

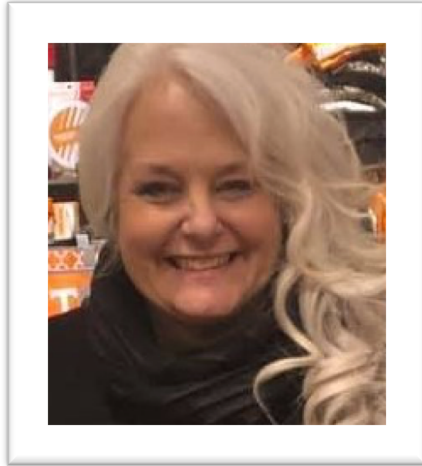
The Ultimate *Productivity* Challenge

“Write the vision; make it plain on tablets so he may run who reads it. For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end - it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay.” -
Habakkuk 2:2-3

By Cindy Rushton

**Ultimate Productivity
Challenge
Action Guide
Week 3**

Welcome!



I am Cindy Rushton, your hostess for the month of April as we take the challenge to work together for **ULTIMATE PRODUCTIVITY!**

This is it! This is about to be your best year ever! This is the year for massive action.

During this challenge, you will be surrounded by some of the most amazing and talented and blessed ladies and men on the planet. First, those in this tribe have a heart for God, their families and helping others. I cannot wait to introduce them to you in this challenge. By the end you will see what I mean and you too will call them friends.

A challenge is not to make you feel guilty about what you have or have not done in the past. A challenge is not to make you stressed about what the future holds.

A challenge is for right now, for such a time as this.

A challenge is as much or as little as you want to put into it - and the choices are varied and will fit the most advanced to the beginner.

Are you ready to roll up your sleeves and see what God has in store for you? I am and the best news, we will be beside you all the way!

Let's do this!

Ultimate Productivity Challenge...

A 31 Day Challenge to Support You As You Step Up to Your Calling and Life Purpose!

31 days from now your home, life, homeschool, business or ministry can look radically different. In fact, commit just one hour a day to work on your challenge and you will never be the same. This will be a month of taking **massive action**. It will be a month of **stretching yourself and your capabilities**. It will be a month of **impact and influence**. It will be a month where you make time to do the things that will impact your bottom lines, your influence, your outreach, and your impact for this year and years to come.

Ultimate Productivity Challenge is a 31 Day Challenge where you will commit to work on your home, life, homeschool, business or ministry every day with our community.

It may be planning. It may be brain dumping. It may be working on your calendar or your schedule. It may be working on a list of things to do. It may be rewriting or revising old content or copy. It may be taking steps to do something very new that takes you outside of your comfort zone. It may be working on a project that has bottlenecked your progress. Each day you will take massive action. As you do, you will post your progress in our group where you will find accountability, encouragement, and great ideas that will take you even further than working on this by yourself.

That is not all!

Private Group Sessions

We have live group sessions each week on Zoom. These sessions will feature a quick topic then we will open the mic for group coaching to help you as you work through your challenges. You can bring your questions to the group where our team and fellow group members will help you. You will find support, encouragement, and practical ideas from one another. You will develop relationships that will forever impact your business. We want for you to join us live for every session, but we also understand the demands of your busy lives. We will have replays available of every session. Now, do note that missing the live sessions and listening to the replays will only give one credit for your challenge points. Also, it will limit your ability to access the benefit of group coaching. Make plans to join as many live sessions as possible. This 31 Day challenge is FOR YOU. Set aside this time for you and your business or ministry.

Our Zoom Room can be found here:

<http://www.CindyRushton.com/Zoom>.

Private Pop-up Sessions

We are planning surprise pop-up sessions on topics that are going to be a big help for you as you work on your challenges. These will be available only to our challenge members. We will

offer replays for a few of these sessions, but we really want for you to join us live so not everything will be available for replay.

Bonus Challenges

This is where we will have even more fun. We will have bonus challenges that can help you earn extra challenge points. Of course, these bonus challenges also help you to get things done and take massive action and help others take massive action.

Facebook Group

Get even more support and more awesome ideas on our Facebook Group. Here is where you go to join us:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/SteppingUpToYourCall/>

For our challenge, you will receive points by submitting daily updates of three things:

1. What you accomplished during the day to work on your challenges.
2. Your big takeaway from our daily group sessions, pop-up sessions, or session replays.
3. Updates on any special bonus challenges.

Prizes

Not only will you have your home, family, business or ministry benefit from taking massive action, we have **fun prizes that you can earn as well**. Every person who completes the challenge as a finisher, will earn a prize. Completing the challenge requires that you finish one challenge of your own (counts as 10 points), plus earn a total of 50 points by the end of the challenge. Not only do you “win” by taking massive action toward ultimate productivity, but you also win a great prize!

For those who hit 150 points, you get the first prize PLUS you can earn a private coaching session with Cindy Rushton. The top 5 people with the highest points will receive access to an online event of their choice with Cindy. That is not all! Our challenge members will also be added to teams who will be competing against each other for a chance to win access to a special one-day “Intensive” with Cindy Rushton.

Points:

- 2 points per day for being live in the live sessions and posting a takeaway in our Facebook group.
- 1 point for listening to a replay and posting a takeaway in our Facebook group.
- 1 point for posting in the group what was accomplished each day.
- 10 points for each challenge that you complete and post a video in our group.
- PLUS! Weekly Bonus Challenges!

Ready to dig in?

This guide will provide you with a self-study plan for working on your challenges. The best way to get started is to read the next couple chapters and work through the journals, brain dumping, and planning in those. Then, take a look at the various challenges. Just pick one. Find the one that will make the biggest difference in your business or ministry this year. Perhaps choose the one that is your “next step” or something that has been nagging you for a while. Let’s work on that one first. If you get it done before the challenge is over, you may want to look through others and pick another. You can use this guide throughout the year to challenge yourself after this challenge is over. And...we will have a guide for you each week of this challenge.

Our goal for you is to help remove any obstacles, hindrances, lids, or limitations that have kept you from taking massive action. We want to see you step into this year fully prepared for your very best year ever! Let’s do this!

What Do You Want?

Reprint from Jumpstart 2020 Challenge Action Guide.

Today I want to ask you a very important question. Turn off everything for a few minutes and stick with me. I truly believe that if you “get” this one thing down, it will rock your world, and in turn, your business! This one thing will give you the direction that you have been needing. It will help you troubleshoot many of the hindrances and obstacles for reaching your goals for your business or ministry. In fact, this one thing will help you prune away all of the distractions, the options, the busyness, and the procrastination so you can jumpstart this year.

So, are you ready?

What do you want?

Think about it for a moment....

WHAT do you want?
What do YOU want?
What do you WANT?

Take a look at Exodus 33 for a moment. Take a moment to dig into this passage. Write down anything that jumps out at you.

Let's look at it together. I want to camp on a few things and circle back to my question for you.

The background on this passage—The children of Israel had been in Egypt in slavery for 400 years. God saw their oppression and suffering (Exodus 3:7-8) and Moses saw “how hard they were forced to do work” (Exodus 2:11). God called Moses to step up to the call as His vessel to deliver the Israelites out of captivity.

For this passage, fast-forward. The children of Israel had been wandering in the wilderness for 80 years. It was time for them to cross over to the Promised Land, however God had “had it” with them and their unfaithfulness. He was going to let them go on into the Promised Land with an angel going before them, but with one catch.

Take a look at verse 3 again. What is the catch?

Why is that significant?

Right, “But, I will not go with you” (Exodus 33:3). This is significant because the Israelites had become “distinguished” as a people who God dwelled among.

But, Moses. Moses did not settle here. Stick with me on this. Look at verses 12-23. Re-read this passage. There are three things I want to share with you from this passage.

1. Moses knew the importance of God going WITH THEM.

My sweet friends, too many of us have settled for doing things that WE can do on our own. Too many of us have settled for doing things that appease the world. Also too many of us have been doing things that can be accomplished with a great set of goals and things to do. The real secret to doing what really matters and stepping up to the call is to only do what can only be done with God being there WITH YOU.

Remember Exodus 2 and 3? Moses saw that his calling was impossible without God being with him all along the way. He was called to do the impossible that could only happen if God was there in the fullness of His glory. God answered Moses' fears and concerns about his own inadequacy with the reason that Moses COULD step up to his call and do the impossible—because God would be with him!

Fast forward—this is what this scene is all about—God *not* going with them.

What about you? Is this your #1 desire? Explain...

Have you settled for doing things that YOU can do just by having a good list of goals and things to do?

What is God calling you to do—that impossible thing?

What is that thing that you cannot do without HIS presence?

2. His presence makes a difference ON YOU!

Our distinguishing characteristic that should set us apart should be that we have been in His presence.

Take a look at another passage—Turn to Acts 4:13. Read it and jot down anything that jumps out to you.

In this passage, I love that it was not education, special training, accomplishments, or anything extraordinary that stood out about Peter and John. Rather, it was that they “had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13 NIV).

So, with this in mind, how is your time with God?

What does it look like?

In what ways does it feed your spirit and soul?

How is it preparing you for your business and ministry?

There is a fresh new year ahead, a fresh new decade, what are you doing that can be done without the presence of God?

Now, let's go deeper, what are you doing things that requires that God is with you or they simply will not happen?

3. God WITH him.

This is one of the most important things that I can share. Let's circle back around. Notice something—Moses interceded. He did not settle for what he was getting. Look again at verses 12-23.

What did he want?

Did he get it?

How did he get it?

Yep. He wanted God's presence *with him*. He wanted *even more* of His presence. He got what he wanted, really wanted.

Don't take this light. This can change you, your business, and your ministry. Moses wanted God's presence to go with him. He asked for it. He would not settle for anything less. And, he got it!

I can hear some of you sighing, “But, Cindy, this is Moses. This is Israel. These were the children of Israel.” Sure. Of course, hop over to Psalm 37. I want to share it from *The Passion Bible*:

Keep trusting in the Lord and do what is right in his eyes. Fix your heart on the promises of God and you will be secure, feasting on His faithfulness. Make God the utmost delight and pleasure of your life, and He will provide for you what you desire the most. Give God the right to direct your life, and as you trust Him along the way you’ll find He pulled it off perfectly!

Today, I want to ask you this one big question: What do you want? Pull aside and really ponder this one question. It makes all of the difference in the world.

GO For Your Dream!

I don't know if you can feel it, but there is a rustling in the heavenlies. We do not have time to procrastinate...sit paralyzed in fear and insecurity...or continue to wait for the perfect circumstances. This is the year!

- It is time to dare to dream! AND, dream big!
- It is time to step up to God's call and purpose for your life!
- It is time to set goals and put them on your calendar and INTO your life!!
- It is time to get up, get moving, and reach for those God-dreams!
- It is time to clean out, revamp, restructure!
- It is time to invest in YOURSELF!
- It is time to press toward the mark!

Are you ready?

This is NOT another hype-talk -- I do not offer that twaddle.

