

## **The Power of The Pen**

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Let's brainstorm for a minute. Stop everything your doing, grab a pen and a piece of paper, and let's start to write. Why? Because writing is an incredible experience, regardless if you are talented or not. The process of writing, of being able to put your thoughts and ideas into words and form concrete evidence of consciousness, has many different effects on the mind, body, and spirit. For some, writing is a very therapeutic experience, calming the author and allowing them to relax or unwind from the stresses of every day life. For others, words flow less freely and therefore writing becomes a source of frustration, especially when it is being attempted in a creative manner. But the writing I want you to do is neither for relaxation nor for creativity. Rather, the writing I am assigning you is for motivation and accountability.

This past summer I was let in on a little secret of Todd Durkin, owner of Fitness Quest 10 in San Diego and trainer of Drew Brees and LaDainian Tomlinson. He told me about a writing exercise he does every three months called 90-Day Wonders. All you have to do is answer four questions, but you need to be honest with yourself. The four questions you need to answer are:

- 1) What do I want to have accomplished 90 days from now?
- 2) What do I need to get there?
- 3) What is stopping me from getting there?
- 4) What opportunities do I have right now?

*What do I want to have accomplished 90 days from now?*

This is the basis to the whole exercise. What do you want to be different about your life in three months? What goals to you want to have reached? The more concrete and measurable you can make you answers to this question the greater your chances are of accomplishing what you write down. Don't write you want to do *more*, how much more? Don't write you want to lose weight, get stronger, or eat healthier. How much weight do you want to lose? How many pounds do you want to lift? How many whole-food meals are you going to prepare yourself every week? Exactly how many???

You can write down as many or as few goals as you'd like, just make sure they are things that you truly want to accomplish as cluttering up your sheet with a bunch of nonsense is only going to lead to frustration. Also, be mindful of the timetable you are working with. This is not a 5-year plan. This is what you want to accomplish in three months time. What small changes are you going to make in your life today that will lead to much greater changes down the road?

*What do I need to get there?*

This step is vital to the success of this exercise because this is where you break your larger goals down into things you can accomplish in the next day, hour, or minute. This is where you begin to let your plan of action unfold. Want to get

back to your high school weight? How about you pick up the phone and schedule a session with your local trainer. Want to start spending more time with your family? Start a list of activities you can do together, and have that list grow by one or two each week. Give yourself steps to reach your goals that are too easy for you to not do right now, because once you take that first small step towards a goal, then all of the bigger steps down the road will come much easier.

You can answer this question in as much detail as you would like. Some people are very self-motivated and can easily commit themselves to accomplishing a task. These people can get away with only writing down the major stopping points between now and where you'll be in 90 days. Other people, however, cannot get excited about making changes no matter how important, and these people usually need the most help, so for them it would make sense to write down every thing that needs to happen in order for them to reach the goals they wrote down. I would suggest writing down more steps than you feel is actually necessary to write simply so you can start crossing those steps off sooner and more frequently and begin seeing progress.

*What is stopping me from getting there?*

As with answering the previous two questions, you need to be honest with yourself here. The reason you haven't already reached the goals you wrote down for the first question or completed the steps you wrote for the second question is because there has been something stopping you, and you need to identify it. This may be the most important question of them all, because once you have identified what may prevent future success you will be able avoid those situations or actions with much greater ease. And once you have removed all of the roadblocks and speed bumps all there is left to do is hit the gas and go.

*What opportunities do I have right now?*

This question does not refer solely to the job market, although if you are currently searching writing those options down here is a valid response. Rather, this is a place to write down the opportunities you have in your everyday life to accomplish the goals you set for yourself in the first question. This is also an area to write down the opportunities you have to impact others' lives.

So with these four questions in mind, I want you to start writing. Just to give you an idea of how powerful this exercise truly is, in December I wrote down ten goals that I wanted to have accomplished by the first week of March. I wrote them down, identified what I needed to do to get there, and put that Word document away. Two days ago I opened that document back up, and nine out of the ten goals I had written down had been accomplished and the tenth one is well on it's way as well. Ninety percent of those goals were accomplished. Just think about what you could accomplish in your life if you reached ninety percent of your goals. That is the power of the pen.

Get big or die tryin'.

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