

“Do It Now”

In my last three articles, I have outlined and discussed the first three Keys to Your Future: Focus, Unique and Teamwork. To recap, focus is what keeps you on track to your goals for success. Your unique gift illustrates that you should specialize and use your strengths to gain the most competitive advantage. The third key, teamwork, is the essential glue for an organization that is vital to every business success.

The fourth key to your future is urgency. Urgency is a vital part of achievement for any successful person. I have known many people who have had great aspirations, great plans, and great goals. But, they ended up achieving very little. The reason is that they did not put action behind their goals. It is not enough to aspire. It is not enough to set goals. It is not enough to make great plans. You must act.

One of the primary reasons why people don't act is because they procrastinate. They keep putting off and putting off and putting off until the perfect time arrives for them to take action. The primary culprit of procrastination is a lack of urgency. Until you feel urgency swelling up inside of you, you do not have the motivation to take action on your plans. When you are able to create urgency within yourself to act, you have mastered the art of being a self-starter filled within initiative. How then, does one go about generating this urgency?

There are two components to creating urgency:

1. The first component of urgency is *creative tension*. You must feel this creative tension to act on your goals. The reason most people don't act is because they are comfortable where they are at now. They do not feel any compelling tension to change their current situation. By building creative tension, you give yourself the desire to act and change the current circumstances.

Where does this creative tension come from? All tension involves two points or forces. In other words, tension is created when something is stretched between two separate points or opposing forces. Consequently, to generate urgency, you must establish two clear points that will build this

creative tension. The two points that you must establish are:

- A. Exactly where you stand now. You must know everything about your current situation and current status.
- B. Exactly where you want to go. You want to know exactly what you want to achieve, how you plan to achieve it, and the differences between where you want to be and where you stand now.

By knowing these two points, you have set up a situation where what you want is substantially different from what you currently have. This builds the creative tension which generates urgency to act and to change the situation.

One of the important keys to building this creative tension is to know how far out into the future to set your goal. In other words, if you set a very small goal that is essentially the same as where you stand now, there is no creative tension because there is no stretch between where you are now and where you want to be.

On the other hand, if you set goals that are too far out into the future and too different from where you stand now, the tension will actually be stretched too far and will create stress. When tension turns into stress, it no longer serves to motivate you, but actually paralyzes you. Consequently, you must learn how far out to set your goals to create the right amount of tension.

2. The second component of urgency is having a *target date*. It is not enough to know what you want to achieve and how you plan to achieve it, you must know exactly when you want to reach your goal. You are probably familiar with Parkinson's Law. It says that work expands to fill the time available for its completion. If you allow two years to reach a goal, it will take the entire two years. If, however, you set the same goal to be reached in three months, you will generate substantially more urgency to take action to make that goal a reality.

Target dates work in both the physical and psychological realm. When you set a target date for completing a

specific task or achieving a goal, your mental commitment to that target date serves as an automatic trigger to alert your body to take appropriate action. The target date adjusts your body chemistry for exactly the type of activity and the rate of work that will be required to achieve the goal by that date.

A psychological effect is also produced by setting a target date. By knowing a deadline is approaching, your concentration improves, your interest remains high, and you experience an inner challenge to give your best. Sports fans are very familiar with this type of effect. A game that has been more or less routine is frequently transformed into an exhilarating power packed combat when the final minutes are being played. The realization that the end of the game is imminent triggers a superhuman effort that often results in more excitement and more scoring in the last minutes than in the entire game up to that point.

Target dates also exercise a subtle effect on your attitude. They represent a challenge that evokes your desire to demonstrate your capability and efficiency. Meeting a target date becomes a sort of game with yourself. Because the target date works on you, you are motivated to work towards meeting the target date. It is this motivation that gives you the urgency to act and do it now.

If you will employ these two components of urgency, you will create the initiative and do it now attitude of the most successful people in the world. This will be a very important key to *your* future.



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