

Chapter 2

Objectives: Where do you want to be?

This chapter is about deciding your objectives in life. Some people call these target or goals, others may call them aspirations, or even dreams, but one thing is certain,

**if you don't know where you're going
you will end up *somewhere*,
and the chances are that you won't like it when you get there.**

The chapter will cover the following areas:

- The power of goal-setting
- Defining your objectives
- Quality of Life: where does it come from?
- 14 Questions you can ask yourself to help clarify your thoughts.
- Writing objectives down
- The subconscious, and how to use it to your advantage
- Pictures and Self talk
- Levels of goal-setting power
- Enjoying the price
- Cutting out negative talk

The power of goal setting

Ten years ago I read in a magazine that to achieve your dreams you should write them all down, in detail, and read the list every morning when you wake up and every night when you go to sleep. As a logical and scientifically trained Chartered Engineer I could see no way that doing this would make any difference to my future, but the article made me realise that I had no idea where I wanted to be in life, so out of curiosity I compiled a list of the features of my ideal lifestyle. I listed some material things, like exact earnings, exact type and colour of car, etc, but I also wrote down quality-of-life areas. Many of the things I wrote were unlikely

dreams that I knew were not reasonable to expect, although they were all theoretically possible and just about imaginable. I also tried reading the list twice a day but soon became bored (I think I lasted about two days), and then I even lost track of where the list was.

When I was moving house three years later I found the list, and was totally amazed when I realised that EVERYTHING on the list had happened to me.

I asked myself how this could have happened, and I have three possible explanations which are probably all working in unison:

- **Better choices:** perhaps our subconscious mind works, unknown to us, on the list, making small decisions and choices every day that move us towards our objectives,
- **Improved performance:** perhaps the act of visualising oneself in a successful situation removes blocks to performance and improves our abilities as a person,
- **Influence over people and events:** maybe there is some form of unknown, perhaps spiritual, force at work:

Whilst the first two explanations seem logical and likely, I am extremely reluctant to include the third one, but I must say that many objectives that I have written down since that first list have happened to me, and most of these have involved coincidences and external agencies which I could not have controlled and which have seemed to go beyond mere good luck.

There appears to be some scientific evidence that people's minds do affect one other, and can also affect physical equipment like electronic random-number generators, even at substantial distances. There are also many serious thinkers (for example Carl Jung) who believe that all of our minds are in some way connected to a Superconscious Mind, so that all knowledge could theoretically be available to us when we are receptive. Meditation, creativity, dreams, and maybe even premonitions, are said to be about tapping into this Superconscious Mind. The Superconscious Mind may be simply the sum of everyone's minds, like a cerebral Internet, or it may be a separate entity in itself, much more powerful than any of us, to which we are all tenuously connected through our own individual subconscious minds. I would recommend W. Scott Peck and Brian Tracy as two interesting authors on this subject.

But in a sense we don't need to know how it works, as long as it does work. Try it for yourself! By the end of this chapter you will have written your goals down in detail, just as I did, so your journey will have started.

You decide what is important.

The only judge, in the end, of how you should ideally spend your time is yourself. It is vital to think about this and decide it, rather than running in a hamster wheel without ever questioning it. You may decide you like being in the wheel, at least for some of each day or for two days a week. You may decide that really you'd rather be in a different wheel. But once you know where you want to be, you can then set about finding a way to get there.

You can focus your energies and your use of time towards getting there. You will achieve success, because you will be doing what you want to do, what you enjoy and are good at, and what you feel is important and worthwhile.

But what do we mean by success? There are many definitions, most not involving money:

One is

"To have achieved the freedom to be able to spend your time in ways that you control"!

Another is

"To have achieved an objective that you personally feel is worthwhile".

What is *your* definition of success? Your first reaction is probably money and fame, but would you really want this for yourself? What is your mental image of yourself as successful, if you have one? For example, let's suppose that fishing is something you really like to do, but only have time for occasionally. What would be your image of personal success? Perhaps it is being able, thanks to your business or investments, to go fishing whenever you want, wherever you want, for as long as you want. Perhaps it is being respected as one of the best anglers in the country. Perhaps it is to have caught the largest bream ever, or just one over a certain size. Perhaps it is to have taught thirty children to fish, and to have filled them with enthusiasm to the point where they win competitions.

So as you can see, your definition of success could well be linked to activities that you enjoy, and can involve helping others, achieving public recognition, or simply freedom to use your time as you wish. So: what is your image of success? If you don't have one, you certainly won't achieve it! Take a moment to think about this, now.

Defining your objectives.

It is vital to convert a vague feeling of success into a clear and detailed picture. This will probably involve three areas:

