

# Backwards Planning

(Planning Backwards)



By J.Sewell Perkins

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**This is a FREE eBook!**

# HOW TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE PLAN

The first and most important part of planning is to fully realize what a plan is. The word PLAN is a word we use many times throughout the course of a day and yet so few people really ever stop to think about what a plan is or how to create one.

## We hear people say:

**I plan on going, doing or what ever.**

**Let's plan on it.**

**We're planning a party, meeting, get together, etc.**

**We're planning a vacation, ski trip, a deep-sea dive, a safari...or whatever.**

**Sorry that's not in my plan.**

My question is, are they really creating a plan or does plan to them mean just a loose putting together of details?

New clients often show up in my office asking me to help them develop a plan. I naturally ask what the plan is for and I'm told something to the effect of, "I want to become a millionaire." While becoming a millionaire is certainly doable, it is not a plan. It is a goal. A plan is your strategy, the steps you put together to help you achieve your goal of becoming a millionaire.

**A plan is necessary in order to reach any goal, be it a successful life, a successful business, your dream vacation or a trip to Disneyland.**

Are you aware that most people put more time and effort into planning a two-week vacation than they put into planning their entire lives? That's a fact. Actually, about 93% of the population has no life plan at all. Despite that fact, most people manage to get from womb to tomb without a plan. The question is, how much better could life be for them if they took the time to make a plan instead of just going with the flow and becoming as straws in the wind?

Planning and goal setting are two of the most important components of which success is made. While still in college I worked for a man who owned a small business which he ran in a very hands-on manner. He always said (and I mean always), "Plan your work and work your plan." He did exactly what he spoke and I was very much aware of his words as I watched his business grow from a little hole-in-the-wall operation employing about seven people to a large and growing operation employing thirty seven people in a huge new building with ample parking, loading docks and truck entrances.

**WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU'RE GOING, HOW DO YOU EXPECT TO KNOW WHEN YOU GET THERE?**

**"When you set a goal, whether in your personal or business life, that becomes the destination that your plan must help you reach."**

**A word of caution!** Make your destination a huge stretch. Exactly what does that mean? Let me give you a clear, real life example: If you decide you want to move to another place, somewhere relatively far away you must make a plan to do so. Let's use, for example, a scenario in which you are on the east coast of the United States and you want to move to California on the west coast. Your plan would not be to go to Chicago and then think about what to do next. If you don't plan beyond Chicago you could wind up there permanently. It's a neat city with much to offer and could well entice you with its charm. You'd wind up spending the rest of your life in Chicago, forgetting about your original plan to live in California. One day, many years later you would wake and realize that your plan had been to move to California. You may be happy and comfortable where you are, but my guess is that you would wonder for the rest of your life what it could have been like if you had actually carried out your original plan.

**Important Note:** You really do control your life and all aspects of it by your thoughts. That's why it is vitally important that you be the one in control of your thoughts. When you allow yourself to become concerned with what others think, whether it be parents, friends, acquaintances or total strangers you are then, at least to some degree, being controlled by these people. You don't have to believe that but until you do you'll be vulnerable to outside forces and will wind up living the life someone else has decided on for you.

**PLANNING IS CRITICAL TO SUCCESS  
WHETHER PERSONAL OR BUSINESS**

How many times have you planned a trip and made sure you had a good map or a reliable GPS to ensure that you arrive at your destination on time and without too much frustration? Just as we plan a vacation, a party or even a trip to run our weekly errands, we must plan our lives and/or businesses as well.

Think of your plan as a map (of sorts) that you can follow easily to your intended destination. It's important to note that there are many steps that make up a plan. We could look at those steps as mini plans within the master plan.

We're going by car - so the plan must be ours. We can get all the advice and extra help on putting together our plan but it must be our own plan and we must keep it our plan lest we wind up in Chicago again for the rest of our lives.

**In planning our move we must:**

**Know exactly where we're going; learn everything there is to know about our destination and visualize ourselves there; begin to live there in our minds**

**Decide if we're taking all our stuff with us or if we'll make a new start**

**Choose a vehicle for our journey**

**Make advance plans for when we arrive**

Whether you want to start a part-time business to supplement your current income from your job, build a highly profitable business of your own and replace the income from your job, or steer your personal life to success...you need a plan. The question is... where do you start? There are different theories on this so I'm going to share with you what has proven to have worked well for many now successful people.

