

YOUR ROADMAP TO SUCCESS

THE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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*It doesn't matter **how** you define success,
but it's **critical** that you **do**.*

CHANGE: HOW WILL YOU INTENTIONALLY AND PURPOSEFULLY EVOLVE?

If you're hoping to hit a multi-million dollar lottery, you're not alone. It's fun to imagine what you'd do with all of that money. But lottery tickets and dumb luck aren't good roadmaps to success.

Instead of closing your eyes and hoping to win, why not define and plan your path to success? Why not define what success means to you, and then determine a plan for getting there - a plan that's easily customized to your needs, beliefs and lifestyle?

Success doesn't just happen to you. You create it. To do so, you have to intentionally and purposefully evolve.

This ebook walks you through an approach to do just that. It is based on an approach that was taught to me by my coach, Rich Tafel, and discussed in my book, ***Business is ART***.

The personal plan described herein is also included in the Plan Canvas software – for free.

Anyone and everyone can benefit from a personal development plan, but one word of advice – don't develop and manage one on your own. Designate someone to be your coach.

This will be discussed in more detail later in the document. Meanwhile, feel free to contact us about our personal development plan coaching services.

With this approach, the first questions you have to ask yourself include:

Who am I?

What is my purpose?

If as you read those questions you imagine them being asked by a white-robed guru with long hair and no shoes. standing in the woods - sitar playing music in the background - that's okay. Go for it.

However, I'm imagining something different.

I'm imagining you sitting down with a good cup of coffee and some quiet time, really thinking over your answers to these questions – perhaps having some very deep conversations with your coach or loved ones.

In addition to asking those two important questions, ask yourself another one.

What is really important in my life?

You don't have to discover the meaning of life to live a significant one. If you're willing to ask - and answer - the preceding three questions, and you're ready and willing to intentionally, purposefully move forward, then you can define success on your terms and achieve it.

A CASE STUDY: HOW I LET THE EARPS END MY BASEBALL CAREER

In the 1970's, Garrett Morris, an original cast member of Saturday Night Live, famously portrayed a character on that show named Chico Escuela.

Chico's catch phrase was, "Baseball been berry berry good to me."

At one point in my life, I could say the same.

When I was a kid I loved baseball. Loved it. On any given summer day you could find me playing a front yard game with the neighbors, on a diamond, in the back yard, practicing my swing, or on my bike, pedaling off to some game, somewhere. As a rule of thumb, we kept our ball gloves looped on the handlebars of our bikes at all times just in case a game broke out.

The Cincinnati Reds was my team. Any chance I got to score tickets and go to a game, I jumped on it. I knew every player and manager on the Reds' roster. I emulated my batting stance after my favorite player, and I dreamed of one day being a major leaguer.

During my sophomore year of high school, I earned a spot as the starting designated hitter on the varsity team. My fielding and throwing were not yet good enough for varsity baseball, but my batting and base-running were.

At our rural Ohio high school, basketball was king. Period. Every other sport was not even a close second in terms of popularity and importance to the community. Our baseball coach was also the junior varsity basketball head coach and the assistant coach of the varsity basketball team.

There were three brothers on the basketball team who we will call the "Earps" to protect the innocent and keep me out of court. Virgil, Morgan, and Wyatt Earp.

Wyatt and Virgil were varsity basketball players with pretty strong personalities. Morgan was a sophomore, like me. Like his brothers, he would one day, without doubt, play for the varsity team. I, on the other hand, would only be on the basketball team if the position of water boy would suddenly open up. It just wasn't my sport.

By today's standards, the Earp boys' parents would be called "helicopter parents". Perhaps "attack helicopter parents" is a better term. They took an OK Coral stance when it came to their boys and their sports.

*If'n you don't play my boyz, there's a gonnna be
sum trouble in these here parts.*

One day, Daddy Earp gave the baseball coach a fairly harsh chewing out because Morgan was a bench warmer, while the other Earp boys were starters. So the coach, considering next basketball season, benched me and put in Morgan Earp, the basketball player, in my place.

At that moment, my love for baseball died and I passively participated the rest of the season. Just before the last game of the season started, the coach took me aside.

"I know you were disappointed this year, and hope there are no hard feelings," he said. "I'd really like to see you back next year."

Dismissive and disrespectful, I said, "I just want to get this game over with," and thus ended my baseball career. I never played again and even stopped following the Reds.

As a side note, the next year, without me on it, the team won the state championship. Oops.

EVOLVING: MAKE IT DELIBERATE AND PLANNED

In a 1980's classic movie called *The Big Chill*, actor William Hurt plays Nick, a wounded Vietnam veteran now taking and selling drugs.

In one scene, Nick finds a video camera, sets it up, hits record, and proceeds to interview himself – simultaneously playing dual roles of interviewer and interviewee.

Some of the dialogue goes like this:

Nick as the Interviewer: What have you evolved into now?

Nick as the Interviewee: I'm in sales.

Nick as the Interviewer: What are you selling?

Nick as the Interviewee (thoughtfully): I don't have to answer that.

