

Setting Goals

“What is the point in writing my goals?” a tenth grade student at one of the local high schools had asked me. My response was right to the point.

“What is the one thing in life that you’d like to do even if you didn’t get paid?”

He thought about it for a moment then answered enthusiastically, “I want to be a professional hockey player!” How many times had I heard that very same answer.

Alright, now ask yourself, what would you have to do to achieve that ultimate goal?”

Again he mulled over and then shot back, “Well I am going to have to score lots of goals!” “It’s not just that easy,” I continued. “A goal that precise takes a lot of practice, determination and persistence.” Now clearly even more frustrated than before, he looked at me and said, “Well that seems a lot harder than I thought!”

We continued talking until he was satisfied that he had the answer that he needed and then went back to class.

As I travel all across Canada visiting high schools each year, I hear the same questions from students again and again. Many seem confused and a little afraid of taking the next big step in their lives; what should I do after graduation? To my knowledge, the public and catholic school systems don’t offer students a curriculum based on what I consider the single most important area of life; goal setting. It’s simple and effective but it does take a lot of hard work and discipline. And this is what I prescribe to thousands of students on a daily basis – the importance of setting their goals and living a life that they want and deserve.

Let’s take our hockey player for example: If he were to break down the ultimate goal (Pro Hockey Player) into smaller sub-goals; MVP-minor leagues, etc. and work backwards to where he is today, then he can plan exactly what he has to do daily, weekly, monthly and so on to achieve each sub-goal. Small steps lead to bigger steps and if he stays on the course, our hockey player will, in time, reach his ultimate goal. The key is perseverance. Knowing what you want and how to get there, (even if it is a slow process) gives you back control of your life. That’s how I have done it and it works.

Since I started speaking to high school students five years ago, I’ve felt the need to help young people learn the importance of setting higher goals for themselves. Everyday I meet people with incredible potential. I can never stress enough how important it is to challenge ourselves, to push the limits, to explore new personal horizons, which brings me back to my first question; What’s the one thing in life you’d wan to do, even if you didn’t get paid? If you strive for something you love, the money will come. Only you can make it happen.