-old aviator, it is his certainty that he will reach his goals." Joe achieved his goal of becoming the first person to cross the Atlantic Ocean solo in a hot air balloon.

How about you? Take action – now! Clarify your values, set your goals, and begin the journey. If you postpone identifying your goals, a year from now you may wish you had started today. Set your ladder against the right wall and start climbing!

I have included principles for effective goal-setting:

- Balance your goals and set priorities.
- State your goals positively. (See what you want, not what you want to avoid.)
- Clearly define your goals. Keep them:
 - Specific
 - Written
 - Reviewed regularly.
- Lock onto an exciting, imaginable end result.
(Initially, you don't need to know how you are going to get there.)
- Avoid time limits with attitudinal goals.
- Keep your goals confidential. Share them only with people who can help you accomplish the goal.
- Update your goals regularly, because success is a journey, not a destination.

Application Suggestions:

1. Identify your values. In life, what matters most to you? List in order of importance below.

2. What are the top goals you are committed to moving toward?
List them in order of importance.

3. Once you have identified your goals and values, be certain they are balanced. Then follow the steps for effective goal-setting and begin today.