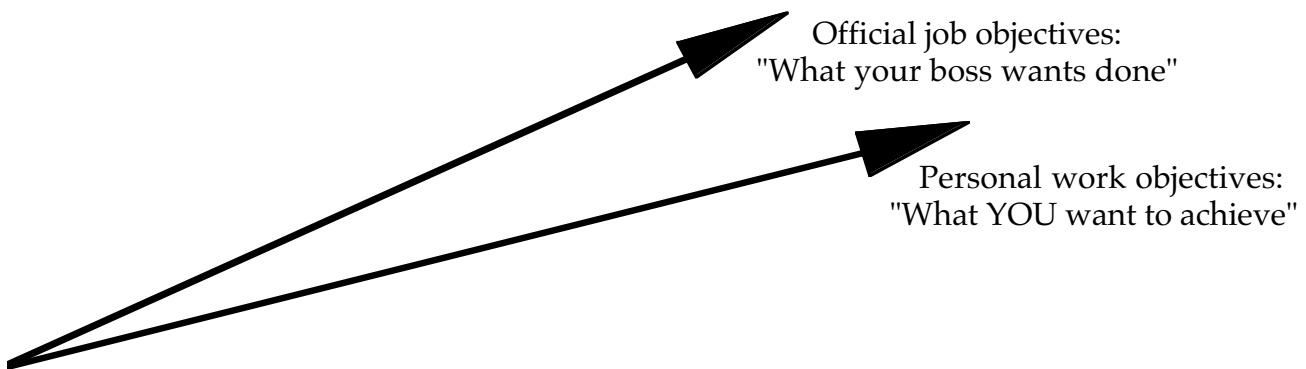
- Work: objectives given to you by your boss,
- Work: your own personal agenda at work,
- Home: yourself and your family.

Have you clearly defined with your boss what you are employed to achieve?

Have you thought about what you personally want to achieve at work?

Can you achieve this personal agenda and still do what the organisation wants?

For most of us who are reasonably happy in our jobs there will be a high degree of overlap between our official work objectives and our personal work objectives:



Which ones should take priority? I believe that you should concentrate on your *personal* agenda first, because only if you are doing what you enjoy and what you really believe in will you achieve excellent results, and the job objectives will then happen anyway as a result of your enhanced performance. If you work only on your official objectives you will not be as motivated so you will not perform as effectively, and you will also be dissatisfied at not achieving all of your personal goals.

If what you want to achieve at work is significantly different from what your boss wants, then you have a problem: you will either be personally dissatisfied, or get fired, so perhaps it is time to think about doing a different job?! But before you do, you could consider the question: Can your job objectives be renegotiated to be nearer to your personal ones?

Other people diverting your progress

Other people have their own priorities and objectives, which often involve you spending time helping them achieve these. How much of your time can you afford to spend on other people's priorities and objectives if they do not coincide with your own?

At first sight it may appear optimal for you to spend all of your time on your own objectives, and say no to everyone else's, but fortunately this is not the case. Clearly give-and-take is a necessary feature of civilised life, and I believe that there are three reasons why helping others does happen. One is that if you help someone else now, they will be more likely to help you in the future. The second is that partnerships and teams can achieve much more than isolated individuals. The third reason for helping others is that doing so can be enjoyable, and is potentially one of the largest sources of pleasure.

So although it is important to know what you want to do, and to make sure you spend the maximum time on achieving it, there is no reason to exclude the ability to help others too. In fact, the converse is more likely to be true: "You can't get what you want without helping other people to get what they want".

Here are some goal setting pointers you could use for your work:

Goals at work

Ideal job title:

Type of business:

Working environment:

Areas of knowledge / expertise:

Size of area of control:

To do in a typical ideal day:

Socially: type of people I'd ideally be working with:

Reputation: to be thought of as a:

Pay:

Key results / achievements / milestones in career:

Quality of Life

Next: have you considered what it is that gives you your real "quality of life"? What are the moments when you are able to think to yourself:

"Yes, this is what life's all about!"?

These could be either at work or at home, or some of each.

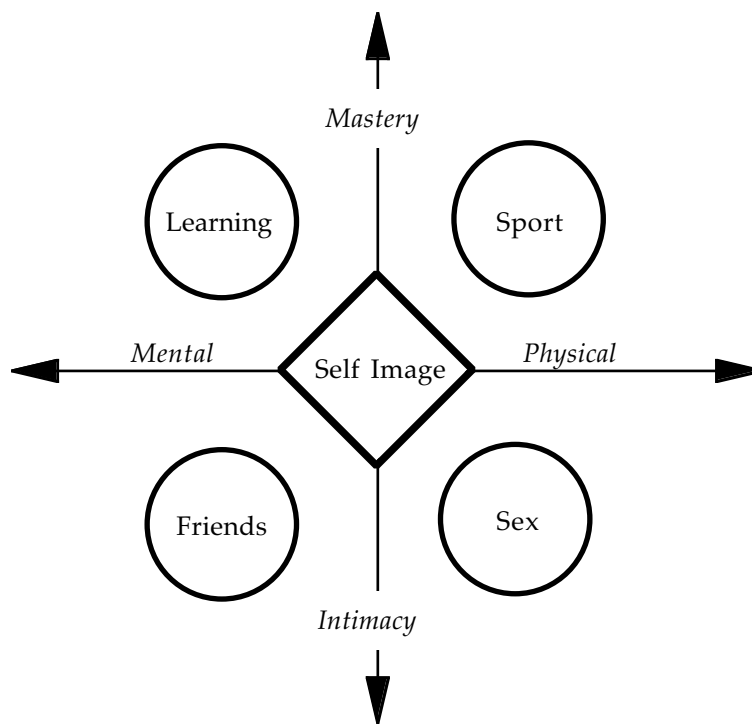
Write down when you last thought or said "This is the life!"



These are usually either "mastery" moments (like hanging back on your windsurfer at high speed with everything just right, or reaching the top of the mountain and seeing the panoramic view on the other side, or reeling in the huge fish after a day of waiting) or "intimacy" moments (like sitting with a loved one and watching the sun set, with a glass of wine, or watching the children play on the beach).