My prayer is for this to be a time that we use this time this month to getaway from our everyday life, pull back, retreat, and hear God. When we do, we can be assured to come apart with an action plan that will help us to reach for those dreams that God has for us. I am expecting big things! Are you? Well, let's dig in....

First, Things, First...

Let's look at this year again...

How has this year been?

How is it going??

Let's get real...

Be honest--it is just YOU AND ME here. BTW--you are SAFE here!
This is NO place for judgment or condemnation. This is a place
where we are free to open up and let God work among us.

As a challenge, take a moment to hop in our group and share an
update – sure it can be video or written (Smile—although I prefer
video so we can truly see you and hear your heart!!)

Share how your year has been--how is it going--are you content?
Write it here, then share it/record it for our group.

Want something more as you head into the next part of your year?

If you are like me, this is yet another year that is flying by! It has been a year filled with sooo much change, many accomplishments, many struggles.

How about YOUR YEAR? Let's get real! How has your year been?

Perhaps you began this year with high expectations...

...a brain swimming with a multitude of ideas

...clear, definitive, reasonable goals

...a planner full of things to do

...a resolution to go for your dreams this year

Then...

It was January 2...

Then, February!

NOW—the last two weeks of April!

Now, you are sitting here wondering if this is going to be another year like so many in the past.

Are you wondering if you just need to put off your plans until a better time? Skip THIS YEAR?

Sweet friend, how are you doing? Really? Has this year been what you wanted for it to be?

This is where we start because we need to see where we are and troubleshoot to find ways to get past the:

- Defeat
- Procrastination
- Paralyzed
- Frustration
- Fear
- Doubt
- Other?

THIS IS THE TIME!

God needs for you to step up and step out NOW!

People need you like never before!

Don't let this year slip by!

This year--RIGHT NOW--is FULL of opportunity!

This year invites you to grasp on to all Christ died to give you!

This is the year that you can get busy moving toward your dreams...

Making the most of every opportunity

Living the life you only dared to dream about!

This is the year to gear up your life, your home, your business and take everything uplevel--NOT up-a-level, but UPLEVEL!! Where God has planned all along!

This is the year to reach for your dreams!

Want to go for it?

Want to make this year different?

Ready to gear up to reach for YOUR dreams?

You are in the right place!

Challenge #13: Where are YOU?

As a challenge, take a moment to hop in our group and share an update – sure it can be video or written (Smile—although I prefer video so we can truly see you and hear your heart!!) Share how your year has been--how is it going--are you content? Write it out ACTION GUIDE, then share it/record it for our group. . See our group here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/SteppingUpToYourCall/>

But, how....

DREAM. Grasp ahold of it. Don't let go. Dare to dream. Dare to dream again.

Without dreams...

- We get stagnant.
- We don't press toward the mark and grasp onto all Christ died to give us.
- We miss those treasures that God has for us.
- We get lazy.
- We have nothing to look forward to each and every day.
- We don't train our children to reach for their life purpose--we can't! They will do what we do!
- We get at a stand-still--not moving forward.
- We don't have anything to work toward that matters--we get on the treadmill of life, we have no real measure of success, and we have no way to "keep score."
- We don't have all of the joy and delight that God intends to give us!
- We don't really LIVE!

Have you been dreaming and pursuing your dreams? Have you just been existing... waiting... Why?

If you aren't dreaming, why?

How are you moving toward your dreams? What does that look like?

Are you believing for something in particular? What?

What are you working toward right now?

Are you daring to dream big dreams and little dreams—those dreams that are way beyond what you can make happen and the little ones that you never get around to even though you could do it? What are they? List them...

Sweet friends, it is time to dream. It is time to go for your dreams...

- It is time to start that business.
- It is time to remodel that room.
- It is time to write that book.
- It is time to sing to that crowd.
- It is time to speak to that crowd.
- It is time to build that ministry.
- It is time to travel to _____
- It is time to see _____
- It is time to _____

Oh! Sweet friend, we need to dare to dream. If we want to live a life without regrets, we have got to dream. If we want to get things done, we have got to dream. If we want more than "resolutions" then we have got to dare to dream again. What are some of the dreams that you have dared to dream in the past that are your reality right now? List them....

Oh! I am with you. I have dared to dream and I have lived those dreams in my reality. But, that is not where it ends.

A few years ago, God told me years ago to dare to dream bigger. I remember thinking, "But, God, you have already given me my biggest dreams. What should I dare to dream?" I seriously could not think of anything more that I would want for my life. I love my life. But, asking that question has unleashed God to really work in me this year. Not only is He asking me to dare to dream for bigger things, **He is also asking me to dream for a bigger list of dreams and put them on my calendar today. This year. Not at the end of the year....this month!**

Want to join me? Brainstorm your "DREAM LIST" here.... So, what are you dreaming?

So, what are you dreaming?

- Godly home
- Prince Charming
- Children- Godly Children
- Grandchildren—Godly Grandchildren
- Successful Career/business/ministry
- Retirement
- House
- Taking on a new challenge
- Making that hobby into a successful business
- Writing that book
- Going on that TV show
- What else?

Go back and really brainstorm and brain-dump all of those big and little dreams that you want to see before your life is over.

Some of those will be things that you can reach immediately.

Some of those things are going to take some work.

Some of those things are going to take a lot of work and perhaps, a lot of time.

Write them all down.

Be bold!

Be BIG!

Take a few days to write them down.

Keep this list WITH YOU. Keep it before you!

Keep adding to it daily!

WHAT DO YOU REALLY WANT?

Challenge #14: CREATE YOUR “LIFE LIST.”

Years ago, I watched a movie that really got me thinking. It was called, ***The Bucket List***. In the movie, one of the lead characters created a “Bucket List” of things he wanted to do or experience before he “kicked the bucket.” Today, I want to ask you to create a LIFE LIST. Create a list that will grow and expand through the years of things that God is giving you to reach for as you pursue His abundant, lavish, overflowing life. What do you want? What do you see? What do you dream? Write it out. Then, hop on our Facebook Group and share it! Give them a background on what God is saying to you about daring to dream big. Share what this will look like in your life, home, homeschool, business or ministry. See our group here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/SteppingUpToYourCall/>

What is on your LIFE List?

Not sure what it looks like? Here is MY LIFE LIST:

- Go to comedy school
- Go to Hawaii
- Go to Israel
- Go to see the Pyramids
- ~~Go to Italy--see Venice/Rome/the great art/run! (Gone to Venice--want to go to Rome)~~
- Get a Porsche-- CASH!
- Lose 100 Pounds
- Run a 5K every month
- Run a half marathon
 - o At Disney Princess Half Marathon
 - o Nashville
- Walk a Marathon
 - o At all of the beautiful places - Maui, Great Wall of China, etc
- Run a marathon
- Finish my entire house -with beautiful furniture.
- Back to blogging (revamp blog and websites)
- Finish writing my big list of Books and get going on some DREAM books!
- Publish books on Amazon.
- ~~Set up shopping cart for all of my books and products.~~
 - o Update shopping cart with all of my books and products.
- Take Photography Classes
- Take Pottery Classes and make some.
- Make printed copies of the trips we have taken, each child's childhood, through the years, the wedding, baby pics, and even my wedding pics. (photo books) Make copies for the whole family.
- Begin a Fitness Membership Site/App.
- Begin a Business/Ministry Membership Site.
- Get Personal Trainer and ~~Nutritionist Certification.~~
- Buy and begin a fitness/business/life bootcamp on my dream property.
- Finish my studio and begin CindyRushton.tv
- Set up TV/Radio/Internet Network
- Set up Mastermind Group and Yearly Retreats around the world.

I hope that your list is as long or LONGER :) than mine AND that it continues to grow through the years.

Want to reach for your dreams?

2. KNOW WHO YOU ARE!

Who are you? WHO ARE YOU? Sure, you may have great resolutions but we are going to get past resolutions today. (Wink) Sure, you may have your dreams. Sure, you may have lots and lots of ideas floating around in your mind. Sure, you have many, many options of things that you can do with your life--days, months, years--life! BUT, if you do not pull back to really get to know who you are, you will not have clarity of which way to go or what to do first. You will get stuck.

Getaway, pull back, press in to the Holy Spirit, and get to know who you are.

So many pull back and study publishing, marketing, trends--but, want to set yourself apart? Want to get on track for great success? Want to know what you really need to be all about right now? Want to know what you need to focus upon right now? Want to know what your next project should be? This is where you begin. Take time to get to know who you are, what you are to be all about, your message for the world.

Who are you? How do you know?

What do you know? Enough to be an authority. Enough to share great content. Enough to have contacts/relationships in that field.

Any special abilities?

Any special knowledge?

What do you love?

Your passion? Your compassion? Your heartbeat? Your hobbies? Your job?

What are your gifts?

Your talents?

Your bents?

Your interests?

What is your message/topic?

Your favorite topic?

Your heartbeat?

Your most pressing topic--your heart cry?

The topic that everyone asks YOU about?

What do people NEED/WANT?

What questions are they asking?

What is missing?

What do people ask you?

What are YOU all about?

Visions/goals/dreams/heartbeats/calling/experiences/ purpose?

What trials/struggles have you overcome?

In what have you succeeded where others have failed?

What is in your library--at home/on the computer? What do YOU love learning?

What is your dream?

What is that “maybe” you have put on the shelf?

What is your LIFE message?

What is your LIFE purpose?

Sweet friend, you MUST start here

...or you will LOSE YOURSELF

...you will bounce around from one thing to another thing to another thing.

...what you do will just be stuff--no power, no anointing,

...you won't have focus

...you will just sit "spinning your wheels"

...you will get stuck and have a hard time getting moving again

...you won't have focus

...who won't get things done!

I know that you

...Want to make your life count!

...You want to produce the best products available!

...You want a business filled with the best products available.

...You want to be productive, prolific, and very, very successful.

So start here! Take time to pull back, get to know who you are and what you are going to be all about. Dare to be yourself. Don't try to compete with others. Don't try to keep up with others. Be yourself. Go your pace.

Be yourself in all areas--

Your Message--Share your message! Don't follow trends, Keep your message before you at all times--clear to the world, as the foundation of your business/ministry

Your Business--Make your business all about you--not the concepts, not the techniques for delivery, not the ideas--these can all be a duplicated. But YOU are original! YOU cannot be duplicated! Only YOU can be you! Build your business around you--then, there is NO competition. No competition can deliver you. You will always be on the cutting edge. You will be established firmly.

DANGER: Design around a topic--topics go in and out. People lose interest in topics. Build your business around you and they will keep up with YOU. Build your business around YOU!

Your LIFESTYLE! Live your dream! NOW! LIVE IT! Don't put LIVING on hold! No matter what you do--the world wants the real YOU. They want to see YOUR LIFE, what works FOR YOU, what you really do.

Be yourself. Build your name. Build your business. It all starts with the foundation--getting to know YOU.

That brings me to the next thing that will help you to reach for your dream...

