

Would You Rather Have Goals or Systems?

By Phil Humbert

This is the time of year when almost everyone sets goals and targets for the new year, and that is a GOOD thing! Always be clear about where you're going! Always have a destination, an outcome, a "next step" or target in mind. If you don't choose your goals in life, you are doomed to live without direction or purpose. Always know "what's next" in life!

At the same time, here's an interesting question: Would you rather have goals, or systems that automatically take you where you want to go in life?

I think the answer is obvious, but few people seem to really "get it."

Goals are wonderful. As I just wrote, goals are good! But systems are better.

The problem with goals is that they are always in the future. They are something to be worked on and achieved as soon as possible, but always in the future. Systems support us and enrich our lives immediately, today, right NOW!

Because they are in the future, goals can be easier to create than systems. Goals sound nice, and there's a kind of safety in knowing that we have goals "down the road" without having to disrupt our lives today.

New systems, on the other hand, can disrupt our lives, and sometimes upset important people around us. A goal to start a business "soon" is very different than coming home late every night because we're working on it. A goal to be slim, trim and strong "this year" is very different than adding a daily workout to your already busy schedule.

Systems (or habits) are the golden path to anything we want in life. Once you establish the system or pattern of daily exercise, fitness is no longer a goal. It becomes the automatic, inevitable result of what you "normally" do every single day. Fitness is a "side effect" of your system!

This is true of just about anything you want in life. My bias is that no one should set a "goal" to start saving! Instead, decide to save, then develop a system to IMMEDIATELY make saving automatic, fool-proof and easy. Join a payroll savings plan that makes it very hard NOT to save, and do it today.

Never set a "goal" to improve your marriage! Instead, develop a system that includes quality time every single day. Establish a system of weekly dates. Develop habits, ("systems") of careful listening, gentle sharing, and lots of hugs that will predictably lead to the results you prefer.

Systems beat goals every time!

Year after year, I have clients who are eager to set sales "goals," but few who are prepared to change their daily behaviors and develop systems that will guarantee more sales. Systems make success automatic, but can be uncomfortable, even painful, at first.

In the end, I recommend focusing on systems. Goals excite the imagination and give us a preview of coming attractions, but systems are the golden path to ultimate success. Systems give us control and empower us immediately. Systems will open doors and give you the life you truly want.