

Bridging the Gap: Getting Where You Want to Go

Have you fallen short of achieving your goals? You can move forward, create clarity, and put realistic steps in place to bridge the gaps in your life.

BY BRYAN DUROCHER

Have you ever asked yourself the question, "How did I end up where I am in life?" Chances are you have asked yourself that question many times. We can often be amazed by how we start out with a goal or some grand vision that in the end just doesn't turn out the way we expected. We have a lot of things pulling at us in our fast-paced world. Our roles as individuals, husbands, wives, parents, children, friends, businesspeople, and caregivers have to be juggled simultaneously every day. Think of it as throwing a set of dishes in the air and trying to keep them spinning without breaking any. It isn't easy to do.

Sometimes when so many plates are spinning and we are so busy trying to focus on them, we can lose sight of our goals in life; once we forget what our

purpose is, the plates may all come crashing down. Instead of stopping there and just living with the broken pieces, there are things we can do about it. There is a way to move forward, create clarity, and put realistic steps in place to bridge the gaps in your life.

Imagine yourself standing on the precipice of a canyon and you want to reach the other side. Now some people might stop right there due to fear or there might be a comfortable campsite behind you with a group of people saying, "Come back here with us where it is comfortable — you don't have to take the risk." This is the time to ask yourself, when has anything that has been truly rewarding in your life not come with some risk and disciplined action? If you are ready to

take the risk, there are steps to move you forward across your personal canyon.

The first step is to identify where you are right now. All the actions and decisions you have made have led to the point where you currently are. For some people, change happens when they decide it is more painful to stay in the same space than it is to change; for others, previous actions have led to success and they want to expand on it.

The next step in your journey is to decide where you want to be. What is your goal? Is there more than one? Write down your goals as if they were accomplished. It is like seeing the finished product and working backwards.

At this point we have identified

where we are starting and our end desire, and what's left in the middle is our gap. This is the time where we leave the comfort of the campfire and begin our crossing.

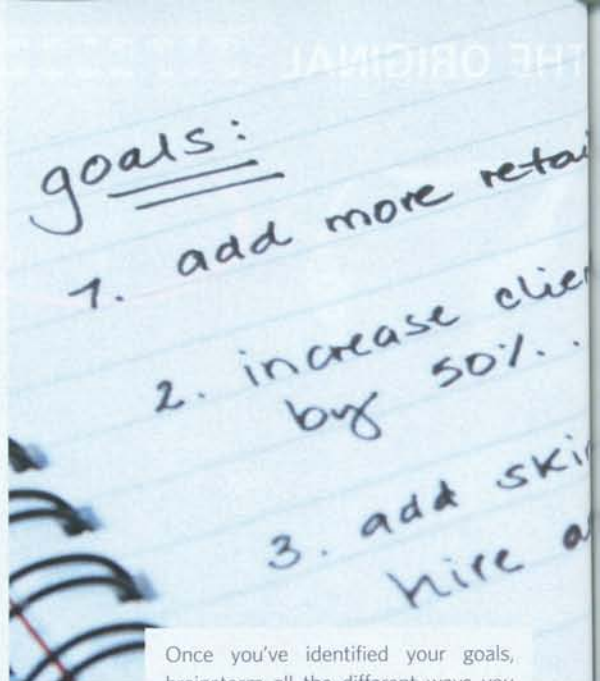
MEANS TO AN END The next step is to discover the possibilities. This means to brainstorm all the different ways you could reach your desired outcome. This starts by asking the following questions:

- > Where is the best place for you to begin?
- > What tools will you need?
- > How much time will you need to spend?
- > Who in your network of people can support you?
- > Who would have information about your goal that you could learn from?
- > How much money will it take to reach your goal?
- > When would you like to have your

goal come to fruition?

- > What have you done in the past that was similar that turned out successfully?
- > On a scale of one to 10, how committed are you to achieving this goal?
- > What would it take for you to raise that number?

Asking these questions brings out possibilities, ideas, clarity, and ways to reach the next step in bridging your gap. That is taking action. An important thing to consider before jumping into action is to make sure you have discovered all the possibilities first. It is critical not to listen to the people back at the safe, comfortable campfire because they will tell you it is impossible to accomplish.



Once you've identified your goals, brainstorm all the different ways you can reach your desired outcome.

Getting into action requires a good plan. A good plan can be motivational. At this point you may have already started to shift your thinking and are bringing yourself closer to your goal.

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This is the time to determine your priorities. Define your parameters to guide your action. Does your plan or role overlap with others? Break your big picture down into manageable goals. You don't have to swallow the elephant whole; it can be eaten in bite-sized pieces.

With all of your action-planning, make sure to set "by when" dates. These give you and others a timeline to hold the space of accountability. "Soon" to you may be tomorrow, whereas to someone else it may mean next week. Set completion dates that are absolutely achievable then strive for early completion. Action steps help us to soar across the canyon. It is also important to look at things that might cut your flight short.

IDENTIFYING OBSTACLES In crossing any gap there may be barriers you have to break through. Identifying and overcoming these obstacles is critical

to making it across. It is sound planning to think realistically about what might get in your way. This is where solutions can be created for the challenges you may face. Examples of barriers are missing skills, empowerment issues, setting too large of a goal, inadequate funding, or emotional issues.

Look at what is doable versus unrealistic, or doable by an established time. Identifying your barriers may create a new gap. What would need to be changed, added, or taken out to be totally successful? Go back to asking discovery questions and add actions to your plan to remove the barrier and close your gap. Sometimes our barriers come not from lacking personal power, but from being afraid to realize how powerful we really are.

Set the stage and stretch to reach your goal. You have by this time identified where you are, where you want to be, what the possibilities are, the actions that need to be taken, and the possible

barriers you will have to move through. Stretching supports you in thinking "outside the box." It creates a space for developing new products, services, and ways to do business. Bridging your gaps moves you forward and keeps the process of growth and learning in motion. It is a way for us to be more fulfilled, to have better relationships, and to create overall prosperity.

I would like to share a final thought with you for when you have crossed your personal canyon. Take time to celebrate what is. Life cannot always be about doing. Acknowledge yourself for your accomplishments and the journey you have taken. Enjoy the present and allow yourself to just "be." When you bridge your personal gaps, the grass will be greener on the other side. **N**

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