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Five Secrets to Creating a "Goal" Medal Life

By Ed Sykes

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The 2004 Olympics just ended in August. As always, it was an exciting event with its dramatic twists and turns, exhilarations, surprises, and disappointments as these great athletes performed at their peak in front of millions, if not billions, of fans for the glory of representing their country and possibly receiving a gold medal.

You, too, can experience the same excitement in your life. What are you doing now to achieve your "goal" medal? What are you doing to realize your goals in life?

You don't need to be a world class athlete to achieve success in life. However, you can use many of the same techniques that these athletes use to accomplish their goals.

The following are five secrets that will help you stand on the winner's platform in life:

1. Create Passion with Goal Setting

Take time to write down the goals that excite you. Ask yourself the following questions:

- * How will I feel when I achieve these goals?
- * What is keeping me from achieving these goals today?
- * What are the times and dates I want to achieve these goals?
- * What resources do I need to accomplish these goals?
- * What is my plan B, or secondary route, to achieving these goals?

2. Believe in Greatness

Once you have created your goals, take time to visualize your achievements. World class athletes visualize the victory before it happens. Take 15–30 minutes just before you go to bed or wake up in the morning and do the following:

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- * Find a quiet place.
- * Quiet your mind, slowing down your breathing.
- * Visualize that you are already achieving whatever goal you want to accomplish. What does it look like? How does it feel?

World class athletes prepare themselves yesterday, today, and tomorrow for success through intense training and sacrifice. What are you doing to prepare yourself for your success? Do a self-analysis to find out how prepared you are today in relationship to your goals and what resources and skills you need to acquire to achieve your goals. What sacrifices are you willing to make so that you can achieve your goals? If it is a promotion, find out what skills, education, and resources are required to obtain that position. If it is a six-figure income, what sacrifices are you willing to make to realize it? Less television,

more education?

I always say, "If you want something bad enough, act like you already have it." That's what champions do. They already believe that they will win a championship, a title, a gold medal. They have a positive, self-expecting attitude and set the bar for others to try to aspire.

I love tennis. One of my favorite tennis players is Roger Federer, the #1 ranked player in the world. When watching him play, I can see he owns the court. In his quiet, yet confident manner, he says to his opponent, "I am #1, I am the best!" Then he goes out and wins. With his positive attitude, he expects to win every time.

How can you apply this principle? Well, one example is if you are a manager and want to be promoted to vice president, act like a vice president today. That means dressing like a vice president, making decisions like a vice president, leading people like a vice president, etc. Also what it means is delegating certain tasks so that you can learn the required skills of a vice president (Read Delegate to Accelerate Success). Do you expect to succeed at any project with which you are involved?

3. Create a Mastermind Group

There is a saying, "A wise person learns from his own mistakes, a wiser person learns from other people's mistakes." That is what a mastermind group will do for you. Winning athletes have a mastermind group so that they will make fewer mistakes and take less time achieving their goals. A mastermind group is an assortment of people dedicated to give you the best advice, feedback, training, etc., so that you can achieve your goals faster. The mastermind group also gives you encouragement when needed. In sports, this might be a coach, a trainer, a physical trainer, manager, and agent. In your situation at work, it might be the following:

- * A mentor that has intensive corporate knowledge and can maneuver you around "corporate landmines"
- * A human resources specialist with thorough knowledge of skills needed for a promotion
- * A manager that wants to showcase your skills to impress their manager
- *

If you are thinking about or have already started a business, it might be the following:

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- * Lawyer(s)
- * Accountant
- * Tax expert
- * Business associate in non competing field
- * Retired executive
- * Association leaders
- * Customers

Note: Be very careful about whom you allow in your mastermind group. Ask yourself, "Who can help me achieve my goals through skills, knowledge, and honest feedback?" Honest feedback is the key. You don't want "yes" people around you; you want people that will give you positive feedback that will set you back on course for success.

4. Embrace Challenges

World class athletes embrace all challenges as a way for them to move to the next level. They have a "bring it on" attitude and you can see it in their eyes. They realize that the spotlight is on them and they

relish it. They are bold in their actions and are not afraid of making mistakes. If they make a mistake or have a defeat, they "own" them. What I mean by "owning their mistakes" is that they say, "I made the mistakes today," or "I didn't play to my full potential today." By taking ownership of their mistakes they take ownership for their actions. By taking ownership of their actions, they take ownership for improving their performance. They take time to learn from any setback.

What challenges are waiting for you at work? How can you improve your community by taking a leadership role? What challenges await you at home? Face them, embrace them, learn from them, and grow with them.

5. Don't Ever Give Up!

H. Ross Perot, the billionaire businessperson and pass presidential candidate said the following:

"Most people give up just when they're about to achieve success, they give up at the last minute of the game, one foot from a winning touchdown."

How many times have we seen people overcome insurmountable odds to succeed? In sports, the 2003–04 Detroit Pistons won the NBA championship against the mighty Los Angeles Lakers. The underdog Villanova University basketball team won the NCAA College Basketball championship against powerful Georgetown University.

