

Volume 8, Issue 10

MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!

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Keeping the Spark

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The Wright Brothers are credited with inventing and building the world's first successful airplane, and making the first controlled flight. It had always been a dream of mankind to take to the air and fly like birds, and while hot air balloons had been in use for some time, it was universally assumed that mechanical human flight was impossible.

Wilbur and Orville Wright, however, paid no attention to the chorus of skeptical voices around them. By closely observing the flight of birds, they gained insight into the secrets of aerodynamics. They built and tested their own flying machines, some of which failed, but with each failure they gained more practical knowledge and experience. Wilbur and Orville persevered and eventually designed and built the Flyer, the first airplane in history, ushering in the dawn of a new age of aviation that radically changed the world.

Throughout history, there have been many great examples of people who persevered until they reached their goals or realized their dreams, sometimes in the face of extreme odds. They were people with a vision, and the faith, initiative, and courage to see their vision come to pass.

If you have a dream, vision, or goal you would like to reach, but you face seemingly insurmountable obstacles or unfavorable circumstances, read on! The articles and stories in this issue of *Motivated* are sure to encourage and motivate you to persevere, and to keep working until your dreams come true.

Christina Lane
For *Motivated*

The Secret of the Chinese Bamboo Tree



Web Reprint, adapted

We all need to be reminded sometimes that outward progress doesn't necessarily reflect or measure inward progress. Zig Ziglar tells the story of the Chinese Bamboo Tree.

When the seed of the Chinese Bamboo Tree is planted, watered, and nurtured, for years it doesn't outwardly grow as much as an inch. Nothing happens for the first year. There's no sign of growth. Not even a hint. The same thing happens—or doesn't happen—the second year, and then the third year. The tree is carefully watered and fertilized each year, but nothing shows. No growth. Nothing! So it goes as the sun rises and sets for four solid years. The farmer and his wife have nothing tangible to show for their labor or effort. Then, along comes year five. After five years of fertilizing and watering have passed, with nothing to show for it, the bamboo tree suddenly sprouts and grows eighty feet in just SIX WEEKS!

Did the little tree lie dormant for four years only to grow exponentially in the fifth? Or, was the little tree growing underground, developing a root system strong enough to support its potential for outward growth in the fifth year

and beyond? The answer is, of course, obvious. Had the tree not developed a strong unseen foundation it could not have sustained its life as it grew.”

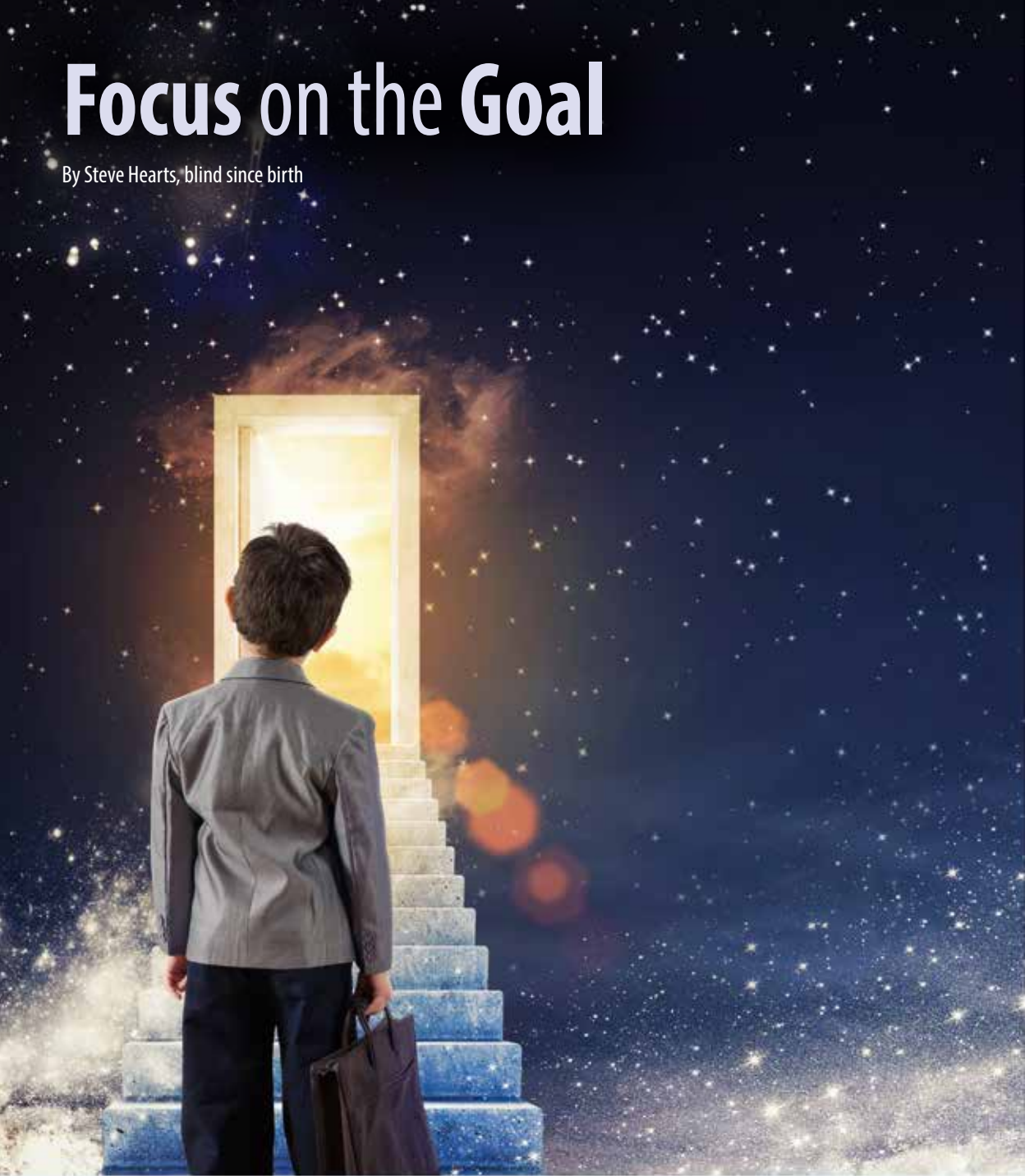
Your dreams, no matter how big, are not in vain. Just because you don't see signs of progress now, do not grow weary in continuing to build, to give it everything you've got within you. Even when overly critical friends remind you of how much easier it would be to give up, to be more realistic, more practical, or find a new passion...choose to believe that growth is happening underground. A root system is being formed within your life, the kind of roots that will outlast storms because of the hard work and commitment it's taken to stand in faith for something it cannot easily prove or qualify.

