

## Chapter 3

### How does accomplishment work?

Once you're clear about what you truly desire to accomplish in your lifetime, the natural next step is to go forth and accomplish it! This is where the fun starts!

Naturally, there are many factors to consider and integrate in order to accomplish something. Things like establishing a workable game plan, gathering and applying the needed resources, and perhaps getting the support of others. You may also need money, premises, equipment, tools or a host of other things. Even when you're completely clear about what you want to accomplish, these "operational" factors will have to be successfully addressed before it will actually be accomplished.

No doubt there's much knowledge and there are many texts on how to master each of these factors. What we've seen though, is that there are some less-than-obvious underlying principles that powerfully influence accomplishment. These principles are about how you as a person approach the tasks that lead to accomplishment. We describe these simply as the "Principles of Accomplishment". In this chapter, we'll consider 8 key principles, looking at each in turn for the learning it brings.

The first and most important principle is "Decide". You need to decide specifically, clearly and positively what you're going to accomplish.

*"I came away knowing I had to change my life, and I did. I wrote down three things I'd do, and I went and did them." – M.*

This principle is so critical that we devoted the previous chapter to exploring it in detail. There is however a further point we'd like to make here. We've noticed that people sometimes hold back from deciding because they're concerned that once they take such a momentous decision, they'll be stuck with it for life, as it were. People know intuitively that things change as time passes, so for some people a "whole of life" decision taken now looms as a possible straitjacket later.

The key issue here is that it's you who's taking the decision, so you can choose to apply navigation or course correction to your decision as time passes. You're in charge. Thus you can ensure that your decision stands for as long as it makes sense, but you're always free to change it if and when you need it to change.

*“Learning this principle gave me the focus I needed. It strengthened my ability to take charge and be in control. I discovered that the decision was mine – I could take charge and make a difference.” – D.*

The second principle is “Be Committed”. When you're on a diving board, you're not committed until you've jumped. Of course you don't jump recklessly. You look carefully before you leap. And you jump just as carefully, because you know that you can hurt yourself badly if you hit the water the wrong way. But, having taken all that into account, you do jump, even knowing there's no going back, no changing your mind half way down. That's commitment.

The diving metaphor makes commitment very clear, but in other walks of life it's not always that clear, and it's sometimes easy to lose sight of completely. For example, if you undertake to do something for someone, do you give the undertaking as carefully and see it through with the same follow-through as if you'd jumped off a diving board?

In accomplishing the outcomes you want in your life, commitment means keeping your focus on creating the results you truly desire. Make no mistake, the result will occur 90-99% because of your intention and commitment and only 1-10% because of your action and technique. So the bottom line is: no commitment, no result. But if you're truly committed, you won't be deflected from accomplishing the outcomes you want. Even if you get off the path somehow, if you know your destination before you set off, you'll always be able to re-find the path, or even make a new one.

The third principle is “Be Honest”. Face your results or your lack of results. Be honest with yourself, and be honest with others. A simple and effective test is to look directly at your eyes in a mirror. Are you truly honest with yourself? Really?

About everything? If not, why not? Who do you think you're fooling? And more importantly, why are you doing it?

*“My honesty with myself was weak – I used to say what others wanted to hear.” – M.*

Our view is that people who are being dishonest with themselves are doing so because the truths they'd have to face if they did are truths they'd rather not face. This little story from De Mello<sup>2</sup> called "The Truth Shop" says it all:

*“I could hardly believe my eyes when I saw the name of the shop: The Truth Shop. The saleswoman was very polite: What type of truth did I wish to purchase, partial or whole? The whole truth of course. No deceptions for me, no defences, no rationalisations. I wanted my truth plain and unadulterated.*

*She waved me on to another side of the store. The salesman there pointed to the price tag. “The price is very high, Sir,” he said. “What is it?” I asked, determined to get the whole truth, no matter what it cost. “Your security, Sir,” he answered. I came away with a heavy heart. I still need the safety of my unquestioned beliefs.”*

We acknowledge that facing up to your own truths can be painful, but as you probably already know intuitively, not facing up to your truths strongly inhibits you from accomplishing what you truly desire. It's also hard to know yourself if you're not honest with yourself, with all the consequences that we already discussed in the last chapter. Once again, it's your choice: face your truths and grow, or avoid your truths and be stuck.

On the other side of the coin, the benefits of facing up to your own truths are considerable. You'll be able to respect yourself for your courage, which in turn allows others to see your courage and to respect you for it, which in turn makes it possible for them to follow your lead, which ultimately helps you to accomplish the outcomes you want. You'll also know that you're not a cheat, which will allow you to genuinely put yourself on the line when that's needed, which could make the crucial go/no-go difference at any given point.

