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From the Editor

Being a Navigator

by David C. Miller

It's that time of year—a time of reflection and goal setting. One of the most powerful things you can do for your career and life is to set clear, powerful goals. Otherwise, you leave things to chance.

Are you a passenger, controller or a navigator? Would you go rafting down a river without any oars to navigate your direction and get to your intended destination? Without goals you are, in essence, making a decision to ride passively and let the “river of circumstances” take you, your practice or career, and your life wherever it wants.

You can go to the other extreme and try to control life's events. Like trying to make a river flow a certain way, this is an exercise in futility. We can't control the majority of life's events!

However, we do have control over certain things, such as what we believe and how we respond to life's events. As we take responsibility in these areas, we are stepping into our role as navigator. In order to navigate we need to set a direction and identify a destination. That's where goal setting comes in. Here is a five-phase plan to setting goals for 2006.

Phase 1: Reflect on 2005

Ironically, one of the first things that often helps to set goals is to first look back. Here are some questions to ponder as you look back at 2005:

- What were your biggest wins?
- What was the most valuable lesson you learned?
- If you had to describe the theme for 2005, what would it be?
- What was your biggest disappointment last year?

Phase 2: Envision Your 2006

Here's where you define the destination. Imagine yourself 12 months from now at the end of 2006. What do you envision yourself accomplishing at that point in time? It's helpful to identify various categories to set some goals that you want to achieve for next year. For example, in your career you may want to think through some of the following categories:

- Maximize new sales/clients
- Support existing clients
- Create more impact in my organization
- Upgrade my leadership and management skills



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- Manage costs
- Create an empowered team
- Implement systems to leverage work flow

Identify personal categories as well, such as:

- Physical health
- Financial well-being
- Emotional strength
- Relationships—spouse, children, friends, etc.
- Spiritual health

Once you have your categories, envision where you want to be in all these areas at the end of the year. For example, you may want to lose 10 pounds and start a consistent exercise regime. You may want to increase sales by 20 percent. Think through all these areas and ask yourself what it would be like to achieve these goals. How would it feel? What else would make it “delicious”?

Phase 3: Set Performance Goals

The goals you set in your categories are most likely end goals in that they define your destination. And in many cases, you don't have 100 percent of the control for achieving them. In this phase write down the practices and behaviors that will support arriving at these goals, i.e., performance goals.

Unlike end goals, with performance goals you have 100 percent control in seeing them to fruition. These are the actions and behaviors that, if practiced consistently, will dramatically increase the probability that you'll get to your end goal. For example, let's say you want to increase your client base by 20 percent (end goal).

A performance goal to help get you there is to speak to groups of qualified prospects at least once per month (performance goal).

Remember: End goals provide the inspiration while performance goals provide the specification.

Phase 4: Who Would You Need to Be?

In this phase, ask yourself the following:

- “What qualities do I need to bring to the table to make this happen?”
- “What do I need to dial-up in order to get to these goals?”

If you want to do what you did last year, it's not going to require anything materially different from you this year. But if you're looking to grow and change in 2006 and play a bigger game, it will most likely require courage to move outside your comfort zone and take more risks. Reflect on the list of characteristics and qualities that will need to show up this year for you to get where you want to be.

Phase 5: Implement a System

If you want to make sure your goals become a reality rather than a pipe dream, you'll need a system of weekly planning to make sure you reach your destination. For more on how to do this, see my article on “Outcome-Focused Planning,” which is in this issue. □