Continue to nurture and develop your roots and foundations, because every step or minute of effort makes a difference, and every step you take makes an impact. You may not see the change right away, but growth is happening.

With patience and perseverance to attain our goals, and with God's help, we can surely reach our dreams. ■

Focus on the Goal

By Steve Hearts, blind since birth



It's one thing to dream of reaching a goal or accomplishing something. This is an important first step. For some, it may be the pursuit of a new endeavor. For others, it could be acquiring a new skill. For yet others, it might be making

changes in habit or lifestyle. Whatever the case, effort, perseverance, and often sacrifice are required in order for our dreams to become reality. Once we realize this, it's up to us as individuals to decide how determined we are to reach our goal,

whatever it may be, and how much we're willing to give of ourselves in order to see our dreams fulfilled. This is where the importance of motivation comes in.

My mother was very consistent when it came to teaching me to read Braille, despite my lack of motivation and desire at the start; that is, until I heard about other blind children my age who had tackled this challenge and were now able to read their favorite books and stories on their own. From that point on, I diligently applied myself to learning Braille, which took a little over three months. But because I was so intently focused on the objective, these three months seemed like mere weeks. Once I could read Braille, learning to write it went even quicker.

When I was about six, I'd hear my two older brothers play the guitar and I would dream of being able to do so myself someday. But when one of them actually handed me a guitar and tried to give me my first lesson, I got frustrated and said, "Forget it!" Not only did my fingers hurt from pressing the strings, but it seemed impossible to remember so many different finger positions for all the chords.

It was not until I was 12 that I made a conscious decision to learn to play the guitar, regardless of the initial difficulty. I paid close attention to what I was being taught, and practiced what I learned. Sure, there were moments of frustration, and I occasionally tired of the effort. But I kept thinking about the goal I was striving toward. This spurred me on and kept me inspired, and in a little over a year, I was playing music with my brothers. Today I'm still learning new things about guitar-playing, and looking back, I'm so glad I

set this goal when I was 12, and that I worked toward it.

"That's all right," you may say, "but there are some goals that are more enjoyable to strive toward than others." That's definitely true. For me, learning to play musical instruments was far more enjoyable than trying to lose weight.

When I was 20, my mother passed away from cancer. As a way of dealing with my pain, I took refuge in excessive eating, and did little to no exercise. I felt justified in this, considering the emotional stress I was under, but I began to steadily gain weight. My family doctor told me that although I wasn't obese, I ran the risk of soon becoming so if I didn't start eating less and exercising more.