Get a clear vision!

Yes!

A CLEAR VISION!

Now, we are going to really unpack this one in the next section, but I want to mention this here because without a clear vision, we will NEVER move forward. We will never reach for our dreams.

Someone once said, "A person without a vision will always return to their past."

That means in EVERY area:

Weight loss

When getting out of debt

Trying to clean and organize the house

Building a marriage

Building a godly home

Homeschooling

In business

In ministry.

This is one of the key reasons that I believe so many of my clients really struggle--

They cannot SEE themselves as God sees them—in marriage, as a parent, as a writer, as a speaker, as a minister, as an entrepreneur, as a person in business—and they act like it!

You see it in their faith

You see it on their websites

You can see it on their schedules

You can see it in their bank accounts

You see it on their LIFE LIST

Don't have a vision, you will always go back to what is familiar--what you can see. You have to see it. Let's look at Scripture...

Proverbs 22:18 says, "Without a vision, people perish."

Perish means:

- Die (you will die on the inside/die to your dream!)
- Dry up
- Fizzle out
- Burn up
- Burn out
- Just exist
- Just survive--not thrive!

My friend, Satan knows this! He LOVES to steal and kill and destroy nothing more than our dreams and goals and life purpose. He WILL discourage you. He will send dream killers and dream stealers along our way. He will set up obstacles, hindrances, distractions, chaos, interruptions if they will hold us back. He wants for you to think that it will never happen or that it is not going to happen for you or that it is not even for you. He wants for you to think that you are never good enough or worthy.

So what do you do? **Get a vision, a clear vision! We need a vision, a clear vision.**

If you cannot see what you want, you will not be able to get where you want to go. You must see it. Wondering--how can you see it if you are not there yet? You see it by vision--by faith. It has to be on your heart. You have to press toward that mark. Here are some questions to ask yourself:

What is it that you really want?

What do you want for your life to be like?

How is it different from how things are today?

What will it take to get there?

What do you need to bring into your life?

What do you need to get out of your life so you have space to get what you really want into your life?

Really take some time to think these things out.

There are only 24 hours a day. You cannot do everything. That is not all you need to know. Also, you must balance everything that you are to do. Take the first step--it is a biggie—get a vision. Get the vision. Write the vision (Habakkuk 2). Make it plain so you can read it while you run.

4. Set goals that get you set!

Peek at a couple verses with me--

Look up Ephesians 5: 3...it says that the dream comes by much hard work. What does that mean to you?

Look up Genesis 11:6 "Nothing that they plan to do will be impossible for them." One version says, "Nothing that they IMAGINE will be impossible for them." What is standing out to you?

This is not saying that planning is unbiblical--instead that it is key to reaching for the impossible. Just imagine what we can do **WITH GOD!**

Stick with me...many people have dreams. Many people can even see it. BUT! This is the pivotal step. This is where you roll up your sleeves and get a plan for making it happen. This is what separates the **WISHES and RESOLUTIONS** from living it...making history! Take time to get it all out of your head and on paper! (Brain-Dump)

Brainstorm all that needs to be done to reach for your dream.

Brainstorm all of the to-do's.

Take time to brain-dump. Put it on your calendar. Take time to plan your year. Take time to plan your project. Take time to develop checklists and to-do's. Evaluate all along the way (monthly, weekly, daily!). Take time to stay on track. Take time to get it done. Be productive all year long. This is how you reach for ultimate productivity.

The time that you spend in planning will help you tremendously--

- With focus
- With clarity
- With your pace
- With re-purposing! (you will have systems in place that help you to be more prolific with the ideas that you are developing)
- With balancing everything!

Take time to plan! Heard this already? Want ultimate productivity? You must get away and plan! When you plan, you plan to reach for your dreams!!

5. Get Unstuck, Get Moving, and Get it DONE!

Very rarely do I get to a place where I am stuck, paralyzed, and just cannot get moving again.

However, when I am in that place called, “Stuck” I have more excuses and exceptions that I care to admit. Little obstacles, distractions, chaos, and interruptions derail me. That is the time that it seems that if I take one step, I get clobbered and stuck again. Again, this is rare for me, but it has happened every time that I have been at a crossroads in my life.

What do you do?

- **Getaway with God and Get a Plan.** Exactly! Exactly what we are doing during this challenge. In fact, this is one of the purposes behind this whole challenge. Getaway with God. Turn Him loose to "clear the table" of anything He does not want in your life--or any ways He doesn't want you doing things. LISTEN to Him--let Him speak, teach, guide, direct you. Get HIS plan. Get on with it.

Listen to this passage from Ephesians 4 (The Message)

...I want you to get out there and walk—better yet, run!—on the road God called you to travel. I don't want any of you sitting around on your hands. I don't want anyone strolling off, down some path that goes nowhere. And mark that you do this with humility and discipline—not in fits and starts, but steadily, pouring yourselves out for each other in acts of love, alert at noticing differences and quick at mending fences. You were all called to travel on the same road and in the same direction, so stay together, both outwardly and inwardly.

- **KNOW WHY YOU DO NOT GET AROUND TO IT...** What is going on?
 - Making excuses? (Perfectionism, Don't have enough money, don't have enough time, don't know how, not sure if anyone would want it, on and on....)
 - Doing everything else and waiting to do this last?
 - Procrastination? Do it later when circumstances are perfect.
 - Too Busy?
 - Waiting until perfection--of circumstances, of life, of finances, of time, of relationships.....
 - Guilty when you work on what you love?
 - No time?
 - Or...did something else pop into your mind?

If you want to get things done, you have GOT to do some serious heart surgery--KNOW why you are not getting around to doing what really matters to you.

That's not all...

6. KNOW and STICK TO *YOUR* PRIORITIES!

We all face a million options for how we spend our days, weeks, months, years, and lives. The difference in those who get things done and those who end each and every year disappointed usually has one pivotal difference--yep, priorities. OH! We may all know our priorities, but there is so much more--we need to live them and stick to them.

BUT...HOW DO YOU DO THAT?

1. Go back to point one--your foundation--who are YOU? What are you to be all about?
2. Next, what needs to be in each day? What are you supposed to do each day? What is the main thing?
3. Set up your day around your priorities. Plan them in first! Pull back, look at your day--set your schedule up around what you are supposed to be all about--what you need to do each day--your main thing. Ask--what is included in my perfect day. What must I do each day? What can you and only you do?

4. THEN, IF you have room (time and energy) for extras, fit in those around your priorities. But, want to know what usually happens? We get picky and we let those "extras" go! Of course, if we don't take the time to really evaluate what our priorities are supposed to be, we will do those extras that don't count and not have room for what really matters. What extras fit with your priorities?

Get to know your priorities. Set up your day around your priorities first. Then, stick to your priorities. See if you don't get more things done that really matter.

Make time for all you do--for what is important to you!

Family

Business

Homeschool

Homemaking

Extras

YOU!

Don't procrastinate. Set very strict limits. Pace yourself. Balance. Today is the day to really get a good look at your day, week, month, year, life. Make sure that what you do really counts. Make time for what really matters.

7. Prune—Ruthlessly Prune.

Continuing on that thought, but getting deeper. There are going to be things that you think are your priorities. But, maybe those things are dragging you down and zapping you. Maybe those good things are hindering you from getting around to what really matters.

If so....

It is time to prune.

Prune—pruning brings bigger fruit, better fruit and more nutritious fruit.

8. Embrace the season.

This can be a big culprit behind many of us getting stuck. I have gone through several seasons with my business and ministry. Every time I hit a new season, I have to purposefully embrace the season or I get stuck. Seasons come and seasons go. Embrace the season. Be willing to say goodbye to the old--sweet things, but there are sweeter in the next season! Embrace the new thing, the new place, the new normal.

9. Remove OBSTACLES!

What is holding you back? WHY?

Letting something stand in your way? Get over it. Got reasons? Well, "excuses" for not doing it. Get moving. Don't have something? Get it (running shoes, scales, help (trainer, coach, DVDs), pedometer, plan? Need to let go of something? Let go. Get rid of any and all obstacles.

10. Get the Vision and STAY FOCUSED on the mark!

Turn to Hebrews 12: 1-3. Copy it in your favorite version here:

Here it is from ***The Amplified Bible***:

THEREFORE THEN, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses [who have borne testimony to the Truth], let us strip off and throw aside every encumbrance (unnecessary weight) and that sin which so readily (deftly and cleverly) clings to and entangles us, and let us run with patient endurance and steady and active persistence the appointed course of the race that is set before us, Looking away [from all that will distract] to Jesus, Who is the Leader and the Source of our faith [giving the first incentive for our belief] and is also its Finisher [bringing it to maturity and perfection]. He, for the joy [of obtaining the prize] that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising and ignoring the shame, and is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Just think of Him Who endured from sinners such grievous opposition and bitter

hostility against Himself [reckon up and consider it all in comparison with your trials], so that you may not grow weary or exhausted, losing heart and relaxing and fainting in your minds.

Here it is from *The Message Bible*:

Do you see what this means—all these pioneers who blazed the way, all these veterans cheering us on? It means we'd better get on with it. Strip down, start running—and never quit! No extra spiritual fat, no parasitic sins. Keep your eyes on Jesus, who both began and finished this race we're in. Study how he did it. Because he never lost sight of where he was headed—that exhilarating finish in and with God—he could put up with anything along the way: Cross, shame, whatever. And now he's there, in the place of honor, right alongside God. When you find yourselves flagging in your faith, go over that story again, item by item, that long litany of hostility he plowed through. That will shoot adrenaline into your souls!

Again, vision is sooo vital. I will be talking more about it in the next session. But, for now, if we want to get unstuck or if we do not want to get stuck, we must get the vision and see clearly what God wants for us to move toward. We must stay focused on the mark--we must keep our eyes on Jesus! If we get into a place where we are stuck, we need to check to see if we have somewhere along the way got our eyes off of Jesus and onto something else!

11. Still not clear? Go back to What You DO KNOW!

Your call, current “To-Do's,” heartbeat, heartaches, heart cry, dreams.

12. Set Your Pace and Run Your Race.

Several years ago, I began to run. I had dreamed about running, but I was horribly out of shape. In fact, I was battling with a very bad back injury. My workouts were with the purpose of getting back in good enough shape to stand, walk, and function on a basic level, but something in me was dreaming about running.

Well, one day I decided to just try to run a few steps. I did it. Then, I decided to try to run a few more steps. I did it. Imagine my delight when I kept on until I finished my “walk” that night. I was hooked. As I began running, my pace was barely more than a bounce. However, I was doing it. I was running MY way. It made me so proud. It was my pace, my race.

There is such a great application for how we can plan our day, our month, our year, our life. There is such a great application for how we step into the things that God has called us to do and do it the way He wants for us to do it. So, how do we do it?

