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Mid-Year Adjustments

Early this year I encouraged readers to set goals and make a plan. Now it's time to ask, “Where are you in relation to your plan and goals?”

It's sort of like the tax accountants who pop up with suggestions throughout the year for “things you can do now to minimize the tax bite.” Well, there are things you can do now to get back on track to achieve your goals, or to reroute your plan to a new destination. In either case, you'll feel more successful at the end of the year if you take a good hard look at your mid-year progress and make some adjustments if necessary.

How do you do that? Well, obviously, you find that piece of paper or computer file on which you imagined where you'd like to be at the end of 2007. Then you ask yourself, am I there yet? How far away am I? Is this a destination/goal I still want to accomplish? If not, what's my new vision of success at the end of 2007?

All that is probably pretty intuitive and straightforward. But how can you make this process more fun and creative, not to mention motivating? Here are just a few ideas to stimulate your own creative juices:

1. **List your accomplishments.** You may not have made the progress you expected in some areas, but is that because you had an unplanned opportunity to work on something else? Give yourself credit for what you've done.
2. **List your key lessons.** Back in December or January when you tried to imagine success at the end of 2007, you didn't know as much as you do now. What have you learned about your situation or yourself? How does that change the possibilities for your next five months?
3. **Give yourself a break!** If you beat yourself up for things you haven't accomplished, you won't be able to get into that playful mode that stimulates creative thinking. Acknowledge where you are and move on.
4. **Recast your vision.** Take a clean sheet of paper (or computer doc) and write: “It's December 2007 and I feel....because.... I am...” In other words, write a present- tense account of where you are, how you got there, how it feels, how it looks, and so on, engaging as many of your senses as possible. While you're at it, plan your celebration of success.

5. **Use metaphor to describe your plan and goal.** Can you visualize your success at the top of a mountain? In the goal net on a soccer field? A journey to a specific destination near or far? Pick up some markers or crayons and sketch the metaphorical vision of success; then, describe the effort (i.e., plan) in those same metaphorical terms. You don't have to be an artist; stick figures work.
6. **Share your vision.** Get together with your family, a few good friends, or business associates, and share your vision of success in five months. Keep in mind that "success" in five months may be only a mile marker toward a bigger goal. Nevertheless, now's time to build some excitement for the journey ahead.

As for me, I encountered a huge detour on my journey this year, but what exciting learning opportunities I've had! I'm planning to make the most of it.

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