



Focus Minded

By Daniel St.Pierre

Relief for those who didn't
plan to fail, but might
have failed to plan.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

No one sets out to fail or become an underachiever. We all have dreams, goals or expectations. Why is it only a few among us actually achieve our goals, or even surpass our own expectations? The answer to that is simple: Too many people are not focused. This white paper solves this problem.

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A Top 20 List Designed to Help You Reach or Surpass Your Goals.

Let's face it in this day and age staying focused is not an easy task. Surrounded with distractions and bombarded by the media, even the most determined individuals find themselves off track now and then. Most Americans are not just off track, they're completely off the map.

An expert motivator since 1995 now a senior partner working with the National Motivation Network I have come across some key elements that significantly enhance focus in purpose driven individuals.

If you have a goal the right mind set is essential in achieving or surpassing this goal. This is the first item in a most comprehensive top 20 list of focus boosters:

1. Get in the Right Mind set

Your mind and your brain are two completely separate things. Your brain is an organ while your mind is the living entity that resides within this organ. There are countless things you can do to help your brain perform at its peak: Eat well, exercise and maintain a healthy balance through supplements. Your mind is another story. There are no supplements for your mind, only the right programming. The fact is you are in absolute control of your mind set and 100 percent responsible for its programming. Fill your mind with garbage and it will produce garbage. Alternatively, if you carefully cultivate your mind with seeds of success you are likely to eventually succeed. This is a no brainer! (Pun intended!)



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2. Plan

Planning is a key part of any task, project or goal. People who fail at reaching or surpassing a goal did not plan to fail but likely failed to plan. By establishing a plan then acting upon this plan you significantly improve your chances of success. Your plan should include a time line, milestones, resources and expectations. Without a plan you are like a ship at sea without charts, drifting cluelessly toward disaster.

3. Create and Manage Task Lists

Everyone has priorities and most people like to think they can manage tasks in their heads, their minds. The human brain is indeed able to handle multitasking which in turn affects focus. This is why creating and managing lists is key to your success. Lists should include pros, cons, to-do's and not to-do's, avenues explored, successes and failures etc. A visual picture of your progress is critical to your success and an essential part of your focus and mind set.

4. Eliminate Distractions

One of the most powerful steps you can take toward improving focus is eliminating distractions. While moving to a deserted island may not be an option for you reaching an acceptable level of isolation should not be too difficult. To be successful and reach your goals you need quiet, productive time. This time should be spent away from distractions, including but not limited to television, phone, e-mail, friends, spouse or even the kids.

5. Steady as She Goes

One of the most important aspects to stay focused involves pace. Confucius wrote "It does not matter how slowly you go so long as you do not stop." More than a quote by a Chinese philosopher, these words should be embraced as a golden rule when facing a task or attempting to accomplish a goal. The amount of time you spend working toward the completion of a goal is not nearly as critical as the frequency at which you work; thereby creating a healthy work habit which in turn becomes a training tool for your mind set. Whatever you do, don't quit! Remember winners never quit and quitters never win.



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6. Use Accountability to Your Advantage

Accountability can be a double edge sword this is why most people who are bound for failure ignore the power of this free, interactive tool. By asking a friend or colleague to hold you accountable you increase your chances of success and consequently allow yourself to build a relationship or two. Accountability is used in numerous task management or goal completion programs because of its high success ratio and interactive basis by which two or more individuals' combined efforts increase awareness and focus.

7. Let Go of Stress

Many people find themselves stressing over tasks, projects or goals instead of focusing on the job that needs to be done. Stress is unhealthy both physically and psychologically. This is why stress and anxiety should be channeled or eliminated altogether through physical or mental exercise, prayer or meditation. Notice there is no mention of distractions here, rather, stress should be relieved by activities that will nourish your mind which in turn should allow for increased focus.

8. Take a Break

Burn out is at the root of many failures. Don't let it happen to you. A well managed time table established in your plan will help you avoid burn out. Remember to stay focused on the goal at hand and to manage your time accordingly. Taking breaks from tasks and projects produce rejuvenating energy and in some cases induce problem solving. When it comes to taking breaks, a little goes a long way.