1. Get up and get started with that very first step.

2. Check your pulse—regularly. If you are pushing it to the point of danger, you are must slow down to your pace. If you go “your pace,” it is going to be “just right.” Sure, you will be stimulated and pushed out of your comfort zone. However, it is not going to push you beyond what you are ready to do. It is not going to be too much. It is not going to hurt you. Watch your pulse.

3. Get your own rhythm. We are all so very individual. We each have a rhythm. Don’t look around to see what everyone else is doing. Rather, get out there and find your own rhythm. You can trust yourself profoundly.

4. Keep it Steady! This is the secret to “running your race” well. In running, the inexperienced have an enthusiasm that can get them in trouble. In “running the race of life” we are no different. As you find your rhythm and keep an eye on your pulse, you can find a “steady” pace that can keep you “in the race” for the long-haul. Keep it steady.

5. NO Unreasonable Goals. Running is only possible when one sets reasonable goals. The good news is that running can give daily goals and, in turn, daily successes. The bad news is that if we set impossible goals, running reveals them immediately. Life is the same. We can push it for a “few miles” but it will catch up. Be aware of goals. Evaluate them daily. Make a commitment to reach for reasonable goals that help you consistently reach toward the mark.

6. Get rid of all that hinders and distracts you. A runner has to be on guard for any hindrances and distractions. A race can be run with obstacles, weights, and chains; however, the race is much more difficult and encumbering. The wise runner prepares for obstacles. The wise runner strips away all weights and chains that would inhibit them. Get rid of those things that are hindering or distracting you from running your race.

7. Don't look around at others. There is wisdom in surrounding yourself with great people. Proverbs 11:14, Proverbs 15:22, and Proverbs 24:6 remind us that where there is no counsel or a lack of counsel, plans fail. They also remind us that where there are many counselors or advisors we find success and safety. With this said, Romans 12: 1-2 reminds us that we cannot conform to others, only Jesus. That is the only way we will know the way to go. That is the only way we will know the perfect will of God for us and

our lives. Don't look around at others. Fix your eyes upon Jesus. Study how he did things.

8. When it hurts, slow down. This sounds obvious however there is something in each of us that has a tendency to "push it" and end up with a big problem. That is where we get hurt. Recovery takes much longer than running a steady pace or slowing down for a bit. Long-term injuries take even longer. Slowing down when it gets painful may be frustrating, but we are in this for long-term. We are in this to finish well.

9. Never, ever quit. You may slow down. You may even sit for a bit. However, don't quit. Each step counts. Each step gets you closer and closer to the mark. Find your pace and don't stop moving.

10. Press toward the Mark. The "Mark" is your high calling. Only you can get there. Only you can run your race. So, run your race your pace. Press toward the mark.

Your race is set before you. How is your pace?

What can you do to run your race, your pace?

Remove LIMITS!

This is the year to remove all limits that have been holding you back. No more lids. No more limitations. With God, all things are possible. With God, there are no more limits, limitations, lids. I don't know what may have been holding you back from reaching for your dreams, but it is time to dig deep and be real honest.

It is time to get unstuck, get moving, and get it done! This is the year to reach for your dreams. Just ask yourself today (not December 31st) how you feel about this year?

Is it what you wanted for it to be--what are your thoughts?

Is it another year that disappoints and discourages you—what is making it feel that way?

Is it another year that you have a big list of resolutions that are not met? Well, enough of that! It is time to get out of your own way, get over YOUR obstacles, and get moving toward your goals and dreams. You will never be the same again!

That brings me to the next thing that will help you reach for your dreams this next year...

Clean out, revamp, restructure.

There are a couple main times of my life that God has brought me to a place of pruning. Funny, it has been with new seasons of my life. This year, He has pulled out the pruning shears with a vengeance. I am so glad that I knew what He was doing this time and that I could trust Him as He cut away some of my favorite “branches” to my life. Hear the snips in your life? What is He “cutting away” this year for you?

Are you scared to let God prune those things you have loved—what are you feeling?

Is it time for Him to get loose in your life? How have you been holding Him back?

Well, if you are ready to get moving toward your goals and dreams, the answer must be, "Yes, Lord!" or it is not going to happen. This is the perfect time of year to clean out, revamp, and restructure. We have already worked through much, but have you worked through all of the troublespots?

Clean out:

1. Stuff
2. Activities
3. Commitments
4. Brain clutter
5. Undone things
6. Things past their season
7. Other:

Invest in yourself!

Have a hard time with this? I completely relate. I am learning this lesson myself. This is the hardest thing for me. Sweet friends, if there is an “Achilles heel” for me, this is it! In fact, I have been chewing on one video segment from my daughter all fall. She said that I was a success because it involves others, not myself. She said that I was a success as a mom because it was always about my children. She said that I was a success as a homeschooler because it was all about my children and the families who I help to homeschool. She said that I was a success in business, not because my name was on the books or audio sets, but because it was always about those I reach and minister to. Then, she said the one thing that I really struggled with—that I was a failure at taking care of myself because it had to be all about me. UGH! Relate? How do you relate?

Maybe you have been taught, just like me, that taking care of yourself is worldly, selfish, and ungodly. Well, that teaching is dangerous and unbiblical. It keeps us from stepping up to our call. Yes, we may accomplish some things, but we will set limits that hold us back from reaching our life purpose and living our dreams. We can do all of the other things perfectly, but miss this one and we will not live the life that God has called us to live. This has been a big lesson for me.

1. Get rest.
2. Take time with God to let Him fill your cup back up.
3. Take time for solitude.
4. Take time to learn - Bible study...good, solid teaching...learning new things.
5. Take care of your body - Rest (again!), fuel up with good healthy foods and water, strengthen up (we all need a good, balanced program--strength training, cardio, stretching, calisthenics), stay active (set goals and reach for them--5K, 10K, Half,

Whole...Play with family...go see spots...make memories), take good care of yourself, invest in yourself (it is not an extra, it is essential).

How are you doing with this? Are you taking good care of yourself?

What are some ways that you can invest in yourself?

And finally...

Press toward the mark!

This past year I accomplished one of my “impossible” dreams. Actually, I did it twice and plan to try one more time as I run press toward the mark! This past year I accomplished one of my “impossible” dreams. Actually, I did it twice and plan to try one more time as I run into the new year. Yes, it was running. I ran my first 5K on New Year’s Eve. Actually, it began 15 minutes before midnight and we ran out of the old year and into the New Year. As I neared the finish line, tears came flooding down my face. I had dared to dream, found the race to train for, set daily goals to train up, pressed past my hindrances, obstacles and excuses, got moving, and then pressed toward the mark. It was step-by-step. I finished. I finished well. And, found myself not just meeting my dream once, but I am now setting higher dreams (on my calendar). There is nothing like it! I don’t know what your dream is, but they are all the same—it is the same process to reach for them. It doesn’t matter if they are little dreams that you can do today if you carve out time to go for it or if they are going to take a lot of work and a lot of investment on your behalf. It is the same process. And, it takes getting your eyes set on the mark and pressing toward that mark. So, what is your dream? Write it out:

What do you want for your life next year?

When all is said and done, what do you want to look back upon?

Just when do you plan to get moving and make it happen? Need some help?

Get a Vision!

"A person without a vision will always return to their past."

I have thought A LOT about that quote for some time now. Think about it...

"A person without a vision will always return to their past."

That means in EVERY area:

- Weight loss
- When getting out of debt
- Trying to clean and organize the house
- Building a marriage
- Building a godly home
- Business and ministry
 - Writing that book
 - Producing that product
 - Working your business
 - Marketing your products
 - On and on.

"A person without a vision will always return to their past."

Don't have a vision, you will always go back to what is familiar--what you can see. You have to be able to see it. This is one of the key reasons that I believe so many of my clients really struggle--

They cannot see themselves as a writer, speaker, entrepreneur, or person in business. And they act like it. You see it on their websites, their schedules, their bank accounts,

We all need a very clear vision. Without a clear vision, we will always go back to what is familiar--what we can see. We have to see it!

Proverbs 22:18... "Without a vision, people perish."

Perish means:

- Die (you will die on the inside/die to your dream!)
- Dry up
- Fizzle out

- Burn up
- Burn out
- Just exist
- Just survive--not thrive!

Satan knows this. He loves to steal and kill and destroy nothing more than our dreams and goals and life purpose. He will discourage. He will send dream killers and dream stealers along our way. He will set up obstacles, hindrances, distractions, chaos, interruptions if they will hold us back. He wants for you to think that it will never happen or that it is not going to happen for you or that it is not even for you. He wants for you to think that you are never good enough or worthy. This is one reason that he is constantly trying to distract you and blur your vision.

What is blurring your vision?

- Needing desperately to getaway with God?
- Too Busy?
- Fear?
- Perfectionism?
- Procrastination?
- Tired and weary?
- Overburdened--need to lighten the load?
- Lack of direction?
- Laziness?
- Distractions, hindrances, interruptions, constant chaos and crisis situations?
- Insecurity?
- Looking back?
- Not letting go of something--good or bad???
- Dream killers?
- Pride?
- Negativity--inside of you, from others, from the devil?
- Personal limits/lids?
- Sin?
- Need to rest?
- Pushing limits?
- Comparisons?
- Something else?

Is it time to "clean your glasses" or "clean your windows" so you can get your vision? Satan loves to blur your vision.

So what do you do?

- **Seek to see through God's eyes.** His vision. His will. His way. His perspective. My friend, seek to look through His eyes. Just think of how He sees--detailed, but big and vast. God has got this! A few years ago I heard Him ask me, "Cindy, if you could see through my eyes and know that everything works out for your "good," would this hurt you and bother you like this?" My answer was a most definite, "No." I have had so many situations that were very, very difficult. He has always brought me through them. He has always turned bad situations into very good resolutions. He has always turned my mourning into dancing. He has always turned my ashes into gladness and beauty. Today, ask Him what He sees. What is His answer?

- **Get the vision.** We have talked about this already, but do you have a clear vision? Getaway with God and get the vision. Write the Vision. Create a Vision Board--to keep it before you. Share with your family, friends--so they can hold you accountable.

God has a vision. He knows exactly what you are called to do. He knows the next project you should work on. He knows how to make your business a success. He knows. We can trust Him. And, if you will seek Him, He will show you what you need all along the way.

Vision is necessary. If you cannot see what you want, you will not be able to get where you want to go. You must see it. Wondering--how can you see it if you are not there yet? You see it by vision--by faith. It has to be on your heart. You have to press toward that mark. Here are some questions to ask yourself: What is it that you really want?

What do you want for your life to be like?

How is it different from your life right now?

What will it take to get there?

What do you need to bring into your life?

What do you need to get out of your life?

- **Keep Your Eyes on Jesus--He WILL show you the way.** All along the way. He will show you how to do what you need to do. He will direct you even in those dark times where you cannot see the way. He will keep you from straying off the path--so common for those in business!
- **Create a Vision Board/Vision Notebook.** God always gives His people "Vision boards." Just look at the life of Abraham (it is neat!):

1. Abraham, 75 years old, was called to leave his people and go where God would send him. He was not given a name, a place, a picture. He went as far as he could go without sight--then, look in Genesis 12: 6-8--he built an **altar**, a place of worship--a place for God to give him vision. And God did...