**Sketching out your plan**

Start at your ultimate destination, not where you are now. If you begin where you are now you're heading into unknown territory and could well get lost many times along the way. If, however, you start at your final destination it's easier to find your way back to where you are now. Confusing? Perhaps, but stay with me.

**Here's an example:**

Let's say you want to have a business of your own but what kind of business? What do you love to do, something you'd do for nothing if you could afford to? Whatever that is, that is your calling and if you apply yourself you can turn it into a highly successful business and create an abundant life.

Whether you're just starting your business, you're restarting or reorganizing an existing business or are planning your personal life, these steps to creating an effective plan will work for you if you apply them.

**Step #1** Decide on your ultimate goal and visualize it. See yourself in the picture. What is your daily routine in this new place in life? Make a daily schedule for yourself and commit it to writing. Remember anything written down becomes more real than something you just carry around in your mind.

**Step #2** What is the vehicle that brought you to this destination i.e. writing, speaking, selling, singing, dancing, painting, sculpting, consulting, teaching, marketing, network marketing, MLM, entrepreneurial effort - what got you here in a business of your own?

**Step #3** How did you choose the destination in which you now find yourself? Was it a well thought out decision or did someone else plant the idea in your mind? Does your new business represent the thing you most love doing? Would you do this thing free of charge if you could afford to?

If you took into consideration that the best way to find success is to do something about which you're really passionate, then my guess is that you are in absolutely the right place doing what you are meant to do.

**Step #4** How did you develop your love and passion for the thing that is the mainstay, the very backbone of your business? Was it always there, perhaps somewhat hidden, but there? How many days, weeks, months, years or perhaps decades have you had this passion for the basis of your new business?

**Step #5** Where did the idea of having a business of your own come from? When did that thought first cross your mind? Did you start out looking for just any business that could make a lot of money for you or did you know from the beginning what you wanted to do?

**Step #6** Did you make a list of all the things you love to do and/or have great interest in then find the common thread that runs through them all? If so, was that the determining factor in your decision to be in this new business you are now in?

**Step #7** You've just come to the place where you've decided that you want to make your mark on the world. You've decided that you want to live a life of total and absolute abundance. You know you deserve it and have made up your mind to go for it.

So, how do you begin? How do you find your way to the success and abundance you seek? Fortunately, you already know how...you simply begin with your ultimate goal and work your way back to right here. Start at Step #1, your final destination, and work your way right back to here to the beginning.

**"Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards."  
- Soren Kierkegaard**

At first reading, the quotation above may sound ridiculous. When you take time to think about it, however, it actually makes perfect sense. How many times have you heard someone suggest that if they had known years ago what they know now they would be rich or at least far better off? That seems to be a common lament.

That is one of the basic reasons for **Planning Backwards**. Starting with your ultimate intended destination you are already there in your mind. You have all the benefits in your mind. Begin to enjoy them mentally until they show up physically.

In addition to mentally enjoying all the benefits of your new position in life or your new business there is the added benefit of realizing any drawbacks that you hadn't anticipated. Sometimes we see someone enjoying a lifestyle and/or a business that looks really great to us and we pursue their dream in the hope of having what they have.

**The following true story demonstrates what I mean by pursuing the dream of another simply because it looks good from your point of view:**

An entrepreneur, let's call her Joyce, owned several businesses, one of which consisted of a chain of retail stores. Each store in the chain had a manager, assistant manager and various other employees, each with his or her own particular job to do. Joyce made it a point to show up at each of the stores each day to check on things and consult with the store managers.

Joyce lived in a big, beautiful home, drove a top of the line car and carried the American Express Platinum card in addition to considerable cash. She had big parties and entertained constantly. Many of the people who were invited to her parties were friends and business associates who happened also to be customers of her business. They, in chatting with the managers of the stores would occasionally say something about the great party they had attended at Joyce's home.

