

# BLUE SKY

## INTRODUCTION

This document is about how to identify what you really want and how to get there; to set goals based on realism and confidence; to work with discipline and resolve; to learn from the requisite failures and too-early successes; to achieve a clarity of focus and a sense of purpose; to stick to your plan; to deal with pressure, thrive on it, and make it your own; to carve away the distractions that slow us all down; and, perhaps most important, to keep going after you fail.

*“Failure is and event. A failure means you’ve put forth some effort – that’s good. Failure gives you an opportunity to learn a better way to do it - that’s positive. A failure teaches you something and adds to your experience. That’s very helpful. Failure is an event, never a person, an attitude, not an outcome; a temporary inconvenience, a stepping-stone. Our response to it determines just how helpful it can be.”*

*J. Allan Peterson*

## TURN YOUR DREAMS INTO GOALS

### **1. Dream Small.**

Think in small increments. If you know your eventual goal then set goals along the path that leads to it. Short-term goals are the only reliable path.

### **2. Write down your goals.**

This makes it formal and gives notice to yourself and others that the work has officially begun. And it keeps your goals clear and in focus.

### **3. Be specific.**

If your goal is to “get in shape,” you will-bad shape. It is far better to focus on specific goals, like run a 4 minute klm or do 50 sit ups a day.

### **4. Be realistic.**

You can accomplish most things you set out to do, but it will take time. Don’t shoot for something unattainable-completely outside your nature or opportunity. At least not right away.

### **5. Know yourself.**

Find your core, that thing you are chasing. Set goals based on what you really want, not what other people expect of you. And don’t assume that goals are only for the competitive areas of your life. You can make goals for family, relationships, anything.

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## SELF DISCIPLINE

### 1. Don't fight yourself.

It's like fighting with kids: you can't win. Get the whole family - body, mind and spirit - in on the goal. Be a good parent to yourself; be stern, patient, and honest.

### 2. Keep a log.

Keep a record of your chase, a daily schedule of your training and your progress. How far have you come and how far you have to go. A log provides two necessary things for self-discipline: *motivation* and *habit*. Recording your progress in writing keeps you focused.

### 3. Do the 50<sup>th</sup> Push-Up.

When you've committed yourself to 2 hrs of training, do 2 hrs of training, not 1 hr and 59 minutes. Six 400mtr sprints is always six, never five. The basis of self-discipline: ***Don't allow the edges to blur.***

### 4. Carry it everywhere.

If you're trying to become more disciplined at training, add some self-discipline at home too. A clean garage might not help you win a gold medal but it will create and reinforce habits that lead to success.

### 5. Tune the engine.

Don't be afraid to reassess. Is your training schedule working? Is the path to your goals working? How can you adjust?

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## DEALING WITH DISAPPOINTMENT

### **1. Don't prepare for failure.**

Trust me, when it happens you'll know what to do. If you spend time thinking about what could go wrong, it will. Fight off disappointment as if it were a pack of wild dogs. It will arrive with out your help. And when it does...

### **2. Lose with grace and defiance.**

You will be remembered by the way you win and by the way you lose, by your greatest achievements and your worst failures. Learn the difference between gloating and celebrating, between moping and morning.

### **3. Write down what went wrong.**

Make two columns: things that you can control and things you can't. Now take the list of things you can't control and throw it away. Don't carry those ready-made reasons for failing to the next opportunity. The other column is where your work lies. So....

### **4. Get back to it.**

Don't lose the momentum of your hard training. Find some other place to channel all that energy. Set new goals. Learn. Get on with it.

### **5. Recognise failure for what it is.**

Failure is a wholly necessary part of the process, the stuff of heroes and legends. Ask yourself what successful person hasn't had to rise from the bottom. Unfortunately, we haven't yet discovered an alternative route to the top.

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## HANDLING SUCCESS

### **1. Don't spend it all in one place.**

The pace of success is slow, and the celebration of it should be too. Don't abandon the things that got you there.

### **2. Share it.**

Share success with friends, family, coaches, and teammates, everyone who helped you get there. Find new people to help. The minute you start believing that you accomplished something alone, you will be alone.

### **3. Reclaim you expectations.**

It's nice for others to have confidence in you, but if your expectations come from the outside, you will resent them and the journey will become more difficult. The best motivation always comes from within.

### **4. Fight the fear of winning.**

We do the strangest things to scuttle our own success. Whether it's because we're afraid of leaving our nest or afraid of falling, we can freeze when it comes time to open our wings. Be bold.

### **5. Fight the fear of change.**

Don't cling to habits, places, or people simply because they worked for you before. The only thing you can never change is your values.