2. God told him to **walk the land** (Genesis 13:17). Talk about a vision board. He was to see the land that he and his descendants would possess. NOTE--there was not even one child. There was not a promise of one child. It was the beginning of the vision for Abraham's life and life purpose! Stick with me...

3. Up until this time, Abraham was holding on to Lot (his nephew and heir). But, God brought him to a place where he had to let go of what was holding him back--we have to get to a place where we will let go of anything or anyone who holds us back so we can believe God for the impossible. Here God brought Abraham to a place of believing him for the impossible. I love that Genesis 13:18 says that Abraham moved near the **trees**--where he had built his altar (and had met God). Remember that quote: "A person without a vision will always return to their past." This was a good place for him! He went back to the place where he had heard from God. Watch what God does there!

4. Genesis 15: 1, God came to Abraham in the form of a vision (got to love this!). Verse 5--the ultimate vision board—**stars**. (He could see them every night. Or, every morning if you get up that early. Ha!). Plus, God cut covenant in Genesis 15--another vision board that came with a personal commitment from God--and, God is a covenant God, meaning that it must come true.

5. Of course, Abraham and Sarah were human--they bombed. They got out in their flesh, (Genesis 16) scheming things to do to help God out. We have to really watch out for flesh--it never works. They still did not get it--remember "A person without a vision will always return to their past." They were operating in what they saw in their culture not in faith--not in the vision that God had gave them. So, that brings us to another visual--another vision board

6. Yep, in Genesis 17 we see another visual--pardon the "visual" with this, but this is one God gave Abraham and his household--***circumcision***. An everlasting covenant--cutting away the flesh. And, here, look at what God says here--it is very, very specific: A child, with a name (Isaac). This is when Abraham was 99, 24 years of walking with God. Look at the clarity of this vision in Genesis 17: 1-27.

7. Then, look at the next one--near the ***great trees*** of Mamre (Genesis 18:1, Genesis 21: 1-7) God gives a specific date--the appointed time. (peek at Habakkuk 2: 2)

8. Oh! And, the ultimate vision! Chapter 22, as Abraham's faith is tested--he went to Mt. Moriah and built an altar for his sacrifice (Isaac). Look what God does there--He gives a vision and with ultimate vision boards--***the stars in the sky and "as sand on the seashore"***—symbolizing children (descendants) and that is not all, symbolizing what they will possess (cities of their enemies) and influence (All nations will be blessed through His offspring because He obeyed God). (vs. 17-18)

OK! All of that to encourage you that yes, we need to set the vision before us so we can see it.

Create a "Vision Notebook" or you can look online and see examples of neat Vision Boards. What do you do? Put that vision before you so you can see it and so you can see it all along the way. Add pictures of that marathon, describe that business, brain-dump that book (the chapters, outlines, etc), cut out a picture of that furniture, cabinets, house, car. This will radically change your year.

Next....If you want to clarify your vision....

- **Find YOUR Secrets to Staying Focused.**

Anybody else battle with distractions and interruptions? Do you want to stick to the things that are on your heart, yet realistically battle with staying focused?

Oh! I TOTALLY relate! In fact, the past few months, my heart-cry has been to stay focused. Everywhere I have turned, I have heard messages on staying focused...saw articles on being focused...and talked with my friends about being focused. As a result, I have found a few great secrets that have really helped me to stay focused on the most

important things in my life and get more done at the same time. Want to know those secrets? Well, let's dig in...

- **BEGIN EACH DAY WITH A QUIET TIME...** I know what you just thought..."But! Cindy, that gets me off track for the day!" Oh! Beloved, nothing can help to focus on the real plan for the day, the best opportunities, and the most important. Actually, on those days that I am very, very tempted to skimp on my Quiet Time, I actually find that I am better prepared for the day that bombards me just moments later. Maybe it is the fresh perspective. Maybe it is renewal of my heart and mind. Maybe it is slowing down to remember to choose the best in everything for that day. Whatever, I never lose by taking time to let God fill my cup first thing each day. Want a great secret to staying focused this year? Begin each day with the best tool for getting focused—a Daily Quiet Time.

Make it easy!

Begin with Daily Bible Reading. Begin with just reading 5 minutes...or in 10 you can usually read through the Bible in a Year using any program. Just 10 minutes a day!

Choose a plan—one that will get you in the Word and not frustrate you. And...while you are choosing, choose a new Bible. Each year I choose a different version for Daily Bible Reading. Talk about a huge difference! I have been a Christian for 44 years. One of my frustrations (now this is being honest) with Daily Bible Reading is that I found myself skipping over certain passages that I *thought* I knew. Oh! Struggle with that too? Well, why not try a new version this year? It will make words jump out and seize you! It will make those stories come alive! Last year, I chose to read through **THE MESSAGE** version of the Bible. It was super. It made such a difference in making God's Word come alive that I decided to choose another version for my Daily Bible Reading this year. Just begin! Don't beat yourself up if you miss a day. Instead just dig in and let God talk to you. He will.

As you begin with your Daily Bible Reading, keep a journal close by. Each day, jot down your favorite verse from the day in your journal. I love that this one discipline helps me to stay focused and tuned in for the study, but it does more... I am amazed that almost every day someone comes across my path who needs the Words that God gives me during my Quiet Times. Give it a try. The Word will stick to your brain and be on the tip of your tongue. Plus, it will keep you focused each day on the most important things. Give it a try.

Finally, during your quiet time, read the Bible, copy a verse that jumps out at you, and take some time to just pour out your heart to God and listen to Him before jumping into your day. He wants for you to come to Him and pour out your heart. He doesn't want for you to walk through your journey by yourself. He delights in being there with you communing with you along the way. Begin each day with some time with Him...you will be amazed at how much more you will accomplish and how focused you will be each day!

- **WRITE IT ALL DOWN...**

Another secret! Actually, this one needs to become a lifestyle thing. Let me explain! I remember the first year I created a Vision Board. I began that New Year with a bit of frustration. I had so many dreams...so many desires...so many goals...so many to-do's. In fact, I had set those dreams, desires, goals, to-do's for many years. Each year, I would dreamily resolve to "go for it" yet again. And...again the next year. Know what I mean?

Well, I was finally at a point that I wanted a year of change. Looking back, this was one single factor that really made the difference. This one thing made a world of difference for me every year since then. Want my secret?

I took some time during the last week of the year to just brainstorm anything and everything that I really wanted to do and accomplish. Oh! You should see the poor journal that housed those dreams, desires, goals, and to-do's--such a treasure as I look back and see all of the amazing things that were done as a result of just writing it all down and then working it. I just kicked back and spent the time to get everything out of my brain and into the journal. When I woke up in the middle of the night and something was on my brain, I got up and wrote it down. I kept the journal close for the whole week. I wrote out everything--the little things that I just could not find time to get wrapped up, the projects that seemed to never fit into my schedule, the business goals that I had, the financial goals (including how much money I owed on my debts--remember that year my attack year on my debts and I ended the year with ALL of them paid off!!! WOoohooo!), the dreams that just seemed a bit out of reach.

I wrote down everything that came across my mind. I compiled them in the journal as to-do lists for different areas of life. The financial page listed each bill I owed with the amount I owed. For my writing goals, I listed books I wanted to finish and project ideas that were on my heart. I even wrote out my dreams for an online radio show--

YEP! That far-fetched dream became reality as I began Mom-to-Mom Radio Show in January of 2006. Only a dream. Just needed focus!

Want to know the fun part about this? I reached ALL of my dreams, desires, goals, and to-do's that I wrote down in January by May. Yes, you read that correctly—BY MAY! I had to sit down and begin a new journal then with the same format, except I was much more bold in my dreams, desires, goals, and to-do's. Of all of the years of my life, 2006 was record-breaking. As a family, we reached for greater things and grasped onto them. We dared to go for all of the “impossible” things with focus and determination. It made all of the difference in the world to have it all written down. To mark off each accomplishment was priceless. Yep! This was another secret for staying focused.

Since then, this has become a major part of my life. I saw such a change in my personal productivity that I made this a lifestyle. I regularly pull back for a getaway to really go over my “little black book” and see what has been done, what is yet to be done, and add more dreams and desires to the list. It makes a world of difference for me. But, that is not all, I also take that notebook out each month and each week to dig out any projects that need to be written into my calendar. Those things to do are part of my weekly things to do. Now, they are no longer wishes or dreams, but they are books, projects, and accomplishments that are my HISTORY.

Want that? Why not try it right now and see how it works for you? I think you will love it.

- **USE A DAILY TO-DO LIST...**

A few years ago, I read a book with my children for a homeschool unit study we pursued during the last four years of my son's school years. I know, I know. It was a study that took on a life of its own. It began with a simple biography about a great businessman. We continued through as many biographies as we could find.

What's the point? Oh! This is a good one!

We read one book about Mary Kay. You always learn so much when digging into the lives of others. One of the life-changing things that I learned from her life was from one thing that she attributed to her success—her daily to-do list. **Daily, she kept a list of 5 things to do for the day.** Each day the list changed. She wouldn't list the impossible. She just plugged away each day on 5 vital things for that day.

I pondered that for a while. I knew that my biggest struggle was having bigger plans than I have hours to work on them. I decided to **pray for my daily “5 things” for the day each and every day.**

Talk about a great secret for getting and staying focused!

First, it keeps us from going day-after-day never getting “anything” done. You know that feeling? It comes from a lack of purpose and direction. Keeping a journal with all of the stuff on your heart for the year is great. Then, we can look at our daily to-do’s and add those other things into that list of five things. I try to add one thing per day from my journal, even if it is a little thing. Of course, there are days that I have to be realistic and limit myself to the demands of the day. I am ok with that when I have hope that I will not put off the heartbeats for years to come. Adding them into my “5 things” regularly helps. Also, on those days that I am blank or that I happen to have some extra time to myself, I go through my journal and work through some of the simple tasks that I can attack. It works great.

Oh! On those days that I have 25 things to choose from...you know that those days pop up constantly, don’t you? Well, on those days, I write all of them down on a Post-it Note. As I look at my day, I jot down my top five essentials for the day from that list. If things go better than planned, I always have the others to keep on working on. But, this helps me to be sure that I begin plugging away on the things that need to get done to finish up things as soon as I can. It clears my brain and keeps me focused on working my plan. It helps me to accomplish much each day. And...keeps me focused all year long. I don’t get overwhelmed as easily. I don’t miss big things or let big things pile up any more. Give it a try! This year will be your best year yet!

- **SURROUND YOURSELF WITH GREAT (FOCUSED) PEOPLE...**

I don’t know about you, but I really grasp for more in life when I have a big dose of encouragement and inspiration. Nothing fires me up more than people who are focused on going for all that God has in store for them. I just love their passion for success. They challenge me to keep growing, keep moving, keep grasping for my dreams. They inspire me to step out there and trust God for those impossible things that intimidate me. They keep my brain turning and fresh. They spur me to reach for the very, very best!