Following the doctor's instruction was a hard pill to swallow in the beginning. But when I started thinking ahead to the future, I realized that I knew, at least secondhand, some of the health risks of obesity, and I didn't want to experience them for myself. I also realized that if I took the steps the doctor was suggesting now, I could avoid having to make drastic diet changes later on.

I set to work on eating less and exercising more. Within about a month, not only was I able to bring my weight down to a healthier level, I found my emotional state to be much improved as well. Today I love exercise and no longer have to watch my weight.

What then is the secret to successfully reaching the goals we set? As I see it, looking beyond the tedium, work, and sacrifice involved, looking ahead with our focus on reaching the finish line, and imagining having reached it, is an excellent way to stay motivated. ■

How to Use Visualization to Achieve Your Goals

By Frank Niles, Ph.D., adapted

In life and work, success begins with a goal. It could be losing weight, asking for a raise, quitting smoking, or starting your own business. Big or small, goals give us purpose and, like a compass, keep us headed in the right direction. Of course, it then takes lots of hard work and determination to reach your destination.

Writing over 2,000 years ago, Aristotle described the process this way: “First, have a definite, clear, practical ideal; a goal, an objective. Second, have the necessary means to achieve your ends: wisdom, money, materials, and methods. Third, adjust all your means to that end.”

Unfortunately, many of us remain stuck at the goal stage. We start out with good intentions and perhaps a plan, but then we can't seem to make it happen.

There are countless reasons that this occurs—busyness, impatience, fear, and negative social pressures are some of the usual culprits—so how do we respond to these challenges and move in the direction of our goal?

Seeing Is Believing

Before we can believe in a goal, we first must have an idea of what it looks like. To paraphrase the old adage: we must see it before we can believe it.

This is where visualization comes in, which is simply a technique for creating a mental image of a future event. When we visualize our desired outcome, we begin to “see” the possibility of achieving it. Through visualization, we catch a glimpse of what is, in the words of one writer, our “preferred future.” When this happens, we are motivated and prepared to pursue our goal.

Visualization should not be confused with the “think it and you will be it” advice peddled by popular self-help gurus. It is not a gimmick, nor does it involve dreaming or hoping for a better future. Rather, visualization is a well-developed method of performance improvement, supported by substantial scientific evidence, and used by successful people across a range of fields.

Take athletes, for example. Studies show that visualization increases athletic performance by improving motivation, coordination, and concentration. It also aids in relaxation and helps reduce fear and anxiety. In the words of one researcher, “visualization helps the athlete just do it, and do it with confidence, poise, and perfection.”

Why Visualization Works

According to research using brain imagery, visualization works because neurons in our brains, those electrically excitable cells that transmit information, interpret imagery as equivalent to a real-life action. When we visualize an act, the brain generates an impulse that tells our neurons to “perform” the movement. This creates a new neural pathway—clusters of cells in our brain that work together to create memories or learned behaviors—that primes our body to act in a way consistent to what we imagined. All of this occurs without actually performing the physical activity, yet it achieves a similar result.

Putting It All Together

Remember, you don’t have to be an elite athlete to benefit from visualization. Whether you’re a student, businessperson, parent, or spouse, visualization will keep you tethered to your goal and increase your chances of achieving it. The power of visualization is available to all people.

There are two types of visualization, each of which serves a distinct purpose, but for greatest effect, they should be used together. The first method is outcome visualization and involves envisioning yourself achieving your goal. To do this,

create a detailed mental image of the desired outcome using all of your senses.

For example, if your goal is to run your first marathon, visualize yourself crossing the finish line in the time you desire. Hold that mental image as long as possible. What does it feel like to pass under the finishing banner, looking at your watch, the cool air on your overheated body? Who is there to greet you as you finish? Your family? Friends? Other runners? Imagine the excitement, satisfaction, and thrill you will experience as you walk off the lactic acid and fall exhausted into their arms.

The second type of visualization is process visualization. It involves envisioning each of the actions necessary to achieve the outcome you want. Focus on completing each of the steps you need to achieve your goal, but not on the overall goal itself.

Back to the marathon example: Before the race, visualize yourself running well—legs pumping like pistons, arms relaxed, breathing controlled. In your mind, break the course into sections and visualize how you will run each part, thinking about your pace, gait, and split time. Imagine what it will feel like when you hit “the wall,” that point in the race where your body wants to stop, and more importantly, what you must do to break through it.

