

The Power of the Start by Robin Sharma

There is great power in the start. One of the things I have learned is that you have to expect the unexpected. So many of us have long-term plans but life happens and we don't turn those plans into reality. Yes, planning is important. And remember that this day will never come again and what you do in the remaining hours of this day could move your life in a whole new direction.

For example, today is the day you could pick up the phone and forgive that person who, you know in your heart, needs to be forgiven.

Today is the day you could start getting into world-class health.

Today is the day you could pull out your journal and reflect on what's not working for you in your life.

Today is the day you could articulate a new set of personal standards.

Today is the day you could decide to be a world-class learner.

I believe that your days are your life in miniature. As you live your days, so you craft your life. Ultimately, time management leads to life mastery.

How the Best Succeed Success comes from the consistent practice of simple fundamentals. In other words, the best of the best are consistent. All too often we think success is complicated. And yet the more I work with the greatest people in business and in life I realize that they are using very simple practices but that they execute around these principles religiously. One of the most important of these fundamentals is that they are meticulous about protecting their time.

The first step in protecting your time is to know where you are going. Knowing your destination increases your focus. Knowing your destination allows you to make wiser choices. Knowing your destination saves you precious time and energy. If you don't know where you are going, any road is going to get you there. Let me give you a metaphor for that. If you need to drive from Toronto to New York City, what do you do? The first thing you are going to do is locate the destination. Then you are going to plot your course. You'd laugh at someone who said I'm going to drive to New York City and just hopped into their car without a map or a plan. That would be recipe for disaster.

Most people spend more time planning their summer vacations than they do planning their lives. You would laugh at a business that had no business plan. You would laugh at a business that didn't reflect on strategy. You would laugh at a business that did not articulate its mission and its guiding values. Yet most people don't have a plan for their lives. Most people have not articulated a philosophy for their lives. Most people don't have a mission. And one of the most important things I've discovered is that if you don't have a plan and a philosophy for your life you will end up living someone else's life.

I had lunch the other day with one of the country's top entrepreneurs and I asked him what his number one success driver was. He looked at me and said, "We created a long term vision statement which we called our BHAG." (A BHAG is a Big Hairy Audacious Goal which comes from Jim Collins' excellent book "Built to Last.") The entrepreneur went on to say, "We based all of our actions on our BHAG and it kept us focused."

My friend, whether he knew it or not, was applying the Law of Linkage. The Law of Linkage states that if you want to live an extraordinary life then link everything that you do to your vision. For example, if a meeting is not aligned with your vision then have the discipline to say no to it. Because that meeting will take time away from pursuing your goals. And the days slip into weeks, the weeks slip into months and the months slip into years and before you know it your life will be over.

Stay focused as best you can, and don't let things happen to you - not when you can make things happen."