Quality of life may come from physical pleasures or mental ones (including spiritual) as shown by the examples in the circles the following diagram:

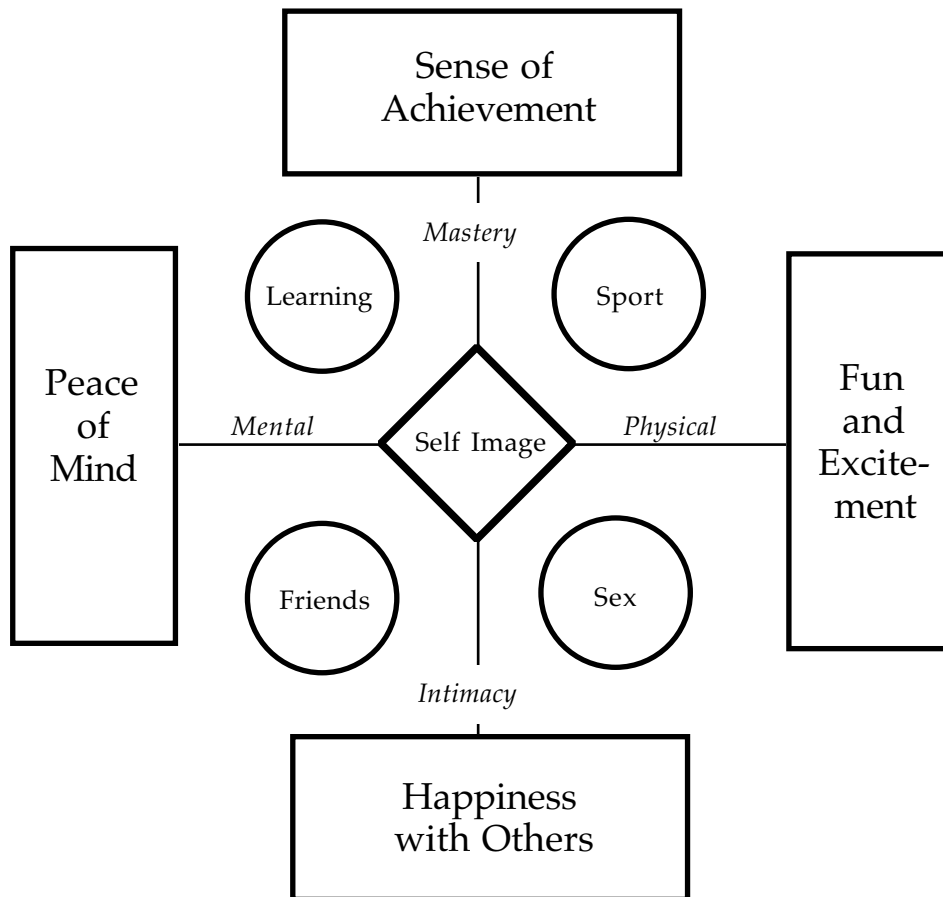
Quality of Life



Your self-image is also important to your quality of life: it is affected by both your physical and mental images of yourself, which in turn are affected by your achievements (mastery) and the success or otherwise of the relationships you have (intimacy). The resulting self-image then governs your ability to achieve further mastery and intimacy, both physically and mentally. Later in this chapter we will look more closely at the role of self-talk and the subconscious in improving your self-image and thus your ability to increase the quality of your life.

The results of a good self-image and getting the balance right between the physical and mental aspects, and the mastery and intimacy aspects, will be a combination of achievement, fun, happiness, and peace of mind:

Quality of Life



If the balance is not right you could be spending too much time on achieving results, perhaps at work, at the expense of personal relationships and peace of mind. This situation is examined in more detail in chapter 9 when we look at stress. Conversely, you may have a contented and secure life-style but be lacking a feeling of excitement and or achievement. Another imbalance would be to neglect the physical or the mental sides of life, or perhaps even to have such poor time management that you neglect all of the key areas because you find yourself using all of your time just getting by. In chapter 3 we will see how the unimportant tasks can take time away from the important ones, and certainly time spent on these quality-of-life areas is very important.

So, when considering your goals outside work you may wish to consider the above categories and the balance between them. In which areas could you improve the quality of your life at present?

Here are some goal setting pointers you could consider for your personal life:

Goals outside work

To spend my time doing: (my top 5 activities):

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

To be good at:

Non-material / "Quality of life" objectives:

- 1
- 2
- 3

To have achieved:

To be described by friends as:

To own:

To be able to pay other people to:

The Ultimate Question.

An interesting way to consider the relative importance of work and family is to consider the following situation: if you had only a week to live, would you spend a couple of days in the office replying to the memos, would you watch soap operas on TV, or would you spend it with your family? Bearing in mind that the rest of your life is *only a succession of single weeks*, should you plan on apportioning the time in these weeks in a different way? If you had six months rather than one week would you allow some of the unimportant activities to creep back in?

What changes would I make if I discovered I had six months to live?

Here are some other major questions that may help you to think about what's important to you:

What are the five things I value most in my life?

What am I good at?

What would I do if I won a million pounds tomorrow?

Whose personality or lifestyle would I like to copy, and why?

If you could write a "film script" for the next five years of your life, what would you write for yourself?

What have I always wanted to do but always been afraid to try?

What one thing would I do if I knew I could not fail?

What have I always wanted to do but not had time to do?

What makes me wake up thinking "Great, it'sxxxxx... today!"