Visualization does not guarantee success. It also does not replace hard work and practice. But when combined with diligent effort (and, I would add, a strong support network), it is a powerful way to achieve positive, behavioral change and create the life you desire. ■



Successful People Who Use the Power of Visualization

By Anna Williams, adapted excerpts

Jim Carrey

In the early 1990s, Carrey was an unknown actor struggling to get by. To stay motivated, he decided to write himself a check for \$10 million for “acting services rendered,” dated it for 1994, and carried it in his wallet for daily inspiration. In 1994, Carrey learned he would reap exactly \$10 million for his role in *Dumb and Dumber*. Today, Carrey is one of America’s top movie stars—and he credits his constant visualization with helping him get there.

Arnold Schwarzenegger

As a young athlete, Schwarzenegger swore by the power of visualization to reach his bodybuilding goals. “I had this fixed idea of growing a body like Reg Park’s. The model was there in my mind,” he explained. “The more I focused in on this image and worked and grew, the more I saw it was real and possible for me to be like him.” Later, when he transitioned to careers in acting and politics, Schwarzenegger said he employed similar mental tricks: “It’s the same process I used in bodybuilding: What you do is create a vision of who you want to be—and then live that picture as if it were already true.”

Oprah Winfrey

The media mogul, who pulled herself up from poverty to become one of the wealthiest women in the world, might be one of the biggest celebrity supporters of affirmations. Her commitment started young: As a child watching her grandmother toil away, Winfrey says she’d tell herself over and over again: “My life won’t be like this. My life won’t be like this, it will be better.” Her many words of wisdom to fans include: “Create the highest, grandest vision possible for your life, because you become what you believe.”

Will Smith

A big advocate of the law of attraction, the award-winning actor says his positive thinking has helped him achieve happiness. “In my mind, I’ve always been an A-list Hollywood superstar. Y’all just didn’t know yet,” Smith has said of the visualizing techniques that helped him along the way. He’s also fond of quoting Confucius’s motivating motto as way of explaining his blockbuster success: “He who says he can and he who says he can’t are both usually right.” ■

Keeping the Spark

By Anna Perlini, adapted

When I was a child I remember bursting into tears when thinking of my parents growing old. I loved them so much, and just the thought that one day they could lose some hair and get a few wrinkles was so hard! Thinking about it now, something in me was dreading the aging process. I felt strongly that everything beautiful should never end or lose its spark.

As time went on, that particular fear slowly disappeared. I can't honestly say I'm excited about growing physically old, but besides feeling stronger now than when I was in my twenties, due to being more physically active and keeping a better diet, I'm starting to realize that what I actually dread the most is becoming old inside: losing my enthusiasm, my ideals, and the desire to continue to learn and move forward. For this reason, I'm glad every time I have a chance to "stretch", and in some way start anew and remain young inside. I'm a hopeless idealist, that's all.

A few years ago, I attended a school reunion and saw many of my friends that I hadn't seen in over 30 years. When I was young I was a very good student and a leader in political and social causes. Then I decided to dedicate my life to humanitarian causes, and I spent the next 38 years doing that, often in very difficult circumstances, never accumulating much for myself in terms of material goods. In contrast, quite a few of my friends at this reunion were now accomplished professionals—doctors, lawyers, and businessmen.

At one point, someone dared to ask me the hot question: "But ... do you have any regrets? You were such a brilliant student. We all admired you and thought you would become a great doctor or writer."

I simply answered that, no, I didn't have any of that sort of regrets. I knew that I'd found my calling in life, and that is the highest form of reward. Everyone breathed a sigh of relief and almost unanimously exclaimed: "We are so glad to hear that and to know that you are still fighting for the ideals you gave up so much for! You continue being a role model for us."

I realized then that I wasn't the only one who hates quitting. It's not a matter of always appearing strong and never making mistakes. That is impossible anyway, and there are many falls along the way, and even times when we are forced to take a break. What I'm talking about is not quitting on doing good, but instead continuing to believe, give, move, and change. ■





The Darkest Hour Is Just Before Dawn

By Washington Wachira, adapted

I met the love of my life, Irene, while we were both in college in Nairobi, Kenya. She studied business administration while I took up engineering. She was, and still is, an amazing lady. It didn't take long before we fell deeply in love with each other. We both loved acting and were part of our community drama group. Four years after we started dating, I proposed to her and she accepted. At around this time, we were both working and things were going great. Our wedding plans went very well, thanks to a tremendously supportive group of friends and family. The wedding itself was a beautiful and colorful affair. We were so happy and things could not have been better.

After the honeymoon, we moved into our new home and started our life together as man and wife. We had a few problems while trying to settle into our new roles, but they were nothing serious. Most of the time, we were doing very well and things were going great. However, this did not last very long as I was soon out of a job. It had only been four or five months since we married, and now I was

jobless. The wedding had used up all of the money I saved, and being out of work was not what we needed so soon in our married life.

