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PREPARATION TIME IS NEVER LOST TIME

Anyone who has achieved success did it by preparing for success. No one has ever achieved success on accident — success is achieved on purpose. It is reached by a prepared process of successful habits, actions and disciplines applied to that specific area of success. So if we want to be successful in any area of life, we are to have a goal in mind to prepare for. The second habit of Stephen Covey's book, *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, says to "Begin with the end in mind." When you begin your journey with the end in mind, it will affect not only where you end up, but also the condition you're in when you get there and after you arrive.

I live in New Jersey. New Jersey in January can be extremely cold. If I am going to be taking a trip in the month of January to St. Lucia in the Caribbean Islands I am going to begin with the end in mind while I'm preparing for my trip there. Even though I would need to wear long sleeved, sweatshirts, sweaters and winter clothes to keep me warm in New Jersey, I am not going to pack the same way for St. Lucia. Where I am going affects the way I pack my clothes and prepare myself.

A runner also begins with the end in mind. When he enters a race, he has his sights set on the finish line. However, when a runner enters a race, he does so with the intentions of not just making it to the finish line but making it to the finish line first. The preparation for this race will not determine whether he finishes the race or not, rather what place he is in when he finishes the race. How you value the end of something will determine the level of preparations and contributions you give to that matter.

I didn't realize this principal while I was younger. I knew there was going to be an end to high school but I never really cared about the *condition* I'd be in at the end. I failed to see the value of the end so I didn't do much to apply my best efforts and abilities to affect the condition of my graduation. So instead of finishing with stellar grades and above average accomplishments, I performed below average and did the minimum requirements needed to just barely graduate. Preparation time is just as important as graduation time. Now a few years later when I went to Bible school, I began to see the value of not only finishing something, but also what *condition* am I in when I finish something. This time around, I started not only with the end in mind, which was graduation time, but the condition I wanted to be in at graduation time. So instead of preparing for below-average results to graduate with the bare-minimum requirements needed to walk down the aisle, I prepared, studied and paid attention, with the intentions of graduating above average and with stellar grades. So, at the end of Bible school, not only did I graduate, but I graduated with a 4.0.

So what's the reason for these stories? To illustrate the success achieved based off of this principle, no matter what area of life you apply this to. Whether it's in the work place, in the sale, in training, in your personal life or in any journey you take, as you allow the end to influence your starting point you'll achieve great success. Here's some steps to take:

The 1st Step — Define Your End

What is the specific target you're aiming to hit? What is the specific goal you want to achieve?

1. Personal Goal

2. Work-Related Goal

The 2nd Step — Set Your Parameters

Clearly lay out the time frame in which you want to achieve this goal. Have a starting point and a deadline.

1. Personal Goal

2. Work-Related Goal

The 3rd Step — Count Your Cost

Everything worth having in life costs something. Everything comes with an exchange. What are you willing to exchange? Whether it's money for a product or service, or time for training and instruction, write down what you have, what you need, what needs to be improved, what needs to be changed and what needs to be removed so you can reach your goals.

1. Personal Goal

2. Work Related Goal

As you apply these steps into your life you will see the end results you desire, reach your end in above-average condition and become a success on purpose.

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