

Your Discipline Is The Anchor of Your Success

By John Madden

“Discipline is the bridge between goals and accomplishment” ... Jim Rohn

You’ve heard a colleague or an employee described thus: “She’s one take-charge lady, or “He’s a self-starter.” or “She makes it happen around here.” Making things happen, as these people are known for, cannot occur if they are not disciplined. They all practice discipline – the most difficult concept for the average person.

When you don’t practice discipline you are ignoring the greatest business tool of success. Undisciplined people become known as disorganized, procrastinating, non-starters, below-average performers, time wasters, and excuse makers.

How can you become a more successful leader/operator through applied discipline? Using the first four letters of discipline, D-I-S-C, here’s how:

DECIDE on what you’re going to do and write it down, as on a To-Do list. Example: “Collect information to prepare budget.” Establish its priority level on your list - by number, or with an X, or using a highlighter - or whatever works best for you. If the project you have to complete will take more than a few minutes, put a time-frame on it: 30 minutes, 45 minutes, an hour and a half, a whole day. Whatever time you first think it will take, add half of that again. We rarely allow enough time for most projects. Write down the deadline for completion: “Wednesday noon”, “Before I go home today”

INTEND to get it done. This is not a wish list; it's a "will be done" list. Wish lists, for the most part, have no sense of urgency, and they breed procrastination. That's where you put off doing that which you don't really want to do, especially if you haven't convinced yourself of its immediate importance. If you're a big procrastinator, ask yourself, "What will happen if I don't get this done today?" On the positive side, see it completed in your mind's eye at the end of the day. Say to yourself at the beginning of the day: "I have collected all the information I need for the budget preparation - No Excuses."

START! The greatest difficulty for most of us when it comes to a project we have to do is to get started. I suffer from this sometime when it comes to writing an article that's due; so I fix it in my mind from the night before, and say the words "I have finished the article by the end of today – guaranteed!" What better way to keep focused? The biggest delay in getting started comes from your waiting till you have the right chunk of time available to finish the job; hence you never get it done. At a break in your day – even five minutes - say, "Let's get started on this." And complete at least one small part of the collection of information, example: "Payroll stats by month for last year." Once you've got the ball rolling, it's easier to build momentum. Just keep adding the other chunks. Chances are that as you see progress, you'll be motivated to stick with it.

COMMUNICATE your plan. Tell anyone who'll listen what you're doing; especially those who are often inclined to waste your time, or those who habitually ask you to help them with something. For those of you who can't say No!, use this project as your reason not to be persuaded into other activities that are more important to others than to you.

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