During the last week, what has made you feel good?

What do I wish to avoid, (then rephrase it as a positive goal):

*What would I like to spend my time doing when I retire?
(and can I start doing some of these things now?)*

What epitaph would I want written on my gravestone?

As a result of thinking about the above questions, you should now have a list of five to twenty goals. They will be a mixture of material things, relationships, quality of life ideas, and thoughts on how you would ideally spend your time. Some will be short term, some will be long term. You should have a mental picture of what your ideal life would be like. Now let's refine this list a little:

The objectives that you choose for yourself should be

BIG: big enough to feel like a step change rather than a small continuation of progress. Big enough to be worth making an effort to reach. Big enough to stretch you.

EXCITING: if your goals don't excite you they won't happen. Do they conjure up a vivid mental picture? Are they worth some effort?

SERIOUS: you have to *really want* them. For example, I'd quite like a Ferrari. (I wouldn't say no to one anyway!) But I'm not passionate about one. I don't go and press my nose to the glass of the showroom window on a Sunday afternoon. I don't know all the different model numbers and how many of each were made. So it would be no good my writing down "To have a Ferrari" as one of my goals; my subconscious knows it's not a serious goal to me, so it wouldn't happen.

CLEAR: your subconscious needs to know exactly what your goal is, since it cannot cope with abstract or fuzzy ideas.

Instead of "to have a better job" your goal should be to get a particular job with a particular company. What will your office be like? How much will you be paid? What will a typical working day be like? In order to get these details clear you may need to do some research, which will then be the first step towards achieving the goal.

Instead of planning "to get a BMW one day", you should know the model, engine size, and colour, clearly enough to be able to visualise an exact picture. This could involve visiting a dealer, or even going for a test drive!

Instead of "getting fit" your fitness goal should be to be able to run a known distance or perform an exact number of exercises in a certain time. Your subconscious now has a target to work on, and an "internal success video" that it can view and make real.

YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS

I would like to make a brief digression here into the power of the subconscious, which has to be understood before you can focus on your objectives properly.

The subconscious part of your mind, not the conscious part, is what controls your behaviour. How you feel in situations, how you react, the decisions you make, and the physical and mental capabilities that you have, are all being run by this inner part of your brain.

It is impossible to behave consistently in a way that is different from the way you see yourself. You can put on an act and temporarily fool others, but your real self soon shows. This "real self" is controlled by your subconscious mind.

Your attitudes and beliefs, whether they are positive or negative, will have much more effect on your future success than your intelligence or your natural talents. By influencing your subconscious, which controls your attitudes and beliefs, you can make the results happen.

Example: why was John MacEnroe the best tennis player in the world in 1983? He probably wasn't the strongest, fastest, or cleverest person in the tournaments, but something inside him knew how to swing the racquet just right. He had something different in his subconscious.

Example: The four minute mile was believed to be physically impossible for years, until Roger Bannister finally achieved it. The next year 37 people broke the four minute barrier, and the year after that, 300! People did not change physically in only two years; but their mental pictures did.

Example: Some people cannot speak in public without sweating and forgetting their words, while others find it easy. There is no difference in intelligence or ability - it's whether your subconscious is saying "I can't" or "I can".

Final example: Memory: do you find that as soon as someone is introduced to you you forget their name? Have you ever sat in an examination and been unable to remember the answer to a question, even though you went to the lecture and understood it at the time? Whether or not you can retrieve the information, which is certainly in your brain because you'll recognise it if you see or hear it again, is down to whether your subconscious lets it out.

You may have noticed that sometimes your subconscious is working when you are doing something else, or going to sleep; suddenly the answer to a problem, or a name you have been trying to remember, pops into your mind. You can't force your subconscious to work, you just have to let it.

Can we manipulate our subconscious to make ourselves better at remembering names, speaking in public, or even playing tennis? Yes!

An experiment was carried out in 1984 by Alan Richardson involving two groups of basketball players, one practising all week and the other sitting in comfortable chairs thinking about the ball falling perfectly into the hoop. In trials at the end of the week the second group, the thinkers, had improved more! Similarly when you play tennis you should visualise the perfect shot before you hit the ball, and again after any mistakes. Golfer Jack Nicklaus is one of many professionals who use pre-visualisation to achieve better putts.

The two best ways to reprogramme your subconscious for success are:

1. Pictures:

Paint mental pictures of the desired situation. This works both for the short term and the long term.

You can experience a simple example of the short term principle of "What you see is what you get" by putting a plank on the ground and walking along it. You visualise yourself walking along it easily, and that is exactly what you do. Now put the plank between two high buildings, and suddenly it is not so easy to walk along! This is because you are now visualising yourself falling off it, and that is probably what will happen. The plank is the same, your balance skills are the same, but your subconscious has a very different picture and is controlling your behaviour differently.

Here are two practical examples of visualisation at work:

When you are preparing to give an important talk to a large audience, don't imagine the talk going terribly wrong, with you drying up and having to leave the stage hurriedly. Instead, picture the crowd applauding your brilliant public speech, and queueing up to shake your hand afterwards. You will give a much better talk.

When visiting an important customer to ask for business, don't imagine them saying "No thanks, we're not interested", but instead picture them saying "That's great, I'll order ten! When can I have them?"

Do these pictures simply make you perform better, or do they in some way influence the other person too? No one knows, but as long as they work perhaps we don't need to know.