Do I sound blessed? Did you just “wish” you had others like this? Have you written yourself off?

Oh! Beloved! I am not advocating that you scrap your friends and family. Rather, I want to encourage you to ask the Lord to show you those that can step into the gap there. Ask God to show you opportunities this year to surround yourself with great people.

Years ago, one of my friends told me that great people are only as great as those that they surround themselves with. Talk about inspiring me. Well, she went one step forward—she said that a mediocre person could become great by surrounding themselves with the very best people in all areas of their lives. I have pondered that since she said it. It is so true!

I have endeavored to surround myself with great people. They are everywhere. I am not special. You have them around you too.

We live in a complicated culture. Whereas, life is not simple like the lifestyle our grandparents had where they could learn from others while sitting on the front porch sipping tea and chatting (yep, I am from the South! WINK), they also did not have access to so much at their fingertips. We have the internet. We have books, audios and media.

Take time to get to know others. Take time to learn from others. You would probably be surprised at what is deep inside of those surrounding you. I want to know the greatness hidden inside of those surrounding me. Everyone has something great in there. Digging into their greatness instills greatness in me and challenges them to reach for more greatness. It makes the most of our time together.

Of course, those people are the ones that I am around “in person” in my life. But, I also have some choices with my free time. I can surround myself with great people through books, online classes, audios, videos, and other methods of study. I plug into great people regularly who are reaching for the best. They inspire me. They fire me up! They keep me growing!

Want to get and stay focused? Those that surround you can make or break you. Surround yourself with focused people.

How can you make an intentional effort to connect with others?

- **GET RID OF ALL HINDRANCES...** Fight the urge to stray. Anybody sitting there and thinking of all of the reasons that you cannot do one thing I have taught here... You have little ones (or for many our age--parents) that constantly interrupt you... You don't have TIME or you don't have much of YOU left when you do have time... You have too much to do each day to write down your list in a journal... You don't have any money for a journal... Your day is so full of things wrapped around the children that you could never plan for "5 to-do's" each day... Email, offers on the internet, chat on the internet, social networking, church, family, friends... Those around you are your struggle and your problem,

Oh, beloved! I do understand. I have hindrances that raise up in front of me as soon as I try to move forward as well. We are not alone. Take a peek at Hebrews 12: 1-2. Copy it here:

I love it in ***The Message***:

Do you see what this means—all these pioneers who blazed the way, all these veterans cheering us on? It means we'd better get on with it. Strip down, start running—and never quit! No extra spiritual fat, no parasitic sins. Keep your eyes on Jesus, who both began and finished this race we're in. Study how he did it. Because he never lost sight of where he was headed—that exhilarating finish in and with God—he could put up with anything along the way: Cross, shame, whatever. And now he's there, in the place of honor, right alongside God. When you find yourselves flagging in

your faith, go over that story again, item by item, that long litany of hostility he plowed through. That will shoot adrenaline into your souls!

This passage really fires me up! It was one of my key verses. It follows the chapter reminding us of the great men and women of faith throughout Scripture. Then, continues in this passage telling us what it is all there for--to remind us to lay aside every encumbrance, the sin that so easily entangles us, get busy running the race, staying focused on Jesus and HOW HE ran the race. It is SO good.

It doesn't tell us that our circumstances will be ideal. It doesn't tell us that everyone around us will "get it" and support us or get on board with us. It doesn't tell us to change those around us. It simply reminds us to get focused on Jesus and get rid of all of the hindrances so we can run the race faithfully.

I have no idea what you will be facing this year. My year last year was not perfect. I had some very, very tough times from time-to-time. I had times that I got tired and weary along the way. I had times that everything I touched seemed to crash. However, a big secret to grasping onto all of the things that God had in store for me was to get rid of all of the hindrances and run the race faithfully. God didn't demand that I do everything perfect, rather He simply wanted for me to keep my eyes on Jesus while I faced all of the tough stuff. To stay focused!

I had to look past the impossibilities. I had to lay aside every hindrance and every encumbrance. I had to repent of my sins, confessing them so I could be healed and run the race with strength and stamina—sin zaps our strength and stamina. I had to drop my excuses—yep, that is what they were! I had to let go of everything that had been hindering me. Want to stay focused? Get rid of all of the hindrances today! You have a great year ahead!

- **DETERMINE WHAT YOU WILL NOT DO.** Just as important as choosing what we will do, we have to determine what we will not do. What does that look like for you?

Is that hard for you? Why?

Why not try something that has worked well for me through the years? I struggle just as much with cutting out great options. However, time is so limited. If I order my day with the things that really matter first on the agenda, then it is easier to let go of the things that are less important as the day goes by. Because of this, I have learned how to selectively procrastinate. Yes, procrastination can really work for you. Procrastinate the non-essentials. Procrastinate so you can focus on what you are doing. If those things are still tempting later, sure do them. But, get the most important done now. What can you selectively procrastinate?

NOW....

You have got your vision. You have written it down and made a vision board/vision notebook. You have learned how to stay focused. BUT, you have done all of this a million times before...

How do you make it happen? How do you pull this together? How do you make it happen? How do you get this into your life?

Last point...

CONNECT WITH YOUR VISION!

Let's get it into your life!

Of course, 1st let's get rid of the stuff that roots it out... Let's make room....

First....

- **Let Go of the OLD STUFF!** Yep, the next thing to do is to let go of all of the old stuff. You may have spent the past few years really doing lots of things that are very, very good. In fact, those things may have prepared you perfectly for your calling. But, every single one of us must make choices. Those choices will affect how powerful our ministry or business is. We cannot do it all. We have to let go of the stuff while grasping onto the things that God has for us to do.

When you are cleaning out your house, you can see that you cannot keep everything. It is easy to see that not letting go of the old stuff can keep us from being able to get the ***new things***.

Life is the same way. If we hold on to the old things, we cannot get the new things. There is just not room. And, can I tell you that the new things are soooo amazing? It is sooo worth it. Your future is where you have wanted to go. Your future has what you have wanted all along.

But, for today, if you want to get there, you must let go of the old—off the top of your head, what needs to go?

Could it be responsibilities--at church, in your support group, etc? Let them go! This is sooo much bigger!

Maybe it is the little business pursuits (getting on toes here somewhere) You cannot build a business on 20-30% commissions or buying up inventory--you are keeping their businesses afloat.

- It is time to get your home set up the way you want
- It is time to homeschool your children
- It is time to start getting fit and healthy
- It is time to write that book
- It is time to build your business or ministry
- It is time to build your own product line
- It is time to set up that membership program
- It is time to start offering coaching
- It is time to begin that podcast
- It is time to start offering those services you have been thinking about
- It is time to build your name
- It is time to step up to your call!

All of those things that have been holding you back need to go. All of those good things that are past their season need to go. The hardest part is making that decision to let it go.

Think BIGGER!

It is time to step up to your call. Let it all go so you can give it all you have got!

Don't you want this?

You must have time for this new life. It is a new lifestyle. Today is the day to let go of the old stuff and get moving toward your new life. Your new lifestyle. You are going to love it. Get moving. Let go of the old stuff! It will be worth it!

- **Set a Strict Schedule.** Now. Yes, there are those of you who have put off going for your dream and need to get moving, but on the other side, there are those of you who have been so much like me:

Working your fingers to the bone.

Working those to-do's.

Not taking time off to enjoy your life.

Not taking time off to be all there for your family.

You may be in your business with the purpose of getting more time with your family, BUT you may be getting far less time than you ever imagined. Relate? Share what is going on:

If you want to do this for the long-haul...If you want to do this and not lose your family in the process...If you want to do this and have it all come together...You must make your business mind. There will always be tons to do. There will always be a huge list of projects (if not, you need to brain dump more often...you need to dare to dream).

Make your business and ministry mind—we have to balance business and ministry without them stealing from family!

Take some time to go back to your schedule, your day. You have now had almost one month since we covered that topic.

Can you see some things that are not working well? What have you noticed since we got started?

Can you see some things that ARE working well--what are they?

Can you see some better times to work on things that need to get done so you can balance everything better? What do you see?

Today, if you want to live that new life, that new lifestyle, set a strict schedule. Work hard--focused, intense, giving it all you have got--when it is time to work. Cut it off when time is up--even if you are not done! YES! Give your family your very best.

In all of this, don't forget to **make time for you**. You must take good care of yourself if you are going to really do your very best. Watch to see how things fall into place. It is amazing!

- **Get YOUR pace!**

This is not another passing fad. This is not another time that you start something and quit. This is the REAL DEAL! Soak that in.

Want success? Get a pace that allows you to keep on working strong all year long. Get a pace that works bit-by-bit. Don't set unreasonable goals that keep you functioning in the "last minute. Get a pace that helps you get things done and still have enough to get going on the next thing! :)

- **LIVE!**

Yes! And, don't forget. This is not just so that you will have a business or ministry. Trust me, I love my business and ministry, but a business or a ministry can kill living. It can squeeze out life.

Yes! There is a great deal of satisfaction from getting things done. HOWEVER, take a peek at Ecclesiastes. You will see a guy who is looking back over life. He is seeing the vanity of pursuits that are great at the moment and meaningless if you miss the most important things. Learn from him!

Business and ministry can easily snuff out living. Be sure that while you are building your business or a ministry that you are not putting off living.

LIVE! Live a life that counts. Live your life purpose. Don't get so busy with your things to do that you fail to live the life of your dreams. Trust me, you want a life--a lifestyle!

Describe the life you really want....

Goal Setting Strategies for Creating Your Most Productive, Profitable, and Spectacular Year Ever!

Goals that are most fun to set usually possess two golden qualities: **They are attainable... yet stretch you out of your comfort zone.** And they should always be in alignment with your most important values. They also offer you one priceless benefit: **Each goal advances you a step further towards attaining your dream lifestyle and business.** So why do most people suck at goal-setting and goal-keeping? The answer lies in your personality...

Step 1: Determine Your Goal-Setting Personality

There are three types of people, when it comes to goal-setting. You might find a clue to which type you are in the way goal-setting makes you feel.

1. You are excited about setting new goals... but you become easily distracted—and discouraged
2. Your stomach knots up into a dismal little lump of cold gravy when you try to set a goal. You put it off till later.
3. You have iron self-discipline. You set goals, and although it's not easy for you to keep walking the straight and narrow towards them, reminding yourself of the benefits you will reap, if you stay true to your path, helps you achieve them.

Since you are reading this guide, chances are you fall somewhere within categories one and two like most people. But here's a thought that might bring a sigh of relief no matter what goal-setting type you are: **Goal-setting ought to be fun. So why isn't it? Why is it, at best, a chore, and at its worst, wishful thinking—the sort that leaves you feeling defeated in short order?**

That comes because of a misconception: That your goal is the end-point of your journey. Very often, what we view as “goals” are actually **steps you need to take** in order to reach a goal. If you separate your journey into steps, mini-goals and end goals, or destinations, each big goal feels smaller, more manageable and more attainable.