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## TOWARD AWARENESS

### **1. Take stock.**

Don't get so caught up in your chase that you get off the track. Take a little time and revisit your goals, look back at how far you have come, pat yourself on the back a little. Then look forward to where you are going.

### **2. Look Around**

Study the people who are attempting things similar to you. Is there something successful that other people are doing that you aren't? You can learn as much from those close to you who are failing.

### **3. Strive for consistency.**

You are in this for the long haul. Try to reach a level of performance at which you will always know what to expect from yourself. Be consistent throughout your life. Steadiness may not be glamorous, but it works.

### **4. Challenge yourself.**

This is the flip side of consistency. New challenges keep you from burning out and becoming bored. And they can reveal new paths to your ultimate goal.

### **5. Match your discipline with efficiency.**

Working harder is not always the answer. But working better almost always is. At this level, small improvements in your effort and your effectiveness will pay great dividends.

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## FEAR OF FAILURE

### 1. **Imagine it.**

I know. I told you not to prepare for defeat, but this is different. You cannot conquer this fear until you recognise it. Catastrophic failure is scary as long as it is a shapeless thing off in the distance. Demystify it by getting a good look at it.

### 2. **Make the expectations yours.**

Too often, the thing you are really afraid of is failing to live up to other people's expectations. In truth, most people are too involved in their own chase to think too much about yours. Yours are the only important expectations.

### 3. **Go back to old friends.**

Fear of failure is best fought with *confidence*, *realism*, and *discipline* – the qualities you've used to get this far. Be confident that you are ready, realistic about your chances, and disciplined in your work habits. It's all you can do.

### 4. **Now imagine winning.**

In detailed, matter-of-fact thinking, go through the steps you need to succeed. Get the taste of loss out of your mouth and put your concentration where it can be useful: on the task at hand.

### 5. **Use your failure.**

If you do fail, don't be afraid to draw on it for inspiration. In a way, it is a great gift. Failure deepens us, puts nice lines in our faces, and gives us great wisdom.

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## PERSPECTIVE LEADS TO PERSEVERANCE

### **1. Strive for balance.**

Don't let your goals smother your personal life, your relationships, or your health. Being successful without being well rounded is a waste. Do something tangible: Add another hour of family time; go to the movies with your friends once a week.

### **2. Regain your perspective.**

This is one of those moments when you need to assess your journey so far. Give yourself time to think or to mediate or just to shut the machine off for a while.

### **3. Listen to your body.**

It will tell you when you are going too fast or when you need something you're not getting. Burnout sets off alarms in your body as loud as those in times of a major emergency.

### **4. Look for new challenges.**

Make sure they are the kind that keeps you sharp, that exercise your mind and body and force you to continue using self-discipline, organisation, and consistency. These are transferable habits that need to be worked like muscles.

### **5. Simplify.**

Trim the fat from your life and seek the motivation behind your chase, the reasons you started on this journey in the first place.

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## PRESSURE

### **1. Don't pretend there is no pressure.**

That's what people often try to do, but it doesn't work. You don't want to play mind games with yourself. Honesty is the only way to go.

### **2. Don't use it as an excuse.**

The pressure you blame today for a failure will show up again tomorrow. Analyse the reasons for your failures. Those are the real problems.

### **3. Trace pressure to its root.**

Outside pressures almost always come about because you've put yourself in a position to do something memorable. Pressure springs from you. It is impressive, a reflection of your own ambitions.

### **4. Make it yours.**

Pressure is like anything else. If you control it, you can make it work for you instead of against you. Realise that the pressure to succeed comes from within and then apply it yourself.

### **5. Use it as motivation.**

If it comes from within, then pressure can be a tremendous motivator. If you can work under pressure, then the more that is at stake, the better you will perform. That's all you can ask of yourself.

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## PERFORMANCE

### 1. Don't be afraid to perform.

You have worked harder than anyone. You have committed yourself to this goal. Now don't back away from the pressure and the people watching.

### 2. Use your secret weapon: Your mind.

Your power to concentrate and follow a plan is incredible and, unfortunately, too often untapped. As strong as my legs are, it is my mind that has made me a champion.

### 3. Be calm and efficient.

Don't try to psyche yourself up. You'll only succeed in psyching yourself out. You have worked to be unflappable and not to waste a single movement of thought. That is how you will succeed, not by beating your head against a wall and primal screaming.

### 4. Go.

Whatever your goal, there is a release point where you simply do it. There comes a time when you have to jump off the diving board. Practice quick release and instant action. This is no time to debate yourself.

### 5. Enjoy.

This is what your journey has been about. Relax and remember what it is you love about this.