All these things led the employees to feel that they were working hard to help her maintain her lifestyle. Many of them talked about how much they'd like to have their own store and live the lifestyle that Joyce lived. They wanted to have their businesses and their own employees to "do all the work." While each manager received a really good salary and had many benefits, they wanted to "live Joyce's lifestyle while someone else does all the work."

One by one, each manager did eventually leave Joyce and open his or her own business, each a business that looked like a clone of Joyce's businesses. These managers were replaced by new managers and Joyce's businesses went right on without skipping a beat.

The stores of the managers who left and went into competition with Joyce failed one by one. Of the five managers who left to go into business for him or her self, only one survived more than a year. The one that did survive created such stress on its owner that he had a heart attack and died. His wife said that the responsibilities of dealing with the daily, behind the scenes operations of the business were just too much for him to handle.

The employees hadn't seen Joyce traveling to the merchandise marts and attending the various shows where she had to not only be savvy enough to know what to buy and what not to buy but additionally negotiate a good price. They had no idea how much was lost to shop lifting nor did they realize how much merchandise Joyce donated to various charitable causes in the community. They didn't realize that many of the parties Joyce threw were to socialize with both customers and potential customers.

None of these people realized that the five stores in Joyce's chain were not really big money makers. They made a modest profit but Joyce's real money came from her real estate investments. She didn't need big profits from the businesses but kept them because she kept a lot of people employed in jobs that they seemed to really love.

Had any of these disgruntled employees gone to Joyce and asked to shadow her or asked for a look behind the scenes she would have shared with them openly and would possibly have considered offering them a partnership in the particular store for

which they had been responsible. The employees could have gotten a first hand look at what is required to keep such a business afloat. They also could have gone to a competitor and asked to shadow on their day off or just hang out and help.

It is clear that none of these people ever considered **Planning Backwards**. It never occurred to any of them that actually going to the end result first and working their way back to the beginning of the idea would be a good thing to do.

**"If the grass really is greener on the other side of the fence it's because someone is lovingly caring for it and keeping it that way."**

*- J.Sewell Perkins*

There are numerous case studies that support beginning at the ultimate destination and working your way back:

**#1.** There's the woman with a beautiful singing voice who loves to sing. She has seen the fame and fortune enjoyed by many entertainment icons but has failed to realize that what she is seeking will require her standing before large audiences and that is a thought that makes her physically sick.

**#2.** Also, we have a case in which the man is struggling to become a well-paid public speaker. He has convinced himself that, that is what he wants to do. He has the potential to be a great public speaker commanding thousands of dollars per engagement but he lacks the faith in himself to move ahead. He hides out in Toastmasters, competing in one competition after the other and becoming dejected each time he doesn't receive the much coveted first place prize.

**#3.** The case of the young man who wanted to be an attorney because he saw the lifestyle of so many family friends who are attorneys is a sad one. He could surely have gone to any one of them and asked for the opportunity to shadow or sit down and see what the life of an attorney is really like but he refused to go to the ultimate destination to check it out and work his way back. As a result he is a criminal attorney and he hates every waking moment of it.

He also didn't take into consideration the fact that there are many diverse areas of law that may not have been so difficult but because the attorney he knew best happened to be a criminal attorney ...so is he and he hates it.

There are endless cases of people starting at what is referred to as square one and working their way gradually to the final destination. Often by the time they get there...if they ever get there...they believe it's too late to turn back. They resign themselves to spending a lifetime doing something they hate doing, for an income that makes them feel severely shortchanged.

**As mentioned previously, every good plan contains a lot of steps (smaller plans) within it.**

Just as with going from the east coast to the west coast requires going through each state in between, going from the beginning of a plan to the ultimate goal requires traveling through many places. Remember that it's always best to claim the end result and explore it thoroughly to be sure that is really where you want to be. Next you go there and test it to be sure it's what you really want to do with the rest of your life and if it is...by all means go for it!

**"Just as the tiny acorn has within it a mighty oak tree, you have within you greatness beyond your wildest imagination."**

*- J.Sewell Perkins*

**Use the greatness within you to make a magnificent plan for your life and then follow your plan to the success you deserve.**