And are you honest with others? If you need the help of others to accomplish what you truly desire, and let's face it you probably do, then honesty is not just the best policy, it's the only policy. The fact is, people can usually tell if you're dishonest in even little ways, and the damage that does to your credibility, and therefore to their willingness to help you, is immense. How willing would you be to give your precious energy to someone's cause when you saw that they weren't being honest with you? And how easy would it be for you to tell if someone was being less than honest with you?

*"I say honesty comes first. It frustrates the hell out of me that people don't do that. If people were more honest from the outset, it'd be so much easier." – M.*

Being honest is more challenging than it seems at first glance. For example, do you always live up to your word? If you say to someone "I'll get back to you tomorrow", do you always do so? Or did you ever tell your child you'd be at their school sports and then not show up? Every missed commitment counts. You notice when other people miss their commitments, and they notice when you do.

*"You can deal with anything if you've got honesty, because from honesty comes trust and with trust you can communicate." – T.*

The fourth principle is "Express yourself". Communicate what is real for you, including your emotions. Sadly, we have learnt to hide our emotions all too well, especially in the business world. We are taught in business not to get emotional about things - to be cool, calm and collected at all times. Even in our personal lives, we are taught to conceal our emotions – "big boys don't cry", or "don't let him see that he's upset you". We intuitively know that this is false, but the social pressure to conform is strong, especially when we're growing up.

The problem with this approach is that inscrutability has its price tag, and it's very high. A classic example of this is the effect that sunglasses have. It's well known that if people wear sunglasses then you can't make eye contact with them, so you don't connect with them, and you can't trust them. What's less well known is that the same is true if people mask the way they express their

thoughts or feelings. We intuitively know that we're seeing a mask. That makes us wary and blocks trust. Think of someone you know who masks themselves like that. Do you feel wary of them? Do you trust them? Do you wonder what they're masking? Do you assume that what they're masking is less than wholesome? The point is that a key part of honesty is emotional honesty, and that means expressing yourself and what's real for you.

*“After an interview they came back to me and said: you're very measured, very controlled, but where's the real you? I discovered that people want to see who you really are and what you have to offer. They don't want the façade, the corporate gloss. I'm a lot more me now – I'm prepared to let people in, let them see me.” – T.*

Now this doesn't mean bleed all over people emotionally! What it means is to communicate what's real for you, not some cover-up. This takes practice, patience with yourself, and courage, because your social conditioning in this area is likely to be quite strong. It's part of your “box” as we discussed in the last chapter. The good news is that if you persevere, you'll eventually realise that the masks you put on take quite a bit of energy to maintain, and as you learn to release them you feel more free, more honest, more real to others and more true to yourself.

*“From this principle I learnt to turn away the barriers that we create for ourselves out of a lack of self-belief, to let people see the real me, and be comfortable with vulnerability. Sharing myself with people has allowed me to achieve far more than before.” – B.*

The bottom line is that when people perceive you as honest, they're more willing to become enrolled in helping you to accomplish the outcomes you want, and that's critical to your success in achieving what you truly desire. And there's no faking it – only genuine honesty will do!

The fifth principle is “Risk yourself”. We're not talking about gambling here, we're talking about breaking through your limitations. Risk and exposure are things most people fear, having “learnt” that the price can be painful. Can be.

The trouble is that avoiding risking yourself so you can avoid the possibility of painful consequences is in the end self-defeating. Of course revealing your thoughts and feelings involves taking risks. And moving past your current limitations, in other words out of your box, also involves taking risks. You're risking failure, or ridicule, or condemnation, or strong emotions in return, or aggression, or a host of other expected and unexpected responses.

But there's also learning, and there's also a host of positive responses. You're open to growth, praise, support, connection, enrolment, love, and a meeting of minds and hearts. We're very clear that these positive results of taking risks by being open are essential ingredients in accomplishing what you truly desire. The thing is, you almost certainly need the support and enrolment of others to accomplish what you truly desire. Isn't that true for you?

At the risk of stating the obvious then, since these positive results of risking yourself are only available to you if you actually do risk yourself, then if you risk nothing, you'll accomplish nothing. That's what the old saying "nothing ventured, nothing gained" is all about. So take a risk, and by doing so you'll unlock a critical door on the path to accomplishing what you truly desire.

*"This principle taught me to take risks. Without that learning, as a career banker of 25 years, which is all about covering your risks, I doubt if I'd have taken the risks that I did in going out and doing what I truly wanted. It changed my life." – M.*

This is a good test of your true desire. If you just want something, chances are that you won't be willing to break through your limitations or risk yourself very far for it. But if you truly desire it, then you're not likely to be put off the path to accomplishing it just because you need to risk yourself along the way. So how's what you truly desire looking now? Does it pass this test? Do you?

The sixth principle is "Participate 100%". You need to participate to get results. You can't catch fish by watching them. You need to become involved. In fact, the more involved you become, the better your fishing will be. As the best anglers know, you catch fish best when you're totally involved. You're knowledgeable,

you're equipped, you're prepared, you're positioned, you're keen, you're skilled, you're focused, you're relaxed, and you're loving it!