What a great question – ***What have you evolved into?***

After high school, I went away to college and did a little evolving of my own. But when I'd visit home, my perception of the people I grew up with had not evolved. I perceived them exactly as I knew them when I was in high school, and, therefore, was consistently surprised by things that should have never been surprising.

For example, I was stunned every time someone from high school would tell me that they had become good friends with someone else who had graduated several years ahead of us. This made no sense to me because I was still perceiving things just as I'd left them years prior, not taking into account that everyone was in fact evolving.

On one return visit home, I was hanging out with my friends from high school, when one of them said, "Hey, let's go get Dick A."

I thought, "It's been two decades. Why would we go pick up our old baseball coach?"

That was my un-evolved perspective talking.

The answer was simple to my friends. Dick A. was their friend and neighbor – not their former coach and teacher. Why wouldn't we go get him? So, we picked him up and walked over to the local watering hole. Coach sat on my immediate left.

After consuming enough draft beer, I turned to him and asked, "Do you know you are the man who single-handedly caused me to lose my love for baseball?"

Without hesitation, all of those years later, Dick said, "You would not understand the pressure the Earps had me under."

He was just trying to do the best job he could while not losing his job by way of overbearing parents. If I wanted to be mad at anyone other than myself, it should have been the Earps.

But, I couldn't even be mad at them because in that moment I realized it was I, not my coach, nor the Earps, who caused me to stop trying or caring about baseball.

I could have looked at it all as a challenge and continued to improve. Coach and the Earps would have perhaps then begged me to stay on the team next year. But instead, I chose to check out and quit.

That's also when I realized my perceptions outside my old home community had evolved, but my perceptions of home and the people who remained there had not.

I felt foolish.

Of course everyone else had evolved. That's what people do. But evolving can be deliberate, or we can let it happen.

There is an old song by artist John Fogerty that includes the line, "Put me in coach. I'm ready to play. Today."

Now it's your turn to sing those same lines. You can put yourself in the game, you can choose to sit on the bench, or you can choose to not even be on the team.

This ebook is about making those choices and evolving deliberately, purposefully, and with intent. As a bonus, it also gives you a means to do so.

GET A COACH: YOUR FIRST STEP

Your first step is to get a coach.

I don't mean one like my old high school baseball coach. The kind of coach you need gives you an unbiased, non-judgmental audience, and provides a level of accountability. This kind of coach makes no decisions regarding your being on the team or playing.

Where, when and how you play your game is up to you.

How do you choose your coach? You can hire a coach, either a certified life coach or a consultant who coaches, or you can find a volunteer. If you decide not to hire a paid coach, here is a partial list of who not to choose as your volunteer coach:

- spouse or partner
- best friend
- clergy or spiritual leader
- boss or employee
- mother-in-law
- bartender
- your dog or other pet

Why not choose a coach from the preceding list?

Because everyone mentioned has their own vested interest in your success – and likely an opinion of what that success should look like. Your mother-in-law, for example, might have your best interest at heart, as *she* perceives it, but she is not unbiased.

You argue, however, that a paid coach or consultant has a vested interest in your money and therefore is not unbiased either. That's not entirely untrue, but a paid coach is not vested personally or emotionally and, therefore, can remain objective much more readily than others.

What does a coach do? A coach can help tailor a plan for you, but the following is a partial list of what a coach does:

- Listens and asks questions - sometimes these questions may be pointed and make you uncomfortable
- Helps you track your progress toward goals and objectives
- Challenges you when your progress does not meet your desired level
- Offers tips and basic guidance, which you can choose to follow or ignore (at your own peril)
- Helps you hold yourself accountable

Again, this kind of coach cannot put you in or take you out of the game. Only you can do that.

BE DELIBERATE: DEFINE WHAT SUCCESS MEANS TO YOU

Once you have engaged a coach, determine what success means to you and how you will achieve it.

What is important to you? Is success defined as a high-paying career? Is it to own your own business? Is it to be a better parent, spouse, or friend? Perhaps your definition of success is to learn to cook meals three times a week for your family.

It doesn't matter how you define success, but it is critical that you do.

Consider the following four major categories when defining success:

1. Current job
2. Career
3. Family (including friends and pets)
4. Spirituality (not meant here specifically as "religion," although it could, but also as those things that make you a "better person.")

Note: Many business-coaching techniques do not include the subject of "spirituality" and it is indeed optional in this one. But I recommend including it because it can be an important part of self-discovery and defining a sense of purpose.

WORK WITH INTENT: CREATE YOUR ROADMAP

This section provides you with a template to help create a roadmap for your personal development plan, but you can use the Plan Canvas software (for free) to develop and track these same components of the plan.

The advantages of using the software instead of a Word (or other document) template include:

- Accessibility (for both you and your coach)
- Version control
- Automated reminders

In either case, to develop your plan, you'll need to answer the following four foundational questions:

1. Envision the future. What is your definition of success?
2. What is your personal mission and purpose?
3. What are your "blind spots" (things that can hinder your success, perhaps things you do not yet recognize in yourself)?
4. What are your strengths?

These are foundational questions to help you take a good look in the mirror and get to know yourself on a deeper level than perhaps you ever have before.

