

Action Mail Newsletter- August 25, 2004

It is with great excitement we launch the first official edition of our "Action Mail" newsletter. I have been preparing for this moment for some time, gathering names of interested recipients (yourself included), establishing goals and guidelines, and developing content. But now, we have finally reached the third level of commitment, and I'm thrilled to begin this journey with you.

This monthly correspondence will help you stay focused on what you are trying to achieve and take better AIM toward your goals. It's all about action. Your actions can either be purposeful or wasteful; focused or fragmented; coordinated or disjointed. It's up to you. And your AIM is critical. "AIM" is an acronym which stands for "Actions Intelligently Managed." I believe the single most important skill for busy people is the ability to synchronize their thoughts, goals and actions. That takes practice, and it takes a daily commitment.

The Third Level of Commitment

Commitment comes in stages. The first level of commitment is when you decide to do something, change something or stop doing something in your life. It is a conscious decision, and it is most effective when expressed in writing. By writing your commitments and sharing them with others, you give your goals a life of their own, and you trigger your subconscious mind to seek opportunities to achieve your desired outcomes.

The second level of commitment is when you start taking action in a manner consistent with your goals. In my life, for example, I've always been fascinated by flying. This is why, when formulating my "life list" of goals during my college years, I wrote down "Learn to fly," and resolved to achieve that goal someday. It was five years before I got serious and reached the second level of commitment. At that point, I went to a flight school, met an instructor, bought my books and started taking lessons. Practicing with my teacher, Mark, we rehearsed take offs, landings, maneuvers and emergency procedures. It was all great fun.

During one lesson, Mark asked me to taxi the plane to the end of the runway. I complied, then he did something that made me uncomfortable. He got out of the plane. He said to me, "Dan, I just want you to do the same thing we've been practicing. Take off. Circle the traffic pattern. Land. Then, come back and pick me up." He closed the door.

Following the rehearsed routine, I taxied the plane toward the runway and broadcast my call to the control tower. "Gwinnett tower, Cessna 67318 ready for immediate departure at runway 7." The reply came through loud and clear; "You're clear for take off."

That cinched it. Even the guy in the control tower thought I was ready to solo. So, I gave the airplane full throttle and barreled down the runway. Reaching takeoff speed, I pulled back on the controls, and the wheels left the runway. It was then that I suddenly found the third level of commitment. My first reaction was "Why did you do that? Now there is no turning back."

The third level of commitment is when there is no turning back from the completion of your goal. It is at this level that you will find a warehouse of new resources, as well as the motivation to succeed. I achieved my goal that day. My AIM was true.

Consider your most immediate goals or a life change you desperately desire. How do you leap from desire to action? Then, how can you increase your resolve to the point where you feel the thrill of commitment's third level? Perhaps you can, today, try one of these techniques.

1. Make a promise to someone you respect. Engage their support. Ask for help, and commit to following through on your promise. Often, we will do for others that which we are reluctant to do for ourselves.
2. Increase your investment of time and money. Commit with your calendar and your wallet.
3. Make a list of the positive benefits of completing your change. Also, list the negative repercussions of not changing. Magnify both the positive and negative consequences until failure to change becomes unacceptable.
4. Remove your escape route. What is it that has prevented you from following through in the past? Chances are, you have a comfortable, well worn path that leads safely back to mediocrity. What must you say or do to dismantle this pathway? Don't let the familiar sabotage your success.

Take your mark. Take AIM. Take action. You're clear for take off!

All the best of success,

Dan

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