There's the story of Gaston Gaudio. Many of you may be asking, "Who is Gaston Gaudio?" Well, he is a 25–year–old tennis player from Argentina who turned pro in 1996. During that time he had, at best, what would be called mediocre results. Going into February of this year, he had a losing record on the tour. Because he wasn't winning, he barely earned enough money to get to the next tournament. He asked friends in towns in which he was playing if he could sleep on their floors.

He had thoughts of giving up and going back to Argentina but he fought these off and wouldn't give up.

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He believed that better things would happen. He earned a wildcard to play in one of the four biggest tennis tournaments in the world, the French Open.

Then a funny thing happened. He started to win against the best players in the world. He won his way into the championship match. He was to face one of the hottest tennis players and fellow Argentinean in Guillermo Coria, the #3 ranked player in the world. Let's say Gaston was not expected to win, much less be competitive.

The match started as expected with Gaston on the losing end, 0–6 and 3–6. Even the television commentators suggested that Gaston quit playing, stop embarrassing himself against Guillermo, and call it quits. But Gaston wouldn't give up. Guess what? Gaston started winning games against Guillermo. He wouldn't give up. He believed he could win more games...and he did. Then the incredible happened...he won the French Open.

Gaston, just a month earlier didn't have enough money to stay in hotels, took home a \$1 million paycheck and the tennis world took notice. He won because he believed, persevered, and wouldn't give up.

Do you believe in yourself, your goals, enough to defeat any obstacle that may get in the way of your success? Take a hard look at your goals and say, as Gaston did, "I believe in myself and my goals. They are worthy of my efforts. No matter what the naysayers say, no matter what obstacles get in the

way, I will not give up!"

Start today. Apply these tips and you too can have a "goal" medal life!

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Five Secrets to Creating a "Goal" Medal Life - Part II

By Ed Sykes

Five Secrets to Creating a "Goal" Medal Life - Part II by Ed Sykes

Recently, Joy and I had the pleasure of speaking at a conference of Educational Office Professionals in Baltimore, MD. The other speakers included Ms. Deborah Phelps, mother of six-time gold medalist in the 2004 Summer Olympics swimmer Michael Phelps, and Agatha von Trapp, the 91-year-old daughter of Captain and Maria von Trapp, the family on which the movie "Sound of Music" was based. To say the least, there were a variety of subjects discussed that day.

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As I listened to Ms. Phelps describe Michael's achievements, I realized that his story had many of the secrets of success mentioned in my September article, Five Secrets to Creating a 'Goal' Medal Life.

Let's go over these five secrets again and see how you can apply them:

1. Create Passion with Goal Setting

Ms. Phelps mentioned that Michael, after competing in the 2000 Summer Olympics, was excited about the experience. Michael told her he wanted to compete again in the 2004 Summer Olympics. He had that burning desire to compete and win. So they sat down, developed goals, and mapped out a detailed plan for his success.

What do you have passion about in your career, your life? Have you put pen to paper and developed goals to achieve what you want in life?

2. Believe in Greatness

Once Michael had competed in the 2000 Summer Olympics and held his own, he now believed he could win the swimming events in the 2004 Summer Olympics; not only win, but shatter world records. He visualized standing on the center stand with the gold medal around his neck. He visualized what winning the gold medals would look like, how it would feel, etc.

Have you visualized your "goal" medal life?

3. Create a Mastermind Group

Ms. Phelps said that once Michael set his goal, she (a single parent), his older sisters, Michael, and his long time swim coach, Bob Bowman, came together to develop a cohesive team for success. This was Michael's mastermind group. This group was devoted to removing barriers and helping Michael achieve his dream. Bob Bowman provided the technical expertise; and Ms. Phelps and his sisters provided the financial, emotional, and family support to keep Michael focused on his goals. They kept him focused on his goals while removing any distractions.

Who is your mastermind group?

4. Embrace Challenges

Michael's challenges began before his first Olympics. He was a son of divorced parents. Yet, he never used that as an excuse. After the 2000 Summer Olympics, his challenge was how do I become a gold

medal athlete? He took a hard look at himself and received feedback from his mastermind group concerning how to make his weaknesses his strengths, and how to make his strengths the best in the world. He attacked those weaknesses with gusto everyday in practice.

When was the last time you asked the question, "How can I improve my skills to become the best?"

5. Never Give Up!

Ms. Phelps joked with the audience that as a mother, Michael's style of swimming made her crazy. You see, Michael, is a "comeback" swimmer. In most cases, he is behind in his races. Then at the last

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moment, with a burst of energy and an iron-willed belief he will win, he comes from behind to win the race. He believes that he can win every race as long as he is in the pool. He never gives up on his belief that he can win.

Do you believe that you can win every race?

As Ms. Phelps left the ballroom, we embraced; and she wished me the best. As she walked out the door, I thought that the Phelps family is truly living a "goal" medal life...and you can too. Start today.

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