For longer term goals, either material, quality of life, or self improvement, cut out pictures and put them somewhere that you will see them every day like on your fridge or bathroom mirror. These could be pictures of houses, empty beaches representing freedom, an organised desk, yourself spending time with your family, or anyone you admire: sportsmen, businessmen, people of character, whatever, or perhaps if slimming or exercise is your goal, your head cut out and glued onto a perfectly slim/muscular body. These pictures will constantly remind your subconscious of your objectives, and will supply it with every detail of the required result in a much more powerful way than mere words. Your subconscious mind works in pictures and will readily absorb these images.

2. Words:

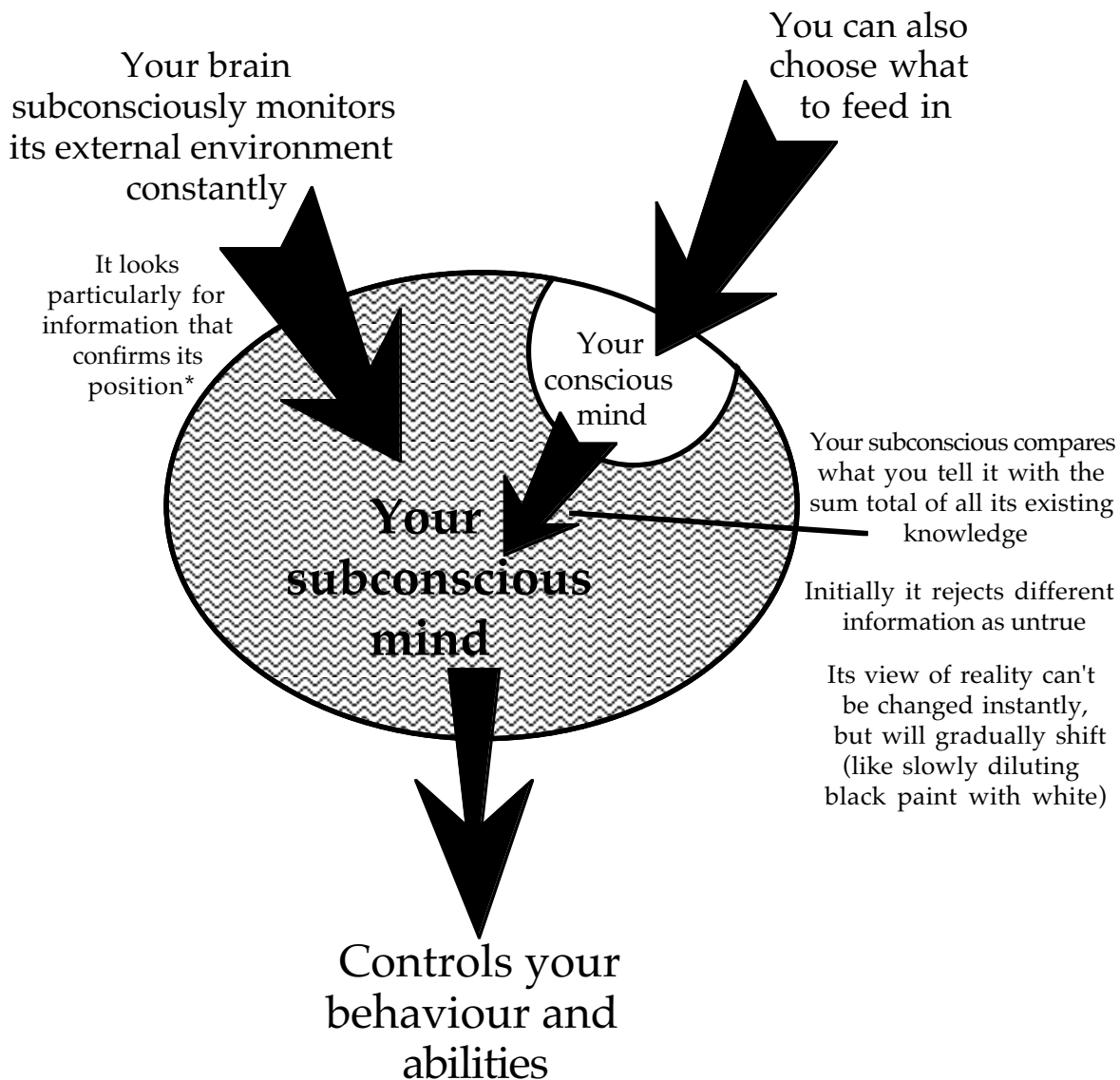
99% of your talking is to yourself, so make it good! Say to yourself "I have a great memory for names", "Public speaking is easy and fun for me", or "The golf ball always goes exactly where I want it to go".

At first these words will sound silly, because your subconscious is disagreeing with the words that your conscious is saying and the images that your conscious is forcing your brain to project, and trying to reject them (technically this internal conflict is known as cognitive dissonance).

As a powerful example of this feeling, try saying out loud to yourself "I'm the best!" Did you feel odd, in your stomach? That was cognitive dissonance, because your subconscious mind did not accept the statement as true.

Your subconscious can only tell truth from lies by comparing new information with the memory bank of all your life's experiences, so if you have never been the best, or have never thought of yourself a such, it now has this idea fixed. But like a huge supertanker your subconscious can be slowly steered around, by repeated nudges. If you say "I'm the best" every day, your subconscious will start to believe it. You can build your self image in this simple way, and be more successful at anything you do. (This should not be confused with arrogance, which is a manifestation of *poor* self image, not healthy self image, so saying "I'm the best" will not make you think any less of others).