9. Set the Mood

Staying focused has proven to be a lot easier when people set the right mood in tune with the task or project at hand. Ambient, trance or classical music, dimmed lights and sometimes relaxed attire enhances focus and allows for more productive work sessions.





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10. Hold Meetings

A proven way to renew focus is to partake in a meeting during which you should communicate the status of your task or project as well as the overall outlook of your goal. Brain storming sessions and focus groups are widely used to overcome obstacles or simply to allow teams to voice their opinions. To achieve or surpass your goals you should look for valuable input found in meetings. If you are working by yourself on a particular task or project you should try discussing it with a friend or spouse. Often, hearing yourself talk about the goal and its status allows for a positive shift in focus.

11. Eat, Drink and Go Potty

A common faux pas among people who struggle with focus involves food or the lack thereof. This is a perfect example of poor planning. You know full well throughout the day you will need to eat, drink and possibly use the bathroom once or twice. You should plan accordingly (except for the bathroom breaks which of course are spontaneous). You should plan for snacks and energy drinks so to avoid losing focus thereby affecting your work negatively. Snacks and beverages should contribute to enhanced focus rather than become distractions.

12. Use the Right Tools

Much like a mechanic would not try to change a tire using a water gun, you are expected to make use of the right tools for the job. Proper tools are time saving and an essential part of most tasks and projects' success. Tools, resources and reference material are plentiful on the internet. Best of all most of them are free of charge. If you are unsure as to what the best tools are for the job you are responsible for you should make use of online forums where you will find answers to your questions.

13. Who's Your Daddy?

One reliable way to stay focused and move forward with almost any task or project involves mentorship. After all, who doesn't love to show off their expertise and achievements? To ensure you stay focused find someone willing to share insight or simply to commit to lifting you up when you seemingly lose focus.





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14. Reward Yourself

Achieving milestones, reaching or surpassing goals should be celebrated and rewarded. There is nothing more empowering than a well deserved reward when battling a task, project or goal. Rewards should be in tune with each milestone. They should also be nourishing to your mind set and not counted as distractions.

15. KISS

The timeless principle "Keep It Simple Stupid" has a place in this list. By keeping each step and milestone simple you allow yourself to stay focused and on track with each task or project thereby increasing your success rate. Working with a plan that dictates a slow but certain progress is key when dealing with most any task, project or goal. Slow and steady wins the race so keep your plan of action simple.

16. Be Organized

Keeping your work space organized helps with productivity. Spending a short amount of time each day keeping up with your desktop allows you to focus on tasks and projects not to mention lifts up your spirit first thing in the morning when walking up to your desk. Too much time and focus are wasted looking for things in a cluttered work space.

17. Compare Notes

One efficient way to renew your focus and energy involves comparing your progress with other people's using their past experience for your benefit. While comparing notes is nothing new, it is too often ignored in a competitive world. Look for shortcuts or solutions to problems that will potentially save you time and energy. Unless you are re-inventing the wheel there is a good chance someone, somewhere has had a crack at something similar to what you are doing, learn from it.





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18. Outsource

When faced with an insurmountable work load you should look into outsourcing some of the less critical tasks. Thanks to the internet there are millions of contractors at your finger tips waiting to hear from you. Often reliable and cost effective, outsourcing can be the perfect solution for your problems.

19. Don't Beat Yourself Up

Whatever you do, don't beat yourself up. A dragging deadline should never be the reason for loss of focus. If things don't go as planned, and they often don't, you need to stay on track and keep focused on the tasks and projects that require your attention. Seldom will you be in absolute control of all variables injected in a task or project; as such you need to be flexible and ready for road blocks and obstacles. What is important is to keep going, slowly but surely toward the fulfillment of your goal.

20. Stay Focused

To complete the task or project you must stay focused. The big picture, the light at the end of the tunnel, the prize. These are the driving forces to be focused on as you strive to fulfill a commitment, to reach or surpass your goal. Ultimately, achievement should not be your concern, instead focus is. Anyone with limited skills that possesses the ability to focus can achieve anything they set their minds to. In the words of a great man, "If you can dream it [*and focus*] You can do it!"

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Produced by Daniel St.Pierre

Daniel St.Pierre is the co-founder of the National Motivation Network with 15 years experience motivating clients in Canada, the United-States, Europe and Africa.
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