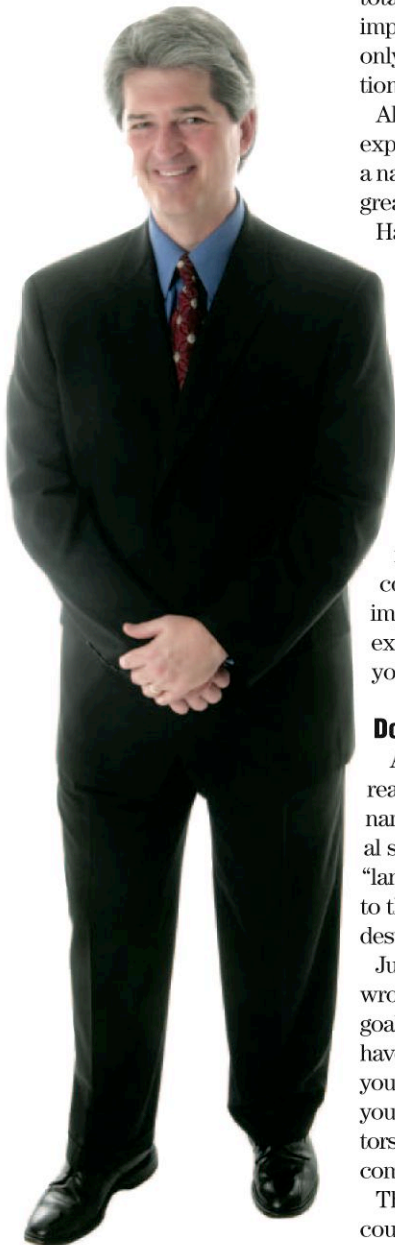


Reach your intended destination

Set precise goals,
then act on the
guidance you receive.



“You have arrived at your destination,” the semi-robotic voice droned from my car’s navigational system.

If I hadn’t been driving for the past hour, I would have laughed. Instead of arriving at the office building where I was to meet an important client, I was instead staring at the loading dock of a deserted warehouse. I had faithfully followed each instruction issued by the system — from taking major highways to making individual turns down isolated streets — but in the process had become totally lost. Not only was I about to miss an important meeting, but in perfect irony, my only way out was to use the same navigational system that had taken me there.

Although this was not the first unhappy experience in my love-hate relationship with a navigational system, it illustrates one of the greatest lessons in the business of life.

Have you ever found yourself in a life situation that was different than you intended? Did you begin with a vision for your career that has now gone off course, leaving you stranded in a job in which you have no real passion or opportunity? Did you give your best effort to a project or assignment, doing all the right things, only to see it fail?

If you have, then you know the pain and frustration that come when your life navigation system fails. To get back on course, you must ask, and answer, two important questions: “Do you know your exact destination?” and “Are you following your guidance system?”

Do you know your exact destination?

As I sat in the warehouse parking lot, I realized that I had entered the correct street name, Havenwood, into my car’s navigational system but had failed to include the word “lane.” Without that detail, the system led me to the same address on Havenwood Court, a destination far from where I wanted to go.

Just as this small detail navigated me to the wrong location, the lack of precision in your goals can take you off track. For example, have you ever accepted a position in which you received the title and the compensation you wanted, only to later realize that other factors, such as the culture or the integrity of the company, made it the wrong place for you?

The disappointment you experienced could have been avoided if you had been

clear about all the factors that were crucial in your decision to take the job.

Take time to really think about the goal you’re pursuing so that your focus is clear and precise. Develop written answers to questions such as, “Why is this goal important to me?” “What is it I really want to achieve?” “How will I know when I’ve succeeded?”

When you become clear about your exact destination, you increase the likelihood that you will actually arrive.

Are you following your guidance system?

When I’ve entered the correct destination, my car’s navigational system will then warn me if I’m off track, issuing commands such as, “You have left the route. Please turn around.”

Your life navigation system works in the same way. In whatever goal you’re pursuing, you are receiving guidance all the time. A mentor may offer you advice on a challenging problem you’re facing, a friend can compassionately share a painful truth that you need to hear, or, more important, your heart will tell you if what you’re doing is not who you really are.

Your challenge is not in being guided; guidance is all around you. Your challenge is in listening — and acting on — the guidance you receive.

Start by capturing the advice and insight you receive in a notebook or on your computer, adding your own thoughts about what it means to you and what you plan to do with it. The simple act of writing it down dramatically increases your ability to remember and utilize the information and, in the process, will guide you to stay on course.

When you take the step of adding clarity to the goals you’re pursuing and start to really heed the guidance you receive, you will begin to create the life you want.

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