A view of how your brain works



** for example: If one of your life scripts is "I am bad at Maths" your subconscious mind will note any situations where you have difficulty, and thus strengthen its position. To combat this you will need to say repeatedly "I love Maths", "I find it easy", and mentally dwell upon your successes.*

You can design your own self talk phrases, but some good ones I recommend to everyone are:

First thing in the morning: "**I feel great today**"

Then as you look in the bathroom mirror "**I like myself**"

And as you drive to work "**I love my work**"

They may seem ridiculous at first, but try them! They will become true in a matter of days.

Some more personal self-talk phrases might be

I find computers easy to use

I enjoy meeting new people

My house is always clean and neat

My desk is always tidy

I am always on time

I don't get angry when people keep me waiting

I like my boss and he likes me

I find it easy to say No when I need to

etc.

If your subconscious mind has been holding you back, (perhaps because it has been programmed by other people saying "You'll never do that"), then repeating these phrases to yourself will remove the ceiling on your performance. You will then be able to behave in a way that is consistent with achieving your goals, and the real results of your performance will "catch up" with your internal image of those results already having been achieved.

Finally on the subject of the subconscious, I would like to add that your subconscious can only see positive things. If you say to yourself "I am going to watch less TV" or "I am going to smoke less" your subconscious only sees TV and smoking! This is why most New Year's resolutions fail. You need to give your subconscious a clear picture. For example "I read for an hour every evening, go for a walk, and then go to bed early" or "I can't stand cigarettes, they make me feel sick". These conjure up pictures in your mind, and although the smoking example may not sound very "positive" it does produce an image that can be clearly visualised. If you repeat these statements regularly, at least twice a day and if necessary up to a hundred times, your subconscious will come to accept them and they will rapidly become true descriptions of your behaviour.

Is this brain-washing? Yes I suppose it is, but at least you are in control of where you are going, and you can choose to make the destination a good one for both yourself and others. Positive self-brain-washing is certainly better than the usual negative brain-washing that we all tend to use on ourselves, and on others. Nobody has a problem with other people saying "I can never get this right" or "Typical, I always forget that" or "You won't find that easy", so why is it regarded as strange to say positive things like "I always succeed at this" or "I can do this if I want to" or "You can do it, I know you can"? You can decide, today, whether you want to talk yourself and others up, or talk yourself and others down.

So, to sum up progress so far in this chapter, you have thought about your objectives, both small and large, short term and long term, and you have seen how your subconscious controls your behaviour and abilities and therefore controls your ability to achieve your objectives. You have seen how your subconscious works on a combinations of the pictures it sees and the words it hears.

In order to use your subconscious in the best way to achieve your objectives, it is necessary to write your objectives down, refresh them every day in order to keep your subconscious on track, set dates for the goals to ensure progress at a rapid rate, have a plan of the steps along the way, and then enjoy the price of achieving the plan. Each of these will be considered in more detail next.

Write your goals down.

If you don't write your objectives down, you have not told your subconscious that you are really committed to them.

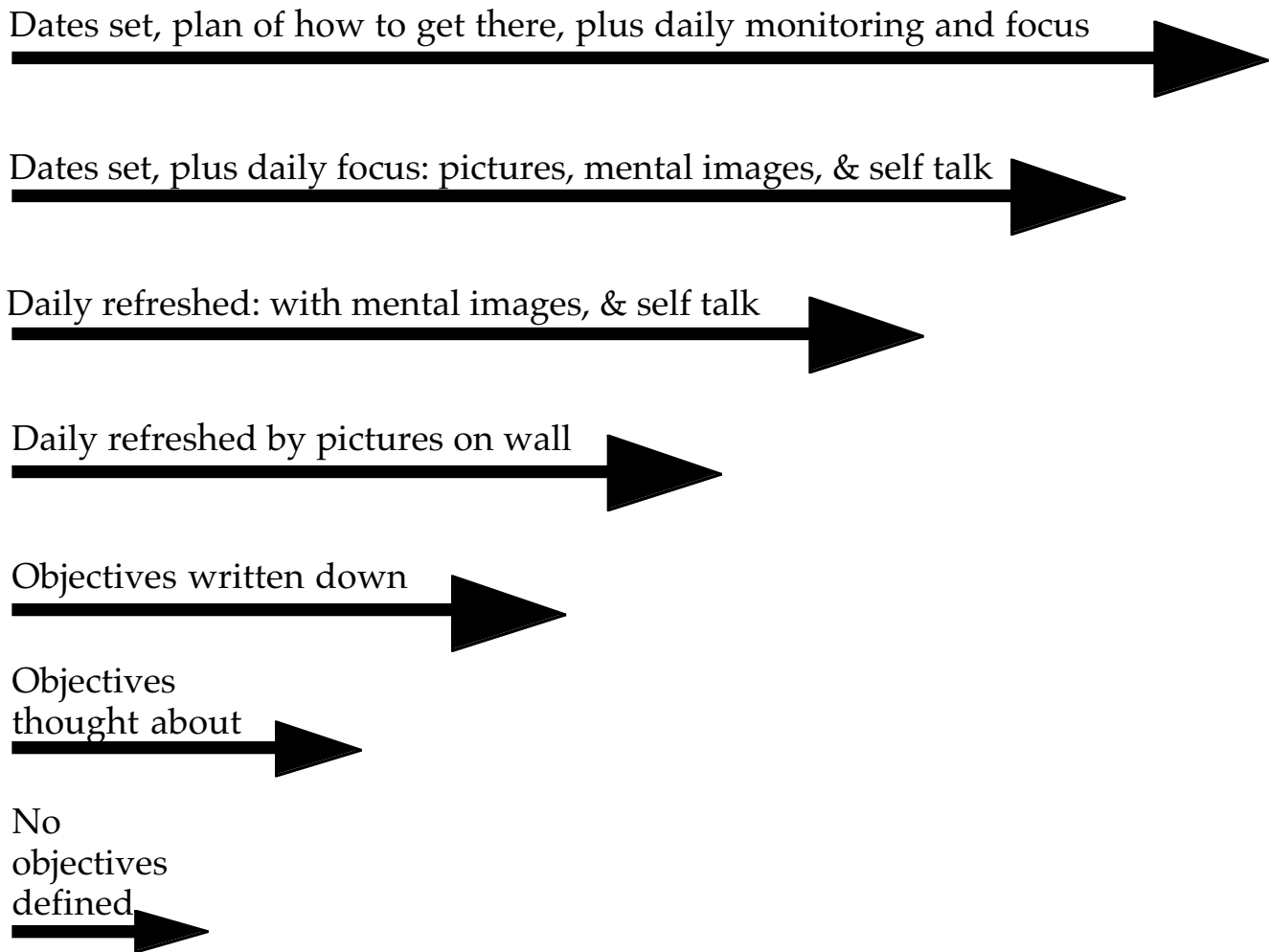
Don't worry, you don't have to show your list to anyone else! In fact, I would recommend keeping your list of goals to yourself, or at least only showing them to others who have done the same. Negative and apathetic people will drag you down very fast. If someone says "You'll never achieve that" your subconscious believes it, and makes it true.

