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Where Are You Going?

When I was in the Marines, we would practice land navigation using the magnetic compass. It was not fancy or slick, required no batteries, and didn't need to acquire a signal but it always pointed north. I can not count the number of hours I spent in the woods practicing with that compass but it became an invaluable part of my equipment and more than once helped me get to my destination. As Marines, it was important to know where we were, where we were going, and how we'd get there.

What was interesting is that most of the time I could not see my final destination until I was almost on top of it. I had to rely upon my compass, map, and training to get to my final destination. I knew that by taking frequent readings, counting my steps, matching terrain feature I saw to what was on the map, and staying the course would lead me to where I needed to be; I'd reach my goal. When I went on ship I found that these large naval vessels were a lot like me when it came to reaching their final port. They could not see their final destination for most of the voyage yet they followed the same principals I used in land navigation.

If you ask the Captain of a ship his next port of call he will answer you in one sentence. But, for 99% of the ships journey the Captain cannot see his final destination; but he knows that if he continues to do things a certain way, at certain times with consistency and clarity his ship will reach its destination. Yet, he can only reach one port at a time and while there may be many ports along the way there is only one that is the ships final destination...its ultimate goal.

What would happen to a ship if it did not have a destination? Let's say we just started the engine, didn't give it a Captain or crew, and let the ship go on its way. If it managed to get out of the harbor at all it would most likely sink or end up a derelict just drifting in the ocean going wherever the tides and wind pointlessly pushed it.

Most people can be compared to ships. If you ask 100 people their goals only 5 can tell you a clearly defined goal. Only 5 know where they are going while the rest are just drifting along with the tide and winds hoping to drift into a good port. Unless you can define your goal in one clear sentence the chances are you are like the 95% of the people...no clear destination, just drifting along with whatever life throws at them. These people hope that they will be successful and drift into something that is good. They lack a clear destination.

Before setting a destination we must first decide on a definition of success. The best definition of success that I have found is "Success is the progressive realization of a worthy ideal." This definition means that any person engaged in achieving something they consider a worthy ideal is a success. A worthy ideal could be a larger home, a promotion, choosing to be a homemaker, a nicer car, or more money. It doesn't matter what the goal is just as long as you have one and once set then taking the action to reach it. Once achieved then set another goal; like the ship you can only achieve one goal at a time. By progressively working to achieve small goals they add up until you have reached your final and ultimate goal and enter the harbor safely.

I still have my old compass from the Marine Corps. I use it to this day when I go out into the woods. I showed it to my teenage son who immediately asked me why I didn't use a new GPS system. I smiled and said that this old compass always points north and in thirty years I've never had to replace the batteries or upload software and it has always helped me get to my destination. It has never failed me. He's learning how to use an "old fashioned" compass to find his way in the woods. On our treks through the woods we've starting talking about setting and reaching goals.

So, where are you going and what type of compass are you using to reach your goal? My challenge to you... decide on where you are going and then make it happen. It's your choice, your goal, and your life.

My name is Steve Ettien and I own Diamondback Consulting, Inc. My newsletters are free and published every two weeks. It is my genuine desire that they are helpful to you; please forward them to your family, friends, and colleagues.

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I would like to wish you and your family a **Happy New Year.**

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