Steps can become goals in themselves—and achieving mini-goals along the way should be fully as satisfying as achieving your big main business goal for the year.

Here's an important point to remember...

Mini-goals and steps are **the building blocks of belief**. The more of these you successfully fulfill, the more easily you can believe-and-achieve your “big” goals.

These small successes are the **proof** you can, indeed, do anything you set your mind to.

Steps and mini-goals are also by their nature more **immediate**—which leaves you less likely to procrastinate and put off starting your journey. Taking it one step at a time will make goal setting feel more rewarding as you complete each step.

But whether or not you prefer to think of goals as steps (or vice versa), the important factor to realize is that the goals we set for ourselves often tend to be black and white. Human beings are not.

We are tossed and tipped by many forces and factors over which we really have very little control. That is why “black-and-white” thinking rarely pays off.

Spend a few minutes thinking about your goal-setting experiences. Based on past goals and their outcome, and also on what you know about yourself, which goal-setting type are you?

Step 2: Go with the Flow

You've heard the phrase: "Go with the flow." It actually signifies the absolute opposite end of being goal-oriented—allowing yourself to drift from one situation to another, with no rhythm or purpose. That's not good either.

But wait: A little fluidity makes anything work better. When you set goals, you need to be **flexible and adaptable**, accommodating life changes but keeping your eye on the prize. I call it "flexi-adaptability."

It's not enough to identify what prize you're aiming for: Imagination is key to creative goal setting. Allow yourself to dream, visualize and explore alternatives.

There can be sixteen different ways to cross a river, but you will find only a few—maybe even just one—that is easiest for *you*. "Going with the flow" means allowing yourself to experience flexible thinking—and always looking around for the one method that suits you and works for you more than others do.

While everyone else is busy telling each other which boat to step into, or arguing over the benefits of environmentally-friendly manual propulsion systems like rowing or paddling versus the speed of engine-powered propulsion, you sit down beside the river with your cup of coffee and look about you at the bright morning.

You notice there's a footbridge over the river, just under that stand of willow trees.

While all your peers are discovering there's no gas in their tanks, or reading manuals, or knocking themselves flat trying to row when they are seriously out of shape, you stroll across the bridge, stopping to admire the view half-way over as you finish your coffee.

You reach the other side easily, not even out of breath.

And you are off to meet your next goal.

Moral: If something is really too hard, that can be a big clue it's not right for you. Don't knock yourself flat trying to master it. Look for creative or drop-dead-easy ways to attain what you want to attain or a way to go around it.

Look for the alternative that no one else is seeing.

Sometimes, the right solution for you can turn out to be breathtakingly simple.

Think back on situations where you've accomplished something amazing in your life or business. Did you take the established path or find your own way? How did you feel about your results?

Step 3: Dream the Big Dream

We plod wearily towards the “right” goals for business. But what if you were to let your preconceptions go for a day, and spend your time exploring what it is you really want out of life? What DO you really want out of life?

To create an ultimate goal—your dream lifestyle—you need to identify and choose the best “big dream” for you.

Let’s try the “What if...” game.

Imagine you have **no limits** to what you can:

- Spend
- Do
- Achieve
- Attempt

Imagine you have **perfect health**.

Now imagine you are the perfect age.

What perfect age ARE you?

Put serious thought into this.

What age were you the happiest?

What age would you like to be forever?

What age bracket would you like to redo, with what you know now?

Most of us would like to be a younger age but perhaps retaining wisdom we've earned over a lifetime. But then again, some people immediately visualize themselves at ten years old, winning horse show classes on their dream pony and wishing they could stay in that moment. Others want to retreat to the wonderful world of being a preschooler, when everything was safe and happy and simple. Others want to go back and experience the wild youth they never had because they married too young and had a family straight away. Others missed out on having children, and would love to be twenty-five and expecting a first child.

If you let your emotions answer, after first dreaming you have no limits and you are in perfect health, you may surprise yourself with the answer.

Obviously no one can go back and be six years old, for example. The reality would be abdicating control of our lives to someone else and having very little power. But if you stay with that vision of your perfect age bracket and explore it further, you can identify what it is about that age that symbolizes perfect happiness to you.

For example, one online entrepreneur revisited her pre-school days by changing her rather dry online art lessons to helping people "reconnect to their inner child" by teaching them how to paint intuitively. It was a small shift—but it gave her business meaning and joy when her mission changed.

Another online entrepreneur wanted to be ten forever and ride ponies all day long. She did so by outsourcing almost everything and spending most of her days at the barn with her horse. Creating that time (and the leisure to enjoy it) became her major goal: "Make \$700,000 a year" was what she needed to achieve to enjoy that lifestyle: It wasn't the goal itself! And as soon as she understood that the lifestyle was her goal, she redoubled her already-impressive efforts.

So take the time, right now, to do the following exercise...

My Dream Lifestyle

1. What does your dream lifestyle look like? **Describe it.**

2. What steps do you have to take to make it happen?

○ How much do you need to make a year? \$ _____

○ How much do you need to make per month? \$ _____

○ Can you do it alone? _____

○ Name three things you need to drop from your life?

○ _____
○ Name the most important thing you need to add to your life

○ What else? _____

Step 4: Get Present in the Moment

One of the conditions you may have identified, above, is adding people to your business—building a perfect team.

You can get a start on that right now by outsourcing.

Don't think in terms of outsourcing "tasks", however: Think of outsourcing responsibilities, time-drains, departments, non-essential essentials...

Be creative. **Whenever you find yourself using a clichéd word** like "outsourcing tasks", look for a different word instead.

Sometimes using the right descriptor can:

- Eliminate guilt
- Put something into perspective
- Help you identify or clarify a problem

- Give you a valid reason
- Give you emotional permission
- Realize a solution

And more.

What looking for the most accurate word does is break you out of automatic pilot and help you get back in touch with the moment; with what is “going on” with you—right now.

Exercise: What else can you do to be in the moment?

To enjoy it? To appreciate it?

Step 5: Making a Vision Journal

While we're on the subject of finding your dream lifestyle, let's talk about visual cues.

You've heard of vision boards, I am sure: That's where you collect photos from magazines and probably Pinterest, inspirational quotes and affirmations, photographs of your dream house (or your dream horse) and so forth and put them on a physical "board"—a bulletin board or presentation board. You put this on your wall so it is always visible from your desk.

As an exercise, try a more fluid approach.

1. Create a file in your favorite program—let's say MS Word.
2. Label the empty page with the name of **the month that is 90 days** from where you are now. (Example: If you are in January 2016, label it "April 2016").
3. Now start searching the internet and copy-paste into it as many items as you can make fit... but these items should all signify something you want to be habitually practicing or have achieved 90 days from now.
4. Every month, repeat the exercise, using different items to represent new mini-goals and larger goals.
5. Go back over it, every three or four months, and see how many of these visualized goals you achieved.

(Don't worry about copyright issues—this is just a personal, visual aide for you.)

For example, if you want to be in much better shape ninety days from now, so you will have the energy to drive your business with more passion, you could include a photograph of the green smoothie you have just learned how to make; a photo of a fit woman on a treadmill; Favorite food items that would be healthy; a screenshot of your favorite Low Carb blog. A photo of the ideal VA you want to hire (generic or specific, if you know the person you want to work with!)

And do write down the dollar figure you want to earn that month.

Make sure this becomes a fun exercise—not one you "have" to do. (And if you're not a visual person, scrap it altogether.)

There's a reason for creating and maintaining this visual, fluid monthly journal, expanding it as you go:

You will find after six months that many of the "I want to attain..." goals you depicted in the first months are now an actual part of your lifestyle. It becomes a visual record and "cue card" for keeping on track with your optimized lifestyle. Repeating elements (such as your treadmill photo) can also help reinforce that this is a concrete and important part of who you are. These visual cues can help you stick to your goals.

And visual journaling is a fun exercise to do.

Step 6: Know Where You Want to Be

It's at this stage many people begin to realize they don't exactly know where they are going—especially if they've created goals based on a lack of information or misinformation.

There are two essential keys to figuring out where you need to be—really fast.

1. Make sure your end goal is **specific**—not general
2. Make sure you use a **plan**, schedule or calendar

Flexibility is great, but it is just that—flexibility. The definition of flexibility is “having the ability to bend”. In order to bend without breaking, you need to know your limits and your parameters. That's where planning and scheduling comes in.

To create the perfect end goal, don't set arbitrary figures or deadlines: Base them on solid information and careful extrapolation. Ask yourself vital questions such as “how much do I need to make to live comfortably and pay off my mortgage in ten years” or “how much do I need to make to get rid of all my credit card debt by this time next year?”

If what you are attempting to calculate is dependent on factual data, make sure you research what you need to know first. (Example: “In order to support the number of team members that will make this a success, I need to clear a 2020 profit margin of...”)

The answers you reap for each specific question will tell you which steps you need to take. You can then use your favorite calendar or planner to enter these steps in, assigning realistic dates and deadlines for each step's completion.

Without research, results, a schedule and deadlines, you don't have goals: You have dreams. And while dreams can be lovely to contemplate, they can also keep you further away from where you want to be.

Step 7: Join a Group

One of the most effective goal-setting strategies to emerge out of the internet age has been the idea of accountability partners.

You can choose a single accountability partner such as a business peer or business team member if you prefer—but one of the best ways to find good accountability partners lies in **joining a group** where its members all have **a common goal**.

For example, say your big goal this year is to not only write your signature eBook, but get it published and promoted through Amazon Kindle. If you join one a Kindle Publishing group where you are all focused on producing a viable, active Kindle book, you will gain multiple accountability partners who will:

- Cheer you on

- Help you get past blocks
- Give you feedback
- Give you advice
- Write reviews for your book
- Help you promote your book

You can find dedicated Groups geared specifically towards your own goals:

- In private Membership Sites
- In dedicated forums
- In dedicated Facebook Groups (look for ours at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/SteppingUpToYourCall/>)
- In dedicated LinkedIn Group
- In paid Groups
- In free Groups

It should go without saying, however, that while free Groups do have their uses, you will usually find more focused support (and better resources, as well as access to experts) in a paid Group built around achieving a goal.

You can find Groups (paid and free) for almost every type of goal: Launching a product, mastering web design or WordPress, writing a book, producing a Kindle book and many more goals. Look for ours and look for our upcoming Group Coaching and our Mastermind Group.

Step 8: Find your Maximum Workflow Formula

Prioritizing has long been a proven way of getting things done: But should you do the most important things first... or the easiest?

The ideal solution is to work on the most important goals... but if this doesn't usually work for you, either start with an easy step or goal; or find the easiest way to take the first steps towards your most important goals.