Initially, I was full of hope and confidence that a job would be coming my way soon. But as the weeks turned into months, I realized this wasn't going to be easy. The bills were piling up and debt was quickly accumulating. Irene's job as a hotel receptionist was our only source of income. She was quickly growing weary of having to pay for everything and this was really affecting our relationship.

Resentment soon set in and we had many ugly exchanges. After many painful fights about our life and finances, I walked into our house one evening to find my wife gone. She could not take any more of the arguments and the debts. I would love to say that this was the turning point for us, but things actually got worse. I was really losing it, and everyone around me was seriously concerned. As they say, the darkest hour is just before dawn, and just when there seemed to be no hope, a new beginning walked into my life.

I was in the house watching a movie when a friend came in. He had been out for an interview and for some reason, he thought I would be a perfect fit for the job he did not get. I asked him about the job, and for the first time in my life, I heard about call centers. It was an interesting concept that was both appealing and intriguing. The call center was looking to hire individuals who spoke excellent English, and could work with British and American accents. The next day, I went in for the interview, and by the end of it, I was one of the twenty candidates shortlisted for training. It was the best thing that had happened to me in months, and I knew I had a chance to turn my life around.

This opportunity was great, as I could earn a steady income if I was successful in the training. The only problem was, I did not even have enough money for the bus fare to get me through training, not to speak of the massive pile of bills that we had accrued over the months. It was a tight situation and I had no idea how to get out of it.

After a lot of soul searching, I realized there was only one person who could help me through this. I went and talked to Irene. It was not easy, and as we talked, I realized how selfish and negligent I had been. Eventually, she agreed to come back and we started taking baby steps towards rebuilding our relationship.

As they say, when it rains, it pours. Most people only apply this to trouble, but I have seen this is also true when it comes to the good things in life. After I had worked in the call center for only four months, I was awarded a promotion to the position of quality analyst. Shortly

after that, I was made a team leader. It was just amazing.

While still working at the call center, I met a lady who introduced me to freelancing. I have always wanted to have my own business, and this was a great opportunity for me, especially now that I had the call center experience. I started off with part-time freelancing where I would work on data entry projects. I worked in the call center for eight hour shifts and then focus on my freelancing after work. The beginning was not easy, but I was able to bear with it as I was not relying on it for my income. After some time, I ventured into writing and was delightfully surprised to discover a talent I didn't know I had. After several months working on various writing and data entry projects, I was making enough money to quit the call center job and take care of my freelancing business full time. Not only was I able to make more money, but I was also doing something I thoroughly enjoyed.

Freelancing also allowed me the freedom and time to further work on my relationship with my wife. Today, we have a better marriage, and each day we learn how to make our relationship more meaningful.

I have learned some important life lessons from this whole experience, and I often share this story with others to encourage them when they are going through tough times. The reason why most people fail is because it is really easy to fold and give up when times are hard. Success requires struggling, taking risks, and picking yourself up time and time again—even when things look hopeless. ■

Facing Fears

NOTABLE
QUOTES



Facing your fears robs them of their power.—**Mark Burnett**

Waiting to develop courage is just another form of procrastination. The most successful people take action while they're afraid!—**Unknown**

Inaction breeds doubt and fear. Action breeds confidence and courage. If you want to conquer fear, do not sit home and think about it. Go out and get busy.

—**Dale Carnegie**

Winners are those people who make a habit of doing the things that [others] are uncomfortable doing.—**Ed Foreman**

Don't wait. The time will never be just right.—**Napoleon Hill**

You miss 100% of the shots you don't take.—**Wayne Gretzky**

You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop and look fear in the face. ... You must do the thing you think you cannot do.—**Eleanor Roosevelt**

Do the thing you fear and keep on doing it ... that is the quickest and surest way ever yet discovered to conquer fear.

—**Dale Carnegie**

Each of us must confront our own fears, must come face to face with them. How we handle our fears will determine where we go with the rest of our lives. To experience adventure or to be limited by the fear of it.—**Judy Blume**

The greatest failure is the failure to try. When I die I want four words written on my tombstone: "At least he tried." You've got to take risks. That's what brings abundance. That's what brings success in life. Don't be afraid to go out on a limb, that's where the fruit is.—**Rick Warren**

[The things we need to do to reach our goals] may all be things that are uncomfortable at first. So what! Do it anyway! One of the ways to get through the discomfort is simply to do the thing you are uncomfortable doing.

—**Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen**