Once you are through this stage, you are ready to start defining what you want to accomplish – in the long-term, in the short-term, and in the mid-term.

The following table illustrates what that might look like.

FIGURE 1: PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN GOALS

CATEGORY	LONG TERM OBJECTIVES (3 YEARS AND BEYOND)	MID-TERM OBJECTIVES	SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES (NEXT 6 MONTHS)
Career	1.	1.	1.
	2.	2.	2.
	3.	3.	3.
Current Job	1.	1.	1.
	2.	2.	2.
	3.	3.	3.
Personal	1.	1.	1.
	2.	2.	2.
	3.	3.	3.
Spiritual (Optional)	1.	1.	1.
	2.	2.	2.
	3.	3.	3.

Now you know yourself and your purpose on a much deeper level - and you know what you want to accomplish. That’s great!

But what are you going to do about it?

This is where your personal development plan has to become actionable. Start recording the actions you will take (and complete) in order to accomplish your goals. Track your progress toward those goals.

The following table illustrates what your action plan might look like.

FIGURE 2: TEMPLATE FOR ACTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

ACTION	OBJECTIVE(S) SERVED	DUE BY:

TRACK PROGRESS: UPDATE AND REVIEW YOUR ROADMAP

Update and review your personal development plan with your coach on a regular, perhaps monthly, basis.

Don't try to answer all questions and fill in all tables at once. Do it one step at a time, then review your work with your coach. With each step, go back to the steps completed previously.

Do they still make sense? Are they on target? Make sure you are satisfied with them before going to the next step.

FOCUS: KNOW YOUR BLIND SPOTS BUT PLAY TO YOUR STRENGTHS

Many coaching techniques focus on improving your weaknesses, however I believe it's better to be aware of your blind spots, while playing to your strengths.

As a simple example, suppose you are a social extrovert with great communication skills, but you are weak in math and need or want to improve your skills.

Play to your strength of being an extrovert with great communication skills by forming and facilitating a study group rather than working on your math skills on your own or with a private tutor.

Your strengths will carry you. Rely on them.

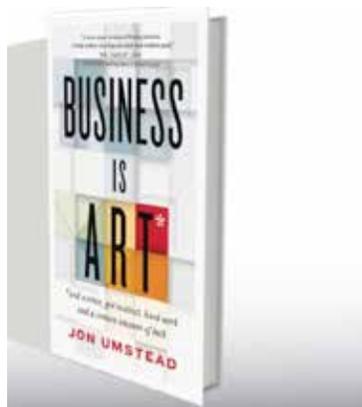
ACCOUNTABILITY: MEASURING HELPS YOU EVOLVE WITH INTENT

Now comes the tough part. Follow through.

Rely on your coach to help you hold yourself accountable and don't get upset when that's exactly what the coach does. Do the things you need to do to achieve your objectives. Measure your progress regularly.

As you do, you will find one of several things become clear:

- You are on target with everything defined in your personal development plan.
- Some things are on target; others, not so much.
- What you thought was important to you now seem less so (if you aren't making time to meet your goals, then they must not be as important to you as you said).
- Your priorities are all wrong.



In working through this process, say your objectives out loud. Repeat them often to yourself and others, especially your coach. You will discover things about yourself as well as the people who mean the most to you, and you will find yourself adjusting vision, mission, objectives, etc. accordingly.

You may even find it is time to take a huge leap of faith. If so, it is wise to be scared, but it is foolish to let that fear paralyze you.

For all of this discovery, the most important thing you will find is that you will achieve your objectives with astounding speed.

BUSINESS SUCCESS: THERE IS SO MUCH MORE TO IT

The personal development plan described in this ebook is the 2nd of 12 steps to greater business success described in my book Business is ART (Articulate, Revise, Track).

While anyone can benefit from a personal development plan, if you are a business leader, it represents only one piece of the puzzle.

Simply put, there is so much more to it.



Consider this - if you were playing blackjack in Las Vegas and someone offered you a tip that would increase your odds by 30%, 50%, or more, would you take it? Of course, you would.

Formal planning and tracking in business does just that, so why don't a majority of businesses do it?

One reason may be that it seems too complicated.

Business is ART (Articulate, Revise, Track) defines a simplified approach to Articulating what it is you want to accomplish and being flexible enough to Revise plans as needed, while you Track progress.

It does so with real examples based on my experience

- as opposed to theory.

The processes and templates described in Business is ART (BIA) are automated in the Plan Canvas software for an even more simplified approach to business as ART.

Contact us to schedule a Plan Canvas demo or ask about our consulting/coaching service offerings.

About The Author

I have seen every aspect of business leadership — as a board member, as an executive, as an entrepreneur, as a student of business, as a consultant, as a podcast host, and as an author.

I led a company to 400% growth, from \$21 million at the time of its acquisition to over \$80 million with more than 700 employees and subcontractors in multiple states and locations by the time of my departure.

This experience created the foundation for Business is ART, which subsequently played a significant role in defining the functional requirements of Plan Canvas.

The emphasis of each is not in the development of plans, although that is an important aspect.

Rather, the emphasis is on executing to and managing the plans as you move along – with extra emphasis on simplicity and results.