

STYLUS

Scratching Beneath the Surface

stylus n. an instrument of metal, bone, or the like,
used by the ancients for writing

REVERSE GOAL SETTING **Lessons from the Bride and Groom**

by Nina Durfee

In her book *Devil with a Briefcase - 101 Success Secrets for the Spiritual Entrepreneur*, Jan Janzen uses the term "reverse goal setting." The premise is that the perfect outcome begins by envisioning the end result and working backwards. Last week I witnessed the fruition of this process in the celebration of my son's wedding.

The precise execution of this beautiful and joyous event began 25 years ago. When the bride was born, her parents envisioned the occasion and established a wedding account that grew at the rate of more than \$1,000 per year. Now that's strategic planning!

The bride and groom took the reins, devoting more than a year to plan and execute each element of the wedding from the bridal shower through the limousine that carried them to their wedding suite, the flight to the Bahamas, and stamps on the thank-you notes. They gave full attention to location, caterer, officiator, flowers, dance tunes for bride and daddy and for groom and mom, guest accommodations and transportation, visitor packets, photographers and gifts for the wedding party.

The couple considered more than physical, visual detail. They envisioned emotions, the feelings of themselves and others. The bridal bouquet was artfully crafted to include the favorite flowers of the bride's mom, the groom's mom, and each grandmother. They omitted the stodgy receiving line, sending their guests straight to fun and festivities - food, drink, dance and celebration. Throughout the course

of the evening they paid personal attention to the 150 guests, enriching the occasion for each and every person. There was no last-minute scurrying or frantic realization that "I forgot to order the cake!" or "I don't have any black socks!" Precalculation ensured the perfect play of a spectacular event. They included fun and positive emotion, and that's exactly what they got.

Whether we realize it or not, we apply reverse goal setting to everything we do. What we hold in our vision comes to be. Our thoughts produce our experiences, and our attention attracts more of what we attend to. If what we have is not what we want, we do well to examine what we've been thinking. Muddy thoughts produce muddy results.

What you envision comes to be. Pay attention to your self-talk. If you think you can't have that promotion, then chances are you won't. If you think you're not smart enough, tall enough, strong enough, or good enough, you won't be. The expectation of nursing homes and debilitation will create that experience. The expectation of health, vitality and joy will result in graceful aging.

Apply the technique of reverse goal setting to create the experience you desire, be it a career move, a personal relationship, a vacation or the acquisition of your ideal home. Begin with the end in mind. Assemble the final result one step at a time, keeping your eye on the puzzle box as you fit the pieces together. Remember to include the positive feelings as part of the intention. Plan for harmonious relationships, enthusiasm, energy, creativity, whatever will most enrich and fulfill your experience.

Intention begets opportunity. Once you have envisioned the experience, recognize the means as they appear, act on them, and joyfully step into the reality of your dreams.

My son's wedding is proof that reverse goal setting works. Now let's hope the bride and groom are employing the same powerful process to provide for the fulfilling future they desire!

THE PROCESS

1. **Imagine the overall experience.** See loving friends witnessing the blissful bride and groom exchanging vows, gathering for food, drink, laughter and

dance in a spectacular setting adorned with flowers. Hear the music, feel the textures, smell the aroma of food, wine and fresh flowers, mentally step into the limousine and enjoy the ride in loving embrace.

2. **Know your resources.** The wedding couple knew exactly what they had to work with. Assess your resources of time, money and personal connections, and plan accordingly.
3. **Budget the costs.** Break down the event into segments and allot a dollar amount to accommodate each element: flowers, music, photography, food, etc.
4. **Budget the time.** Allot time to research and complete tasks such as finding the right location and service providers and confirming reservations. Include time to adjust as necessary.
5. **Assess and refine.** Check the calendar and the status along the way, and tick off items as completed. By maintaining vision of the final outcome, what could be a surprising cascade of insurmountable obstacles is reduced to a manageable trickle.

Apply this reverse goal setting process to any task, big or small. The key to success is clarity of vision of the physical, mental and emotional outcome.

ONE WOMAN'S VISION

It's one thing to envision financial security and ideal surroundings in our elder years, but what good are they without the joy to accompany them? Craft your vision to include everything you desire. State your vision in present tense, as if it already exists. Here's my list:

1. **Home.** I enjoy being by myself and with welcome guests in my roomy home with lots of light, air, color, ample storage, with a water-view setting, at a price I easily afford.
2. **Lifestyle.** I actively participate in my chosen life work, travel, entertainment, and frequent association with close friends and family.

3. Partnership. I share my life with my husband, our love ever deepening.
4. Relationships. All my relationships with friends, family, colleagues and associates are loving and harmonious.
5. Health and well-being. I move through my day with vibrant energy, flexibility, and strength, all my body's rhythms in perfect order.
6. Mental acuity. I easily maintain focus and remember where my car keys are!
7. Independence. I easily care for my basic needs and assist in the needs of others.
8. Communication. I listen, understand and articulate with ease.
9. Mobility. I am free to travel and to joyfully participate in physical activities.
10. Laughter. I laugh daily, by myself and with others.
11. Purpose. I consciously act in a way that honors my deepest values.
12. Prosperity. I enjoy financial freedom, comfort and security.
13. Service. I contribute to the well-being of friends, family, community.
14. Footprint. I leave a legacy of empowerment for others to joyfully realize their dreams.
15. Knowledge. I joyfully gather, retain and easily express new knowledge.
16. Spiritual fulfillment. I am deeply satisfied with my choices, actions, way of being, and my relationship with the Source of all creation.

What do you want?

For more information or to schedule a workshop, go to www.lifesculpt.net/programs or contact Nina Durfee at lifesculpt@gmail.com.