Does this sound like you? In your drive to accomplish what you truly desire, are you participating 100%? Or does 100% participation seem a little extreme and unnecessary to you? Interestingly, it's actually much easier to participate 100% than say 90%. To take a simple example, it's much harder to fish successfully without the right attitude, but how many of us do that anyway, because we're only participating 90%? If you participate only 90% in accomplishing what you truly desire, in our experience there's a good chance that you'll end up not accomplishing it. We see 90% participation as a big signal that all's not well.

If this sounds like you, then it's time to have a good hard look at yourself and what you're going to accomplish. How serious are you about it after all? Are you perhaps doing it because you feel you ought to, or even that you have to, or are you doing it based on what you truly desire? Our advice: if you're doing it for any other reason than your own true desire, then it's back to square one. Tough? Yes. But if you don't face up to yourself at this point, when will you? And if you're not real with yourself, how will you accomplish the outcomes you want in your life?

The seventh principle is "Take Responsibility." Very topical, considering what we've just been talking about! We propose that you alone are responsible for your actions and for the results you achieve. The essence of this principle is "If it's to be, it's up to me". Do you accept that for yourself?

*"I discovered that whatever I portrayed into the environment was what I got back. I concluded that life's as good as you make it." – M.*

In the world of business, it's very common to find people who are responsible for achieving a result that is only partly within their direct influence. It's also very common to find such people arguing that they didn't achieve the required results because of "influences beyond their control". Behind this argument is what appears to be quite sound logic that a person cannot be held responsible for things they don't control. This logic is technically correct, and it's also the slippery slope to failure!

How so? Well, valid though a reason for failure might be, it's still a failure. If you readily accept "lack of control over external influences" as a valid reason for failure, then most of the time you will fail, because most of the time there are opposing external influences in play. If you treat the accomplishment of the outcomes you want in your life this way, then stand by to fail!

So what's the answer then? Well, we're willing to bet that if their lives were at stake, really at stake, then the "victims" of external influences would suddenly come up with a dazzling array of ways to succeed despite the external influences. They'd block, thrust, parry, twist, turn, wheedle, cajole, bluster, bypass, reinforce, adapt, plead, argue, do without, humour, redouble – to a fertile mind, the list is pretty well endless. And why? Because they truly desire to accomplish something. That's the power of true desire. It will not be denied.

Have you noticed how children often end up accomplishing what they truly desire, despite the obvious fact that they don't have direct control over many (if any) of the relevant influences? How do they do that? How did you do that when you were a kid? Sure, many of their methods are immature and perhaps some are less than honourable. But the key is that they take full responsibility on themselves for "getting what they want". Kids can do that. You did, when you were a kid, and you still can if you really want to, and in our experience you'll need to. So if this attitude has escaped you as you grew up, then reclaim it!

The eighth and final principle is "Work in Partnership". The essence of this principle is "If it's to be, it's up to we." When you're working with other people, work for mutual benefit. This doesn't just mean, "support the principle" of mutual benefit, it means work for it. Work just as hard to ensure that the other person wins as you do to ensure that you win.

To some, this will seem to be a new burden – here you are 100% involved in accomplishing what you truly desire, and now we're proposing that you work just as hard for others to ensure that they win too. And if there are many "others", won't that mean many times the work?

Actually, no. These people are putting their energy into your project because doing so adds value to their lives in some way, and that's how they get their success from contributing. That means you're not required to put a similar amount of energy into their projects, but you do need to work hard to ensure that your support people get their success, whatever that might be for them.

That means that you need to understand their real reasons for being involved. It also means that you don't just "take" their effort and "thank you very much". And that in turn means that you need to connect with them at a personal level, and become their partner in such a way that you're both ensuring that you both succeed. They're giving you success, so consider it your responsibility to give them their success.

Of course the "win/win" theme is very well known. What we've noticed though is that while people understand and readily agree with the concept, more often than not they don't truly deliver on it. How about you? If you're really honest with yourself, do you truly deliver on it?

*"I'd always felt that I was a win-win person, but a learning game we played revealed my kill-kill tendencies, which I would've absolutely denied if asked." - J.*

At the end of the day, people are often still most interested in getting help for what they want, whereas they really need to be enlisting partners who they can work together with to achieve their mutual goals.

*"I was a stressed-out workaholic. It wasn't good for me and didn't make me a good leader. Through these principles, I learnt to trust others. It was a breakthrough on a big personal issue for me. I now have an enormous sense of respect for the individual. I don't think I'd have survived in my job the way I was." - T.*

These then are the eight principles of accomplishment. As you will have seen, they're not at all about the mechanics of accomplishment. They're about you, and how you approach the task you propose to accomplish. We know from our experience and from seeing how successful people approach their tasks that if

you use these principles fully and energetically, you'll be well on the way to accomplishing what you truly desire in your life.