Refresh them every day.

This is the repetition part mentioned above, to steer the supertanker of your subconscious by a series of small nudges. It involves seeing pictures on your wall every day, and daily reading your list of goals, picturing in your mind what achieving them will be like, and saying out loud "I am..." or "I have achieved...". This takes time, and may be boring to your conscious mind, but is well worth the 2 minutes a day that it takes.

At the start of this chapter I described how I made a list of goals and realised three years later (to my amazement) that they had all happened to me. I use the phrase "happened to me" because many of them were not achieved as a result of direct effort on my part. I didn't carry out the recommended daily refreshing activity of reading the list first thing every morning and last thing every night, feeling that this would be too superstitious and probably too boring as well. I also didn't set dates or have a plan of how to get there. Yet I still achieved all of my list! I now believe that this is like setting your course and then not looking at the map and not monitoring your speed; you *may* get there, but there is a high risk that you will drift off course.

The diagram below shows that there are different levels of seriousness that you can choose for your goal setting; I recommend the top one as the most powerful, but it does take some discipline to follow and the choice is up to you:



As you can see, the top two arrows involve setting dates for your goals, and the very top one involves having a plan as well.

Set dates for your goals.

A goal without a date is just an idle wish: "Some day I'd like go to to Australia" is very different to "I'm going to Australia next year". "I'll be a director by the age of 30" is very different to "One day I'll be a director."

Setting a date forces your subconscious to start working on it. It is unable to procrastinate, and get away with "I'll start on that next year". It knows you are serious. Since your subconscious is perhaps the real you, by setting a date on your goals you are telling yourself that you really are serious about getting them.

Why do so few people write their goals down, and set dates for them?
Why is it a rather uncomfortable feeling to set a date?

The answer is FEAR OF FAILURE.

Once you have admitted to yourself that you want to achieve those things, you run the risk of failing, and admitting to yourself that you are a failure. But are you? Suppose you only achieve half the progress that you aimed for: you are still ahead of where you would have been.

So take courage, write them down, set dates, and get serious. You can do it!

Have a plan of how to get there.

Your objectives can probably be divided into chunks, or steps along the way. What are the sub-tasks you need to achieve? Objectives like "Get fit", "Have more friends" or "Be more successful at my job", are too large to easily visualise getting started on, and need to be divided into steps. The initial steps might be "join a tennis club" or "talk to a new person every day" or "read one book per week on my chosen success area". This is, in a way, Project Managing your life, and although it may seem rather mechanistic remember that the tasks should be fun in their own right as well as contributing to your overall plan.

Some of the steps along the way will appear to be hard work, or at least to require some effort. Is your objective worth it? In his classic book "See You At The Top" Zig Ziglar says "Either you can pay the price of success, or you WILL pay the price of failure". What he means is that apathy now will cost you regret later, and taking the easy road now will mean more difficulty later. You will need to do some work, to pay some sort of price. Are you prepared to pay it?

Fortunately, taking the apparently harder road will be more satisfying along the way, in addition to producing a better outcome!

Enjoy the price.

It is important to enjoy the price, which is the journey to where you want to be, since this makes up 99% of the process. Only a tiny fraction of life is the moment when you arrive. As soon as you have arrived, you will be setting off on another journey to a new destination, so you may as well enjoy the travelling! Management is identical to life in this respect: enjoy the process, because that's what management really is. Both at work and in your home life you only have the present, and your whole life or career is made up of tiny instants, a continuous series of "nows", and if these are not fun or enjoyable then you will be left eventually with nothing. A measurable result at the end will not be able to make up for a long period of unpleasant effort.