For example, if you are struggling with writing that Kindle book and you spend every morning paralyzed with writer's block, brainstorm alternate ways to get started. These could include:

- Giving yourself a daily minimum number of words you must write—even if the number that works is only “100 words”

- Just getting started (no matter how silly that first paragraph sounds)
- Writing a paragraph on a different chapter every day
- Dictating into a tape recorder or speech-to-text program, instead of writing
- Creating a strong outline

There's solid reason behind each technique: Some people find that if they give themselves a low minimum daily word count, once they reach it, they are inspired enough to keep going. Others find

TIP: If you have problems creating outlines, shortcut this by paying a ghostwriter to create your outline for you.

that just getting started is the key. For auditory learners, verbal dictation can be the strategy that rockets them steadily towards their goal. And almost everyone can benefit from working to a strong outline.

Step 9: Find Your Story Question

First, let's make a quick list of twenty "goals" or tasks you would like to do before the end of the year. Brainstorm here:

Now go through your own list and simply scratch off anything that does not move you towards your big goal.

Yes, **scrap: As in "throw it out and discard it"**.

Storytellers and authors know the importance of this type of elimination. In fiction, every book has an important "story question". Editors will ruthlessly make authors eliminate anything that doesn't move the plot towards resolving the "story question".

A typical story question looks like this:

- "Will Mercy Holler choose the fame she knows she can attain as an actress... or sacrifice it all for the man she loves?"

A good story question always speaks to a **core value**, as well as to a **desired outcome**.

It also anticipates and references—explicitly or implicitly—the type of **conflict** that will inevitably rear up its head as the heroine moves towards her goal.

So what is your story question?

How will you answer it?

Does it add meaning and value to your life and business?

Step 10: Brainstorm your Big Business Life

Oh. You haven't really made that list yet. And you skipped the visual journal exercise because it's just not your thing.

Okay. So let's go back to isolating your big goal—the one that will change your business, move you to the next level, paradigm-shift you up several levels or bring you sudden fame or fortune.

Do you even *want* fame or fortune? If you suddenly became an overnight success, could you handle it right now?

If the answer is "no", evaluate whether or not that "no" comes from lack or insecurity. What is going on?

What conditions are you putting on yourself that are stopping you from enjoying the idea of success now? (Look for self-limiting beliefs like “I have to lose forty pounds before I make a webinar”.)

Are these conditions and restrictions realistic? Necessary? Do they reflect on your ability to achieve business success?

Here's an important point to ponder...

Unless you are happy within yourself **right now**, you won't be happy when you do achieve fame and success.

You will still deal with your demons: Insecurity, fear, and the like.

What self-limiting beliefs are holding you back from success? What conceptions do you need to change? Go deal with? Start throwing out today?

Perhaps, before you hire those ten team members, you need to change your goals to include taking a management course or seeing a psychologist about your low self-esteem.

Or maybe you just need to give yourself permission to enjoy being who you are, right now, in this moment.

Step 11: Make Sure Your Goals Belong to You

Another reason people don't achieve goals: They are often goals set by someone else. Oh, perhaps not blatantly. Nobody walked up to you in the street and said: "I want you to go be a firefighter." But there is enormous pressure in North American business life today to always be the next president or the next billionaire.

Often, that type of pressure doesn't come from within—or at least, if it does, it's not speaking with your own pure voice. Whose voice are you hearing, when you decide on big or small goals?

- Your mother's voice
- Your father's voice
- Your teacher's voice
- Your coach's voice
- A chorus (popular magazine topics; forum opinions; blogs you read, etc.)

The only voice you should be listening to is your own. So make sure, when you choose a coach or mentor, that you are both on board with your primary goal.

"But what if I'm doing it for someone else?" you say. "What if my big goal isn't a fun one, but is necessary? For example, I have a husband with cancer, and I need to raise funds for his treatment?"

That's a tough one—and it happens in life. But you can still stay true to yourself and your abilities, even if you have to achieve far more than you wanted to, income-wise. In fact, if you don't take care of you, you'll burn out: Maybe later, rather than sooner—especially if some external cause that you deeply care about is driving you—but doing things we are not suited for or feel we don't have the ability to do can burn us out completely, sooner or later.

So do your best to bring fun and fulfillment into your business even if you're pushing yourself beyond your natural limits out of dire necessity. Make it your quest to find out how you can make running your business feel like your choice again, rather than a soul-killing necessity.

(And don't be afraid to make a radical switch, if you realize you're running up a dead-end street.)

Step 12: Write your Own Obituary

This strategy takes a little more courage, since no one likes to contemplate his or her own demise, but if you decide to take a shot at it, you may surprise yourself by ending up with a much clearer view of how you want your business to look.

1. Put yourself in the position of being a reporter for a business magazine such as Forbes. Write your own obituary.

- What was your primary contribution to your business or ministry (e.g. “Margery Daw was a brilliant physicist who...”)

- What would it say your company or ministry was all about? What did you bring to it?

- Who was your focus? (Your ideal customer or client?)

- How did you help them with your primary talent?

- What did your business or ministry achieve?

- How did you leave it?

- What is your legacy?

If you want to add another level of authenticity to the exercise, look up sample obituaries of prominent people.

If writing your personal obituary feels too morbid, try writing an obituary for your company or ministry as if it was a person.

What do you want people to remember?

What would make you say at the end of your life: "My business or ministry was a success!"

So go ahead, write your own obituary. And have a little fun with it while you're at it. It might just be what you need to see the future with more clarity.

Step 13: Do More of What Worked

Sometimes we focus so much on changing, we forget to appreciate what is working in our lives.

Human beings are naturally hard-wired to do more of the things that are fun and drop things that aren't (hence the failure of rigid dieting, for example). That doesn't mean spending all your time watching TV reality shows—but it does mean taking a look at your business and assessing what went really well for you.

- What changes did you make last year that “stuck”? How did those changes help grow your business or ministry?

- What increased your profits?

- What energized you and made time fly by, when you were working?

- What were you grateful for?

- If you could do more of one business or ministry activity, what would it be?

Part of assessing what worked for you last year also involves taking the time to enjoy your successes. Entrepreneurs in particular seem to be naturally driven to keep climbing the mountain, but doing so should include stopping periodically and looking around.

When you do this, you allow yourself to see:

- Just how far you've climbed
- How beautiful the world is around you
- How many things you have to be grateful for
- What challenges you are likely to encounter, moving forward
- What you have mastered, looking back
- How far we need to continue on that particular mountain
- Whether or not we would prefer to take a different path to reach the summit
- Whether or not we need to reach the summit at all

Sometimes we burn out simply because we don't allow ourselves to rest and reward ourselves for all our hard work. And sometimes we develop such a case of tunnel vision, we don't notice that the journey isn't fun anymore: We are too busy beating ourselves up for not climbing faster.

Step 14: Build Your Confidence with Tangible Rewards

There is nothing more miserable—or less confident—than a kid who wins the science fair because his father did his homework for him. Oh, he may not feel miserable in the excitement of winning... but deep-down, even children know when they haven't earned something. And it comes out in other ways; the most notable being a life-long lack of confidence.

If you really want to get past self-esteem problems and gain confidence, start challenging yourself and treating yourself to rewards for honoring your own challenges. The key in business: Making sure your reward is business or ministry-related.

And make sure you don't give it to yourself unless you have really earned it!

Keep a reward book. Enter:

- The goal you want to reach
- The date you want to reach it by
- The reward you plan to enjoy

And if you are the type of person who feels “doomed” the instant they commit to a date, trick yourself.

Make the date slightly more flexible (for example, instead of “March 15”, just say “March”).

Look back periodically at your reward book. Records of successes are always inspiring. And noting failures is also important: They can provide important clues you may have been missing as to what doesn’t work for you—and why.

(You may even discover you’ve missed a couple of rewards—in which case, take them!)

Step 15: Train Yourself to Keep Deadlines

Ghostwriters, graphic designers and other work-for-hire contractors know a big secret that other entrepreneurs don’t: **Working to deadline moves you past blocks better than any type of positive reinforcement.**

When you realize that you are holding up an entire project, you don’t say “oh, I’m tired. I think I’ll go have a nap and knock off for the day.” **Instead, you push yourself to finish, no matter what.**

Deadlines can feel restrictive, it’s true—but they can also inspire you to keep going and just get the job done. So even if you don’t have a client hopping up and down at the other end (and you don’t yet have team members waiting for your particular ingredient so they can do their job) get into the habit of setting and using deadlines to make sure you get tasks done—and achieve all your goals, large or small.

But how do you make sure that your deadlines matter? That you don’t give yourself excuses to keep moving them as you fail to achieve steps or mini-goals?

Use tools to help keep yourself on track. You can download paid or free apps and software to help you:

- Set alarms for short-term tasks
- Alert you with reminders
- Track your time

Tracking time is one of the best ways to give yourself a Reality Check—and reality checks are important in determining whether or not your goals are on target with your dreams. (It also helps you judge whether or not deadlines are realistic: For example, if you see that it always takes you two weeks to complete a particular type of project and you are consistently assigned three days, you can stop beating yourself up over “failing” to meet the deadline and explore other strategies such as outsourcing part of the project or re-negotiating the deadline.)

Tracking gives you facts. Data helps you make better-informed decisions about your future—and set more realistic and attainable goals. Tracking can also show you that your goals are not ambitious enough!

Step 17: Dig Deeper and Challenge Everything

Most people, when goal-setting, do so in January—it's all tied in with that "New Year Resolutions" phenomenon. And as such, they look back and see what they failed to accomplish the previous year.

This is a formulaic way of goal-setting; and whenever you get formulaic thinking, you get clichéd, predictable responses that don't lead to greatness. Uninspired goals lead to let-down and failure—who can get excited about a list of "shoulds"?

Challenge your own assumptions. Challenge the words you use. If a phrase falls too glibly from your tongue, think about what it really means. What figure exactly are you thinking of, when you say "Earn a six-figure income"?

Why? Why "six figures"? Could you be happier with less?

Do you actually want more? Is it realistic of you at this time to set your sights on more and do you have a plan for achieving a huge income jump in a short space of time?

The more thoroughly you think through and challenge every detail of your goal-setting out, the more confidence you will have in your planning—and the more likely you are to achieve your goals. Just remember: A goal—big or small—should never leave you feeling oppressed, discouraged, or flat-out exhausted.

Instead, it should leave you feeling excited, determined and full of purpose and joy. Setting (and achieving) goals should be fun!

Challenge #15: Create Your Ultimate, Productive, Spectacular Life!

Think this last lesson through. Work through the questions, then write out a letter to yourself about what you really want for your life. Write out what you want for your year. Write out what you want for the next quarter. Write out what you want for this next month. Write out what you want for each week and even each day. What do you want? What do you see? What do you dream? Write it out. Is there something holding you back? What will you do to make this life TODAY your most ultimate, productive, spectacular ever? Write it out. Then, hop on our Facebook Group and share it! Give them a background on what God is saying to you about daring to dream big. Share what this will look like in your life, home, homeschool, business or ministry. See our group here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/SteppingUpToYourCall>