

Want it • Create it • Live it

Three things you must do to reach your dreams

by Bill Sparkman, The Coach

Each year an untold amount of time, effort, and money is spent on technical Training - learning ways to do our job better, ways to enhance the bottom line. Each year an untold amount of time, effort, and money is spent on self improvement items such as books, tapes, and motivational seminars. People are looking for ways to get an edge - ways to the “secret path” to a happier, more fulfilling life. I endorse and encourage the process of self improvement – it is very important in the development of an individual and a company. If you look in the bookstore, there are thousands of books on leadership, management, reaching your potential and how to unleash your hidden powers. With so much information, it can get confusing. One author tells you there are 7 habits to be a highly effective person, another tells you there are 12 laws that govern success, another tells you to follow these 10 steps and you will have the abundance that you desire.

As you continue to read and listen to various speakers and gurus, you start to realize that about 80% of all the information is basically the same; it is just packaged in different ways, allowing for consumption from a variety of individuals who learn and process information differently. Most of the wisdom that is relevant and pertinent in today’s world was relevant and pertinent a hundred years ago.

I am convinced that it is very important that you not only experience learning from books, tapes, seminars, and sermons, but you also learn from the experience. When I say learn from the experience, what I mean is, to the point of application. There is a huge gap between knowing and doing. Part of my job as a coach and trainer is to help people narrow that gap.

It is my opinion, after years of training, consulting, and practical application, that there are three little things you must do to “reach your dreams.” I’ve learned that some of the best things in life can be described in simple terms. These three steps, seemingly simple, can be important breakthroughs in reaching your true potential, not only as business people, but just as importantly as individuals.

#1 WANT IT

The first thing you must do to reach your dreams is WANT IT. What I mean by “want it” is the desire stage. All goals and journeys start with desire. You must have a sense of discontent with where you are – a reason to move from where you are to some other place. This discontent is a positive attribute. It is what starts the desire for change. I call it “creative tension.”

Without this healthy discontent, you will never take action to move away from your comfort zone. We all have a tendency to get ourselves into a comfort zone, where we become content with how things are going, with the status quo. What happens is that these comfort zones begin to box us in. For some they become their casket. We get stagnant. We start going through the motions and we no longer have the sense that we “can do better.” And that there is more to learn and to live. Michael Jordan, arguably the best basketball player ever, knew this principal and used it to drive himself to be better and better – what I call the “best of the best.” When Michael was at North Carolina, Dean Smith never allowed freshmen to start. Michael, being how he was, used this to drive

himself to be even better. He was already one of the best players in college basketball. His 60% or 70% effort was better than most players' 100%. Yet he was not willing to settle for "good enough." So he pushed himself harder, and as a freshman, he became a starter for Dean Smith and the University of North Carolina. Dean Smith was a coach known for raising the bar, expecting more from everybody. So when Michael became a starter, Dean again raised that bar to have Michael "want" more. Sports Illustrated wanted to put the North Carolina team on the front cover of their magazine because they were picked to win the national title. When they approached Dean Smith he said, "You can put the other four starters on the cover, but not Michael." He had a private meeting with Jordan and told him the reason for his decision was because he had not earned the right. This caused Michael to push himself harder and want to do better. This constant "desire", this constant wanting to do better, helped create the Michael Jordan we know today. Without this discontent there is an "unconscious sense of being on autopilot or going through the motions." It can be easy to let the "flight" of our lives slip into autopilot, slicing through the air, but not entirely under our guidance. The major problem with autopilot is that over time we might forget how to fly the plane.

#2 CREATE IT

The second thing you "must" do to reach your dreams is CREATE IT. Steven Covey talks about beginning with the end in mind. All things are created twice - first mentally, through vision, and then physical, through action. Let's take a look at what happens when somebody wants to build a home - notice how it all begins with a "want.". A home builder begins with an idea, or a vision, of what the home will look like. He or she then goes to an architect to design the home. The architect then puts together the plans for the home before a single shovel of dirt is turned. The building is constructed in the client's mind, and the plans are laid out so they can be communicated to all the people who will help create the house that matches the original vision. You have to design your life the way you want it so you can create it. When you create your future you not only create the vision, you must also create the steps to accomplish it.

#3 LIVE IT

The third thing you must do to reach your dreams is LIVE IT. Most people never get to this stage. This stage takes commitment and a belief in yourself. Commitment at the point of decision is how you achieve your goals. Most people wallow in the "want it" stage and some make it to the "create it" stage. Very few ever cross the threshold into this final stage. My definition of power is action. You can have all the dreams in the world, but if you don't take action, they will die. You have to "live it," put it in motion. Without movement you will experience wishful thinking that usually ends up leading nowhere. The phrase that is most often used is "walk your talk." The world is full of hypocrites - don't cheat yourself by dreaming without acting. Live it and live it with passion. If you don't live your dream, who will?

The three steps to reaching your dreams are: WANT IT, CREATE IT, LIVE IT!

These three steps are best illustrated by the following quote by John Schaar:
"The future is not a result of choices among alternative paths offered by the present, but a place created - created first in the mind and will, created next in action. The future is not some place we are going to, but one we are creating. The paths to it are not found, but made, and the activity of making them changes both the maker and the destination."

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