This philosophy can be summed up by the saying
"life is a journey, not a destination",

which is sometimes also phrased as
"*success* is a journey, not a destination"

Whether you enjoy something depends partly on whether you focus on the good parts of it or the bad parts. For example, we can all think of parties that we didn't enjoy because we "weren't in the mood". It wasn't the party that was different, it was something within us. If you try, there are plenty of unpleasant things to focus on at a party!

Enjoyment can also depend on mental scripts. For example, you may have a script like "I don't like swimming" or "I don't like opera" programmed into your subconscious. This has been confirmed as true in your subconscious every time you go swimming or hear opera music and don't like it. You may have a dislike of your job, or of part of it, also programmed in. As discussed earlier in this chapter, this programming can be broken by saying to yourself "I love swimming/opera/my work" regularly, and visualising doing so.

If you can enjoy as much of every day as possible, you are "squeezing more of the juice" out of life: surely a worthwhile objective!

However, sometimes the problem is more than just a matter of opinion (like opera or swimming). The price of success really is tough.

Luckily, it is possible to enjoy any price if your attitude is right.

Here are some examples of prices you have to pay to get the result you want, and views you might take on paying that price:

Area	Desired result	Negative view of price	Positive view of price
Fitness training	Feel fit	Unpleasant, hard work, boring	Invigorating, exhilarating, satisfying, a progression
Negotiating	Obtain best possible settlement	Squalid and frustrating; you always wonder if you could have got more	A fascinating game; you always gain something
Recruitment interviewing	Select most suitable employee	Time consuming, nervous, never really know what they are like, have to reject all except one	Meet new people, a chance to shape the future of the company, a chance to offer someone a job
Giving staff appraisals	Communicate performance to staff, and agree targets	Embarrassing, dishonest, unpleasant if bad news has to be given	Important, worthwhile, a chance to shape someone's future for the best
Presentation to group of important people	Communicate message	Frightening, risky, what if it goes wrong? What if they ask a question I can't answer?	A chance to impress, get what you want, feel good after it went well, be the expert on your particular subject.
Cold call to potential customer	Achieve a sale, or the first step towards a sale	They might be rude. I'll get depressed. Is this job worth doing?	Learning about people, developing my skills, achieving sales target, what will I do with the bonus?

Clearly, if you develop the habit of enjoying the price, then there ceases to be a noticeable price to pay. You are therefore much more likely to continue to make the effort required to achieve your objectives.

One idea that is particularly useful in developing this success habit is to

NEVER SAY ANYTHING NEGATIVE.

This is not easy! Think about most conversations: the weather, traffic jams, the latest murder or war that was on the news, changes in the company: they are usually negative.

Bad things in the past are best forgotten, so don't drag a burden of grudges and regret around with you.

Bad things in the present are best ignored; it's better to smell the roses than to look at the manure.

Bad things in the future can be spoken into existence, so don't dwell on potential problems: have a contingency plan, yes, but think positive.

Here are some classic negative phrases and habits that you could try to banish from your life. As you read each one, can you think of a positive alternative that you could use instead?

Negative phrase	Positive alternative
"I bet it doesn't work".	
"If only I'd..."	
"He'll probably be late."	
"You'll never manage that."	
"I hope it doesn't break down."	
"Typical."	
"The world isn't fair / there's no justice".	
"Sod's law".	
"I can't believe I was so stupid".	
Criticising others behind their backs.	
Bearing grudges.	
<i>To a child:</i>	
"Your room is always such a mess"	
"Don't run out in front of a car"	
"Be careful not to lose it"	

Here are some suggested positive phrases that you could try instead:

Negative phrase	Positive alternative
"I bet it doesn't work".	This time it will work
"If only I'd..."	Next time I will...
"He'll probably be late."	I'll make sure he's on time by...
"You'll never manage that."	You can do it!
"I hope it doesn't break down."	I've got some spares but I won't need them.
"Typical."	How can I prevent a repeat of this?
"The world isn't fair / there's no justice".	I am responsible for what happens to me.
"Sod's law".	It's lucky it didn't happen at a more critical moment.
"I can't believe I was so stupid".	Next time I will check for...
Criticising others behind their backs.	Praise others behind their backs
Bearing grudges.	Forgive them (it's just how they are) and plan how to prevent a repeat
<i>To a child:</i>	
"Your room is always such a mess"	I like it when you tidy your room
"Don't run out in front of a car"	Stay on the pavement
"Be careful not to lose it"	Always put it back in the box straight afterwards

How can you get into the habit of avoiding the negative phrases and using positive ones instead? You could try the following:

Make a contract with someone close to you, perhaps your wife/husband, or a work colleague, to point out whenever you say something negative. For a while I played a game with my wife where I had to contribute 50p to her collection if she caught me saying anything negative, (and vice versa), our collections to be spent on whatever luxury we wanted. This simple game made me much more positive, thus enjoying life more and achieving more, and I gained much more than I paid!

End of chapter action points.

Tick the ones you feel you ought to do:

List your goals at work.

Compare with your job specification,
and renegotiate if necessary.

List your goals for your personal life.

Visualise your ideal life.

Get pictures.

Design and use about 10 self-talk phrases.

Refresh goals daily: mentally picture, and speak.

Set dates on goals.

Divide into sub-tasks.

Resolve to enjoy the price.

Begin a no-negatives campaign.