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Identifying your Destination

The classic romantic comedy Pretty Woman begins and ends with the same line “Welcome to Hollywood. What's your dream? Everybody has a dream. What's your dream?”

Although the bright lights and glamour of Hollywood are far different from a softball field, I truly believe that our response to that question and more importantly what we are willing to do about it forms the basis for everything else that we do.

If I were to walk down the walkway between fields at any local tournament mumbling out loud “Welcome to Softball. What’s your dream? Everybody has a dream. What’s your dream?” I would get a lot of strange looks, and probably be asked to leave by the tournament director so I won’t try that. So instead imagine me looking you right between the eyes and saying “I know you have a dream. We all do. What is you dream?”

No bright lights. No fans screaming from the bleachers. No coaches around to impress. No parents around whom you need to repeat what they’ve told others since you started playing t-ball. No teammates around who’ve seen your errors in the past. Just the quiet of your own thoughts. So I ask softly, what’s your dream?

If you could even respond and admit you have a dream you are already far ahead of others. Others won’t even admit to someone else that they have a dream, because they are afraid of being laughed at.

They have this misconceived notion that dreams have to be “realistic.” They don’t. They are your dreams. Not your parent’s dreams. Not your coaches’ dreams. Not your team mate’s dreams. They are yours. You alone are allowed to dream anything that you want for your life.

"Happy are those who dream dreams and are ready to pay the price to make them come true." - Leon J. Suenes

I’m not talking about those fleeting thoughts that happen every now and then when we hear about someone else like “I dream I won 3 Gold Medals like Leah O’Brien Amico” or if you are a center fielder and you watch Danielle Lawry pitch one day and say “I dream I could pitch like her.” What I’m referring to are those things that you can’t stop thinking about. The ideas that come into your head all the time, when the television is off, the computer is off and the cell phone is recharging. “I’ve been dreaming of being the starting pitcher for my high school ever since I saw my first high school game when I was 7.” “I’ve dreamed of being a college player since I was 13.” “I’ve dreamed of wearing the colors of my country and representing my entire nation in the Olympics.” Those kind of dreams.

So what about you? Do you think you could you tell someone your dream? Or are you afraid that others will laugh at you if you do share. Or are you like others who are afraid of what they themselves think. Before they can even get the words out to others, stop them selves because they doubt they can accomplish it. They can’t even speak the words that go round and round in their head all the time because they allow their negative self talk to stop them before they come out. In fact they know that others would support them and encourage them and that’s the problem.

They feel so sure that they could never do what it is they are dreaming about, that they can't share because they simply feel like that would be one more failure in their lives.

The reality is that many people have fears. Some are self imposed. Unfortunately some of our fears are based on years and years of experience in dealing with others. I could suggest you spend thousands of dollars and years on therapy to help you get over those fears if you are like either of those people. But I won't. Instead I'll simply suggest the following two very simple to implement concepts:

1. It is YOUR dream so feel free to keep it to yourself.
2. It is your DREAM so feel free to not believe in it. At least for now.

Seriously.

That's it.

Nothing profound.

Just taking the pressure off.

But I do want you to admit YOUR DREAM. But only to yourself.

Don't tell your teachers, but the next page of this workbook is actually meant to be torn out. I want you to. In fact I insist that you rip the next page out of this book and make it the most important piece of paper you have ever touched in your life. Why? Because after you tear it out I want you to admit that you have a dream, and I want you to write that dream down on the piece of paper.

I'm not kidding. Get busy. Rip the next page of this workbook out and write your dream on it. The biggest one that you have. If you dream of hitting a home run, or striking

out 21 batters in a game, and being in the Olympics then write down that you dream of being in the Olympics.

Don't cheat yourself either. If you dream of being a hero in the Women's College World Series don't just write down that you want to play college softball. If you are going to do this, then be fair. Write down your biggest dream and remember my 2 simple tips:

1. It is YOUR dream so feel free to keep it to yourself.
2. It is your DREAM so feel free to not believe in it. At least for now.

"The difference between having a dream and living a dream is the people you surround yourself with." - Phil Tuttle

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See that wasn't so bad was it?

But we aren't through yet. I need you to do 5 more very simple things:

1. Go and get a plastic sealable lunch bag, your bat bag and some duct tape.
2. Fold up the paper that has your dream on it.
3. Stick the paper inside the lunch bag
4. Seal the lunch bag
5. Use some duct tape to tape the baggie down inside your bat bag

1% of you ran and got what I asked you to, then came back and blindly followed all 5 steps. But the other 99% of you are asking the obvious question "Why?" And that's a fair question. I'm asking you to do some pretty simple things, and yet I've said that piece of paper is going to become the most important piece of paper in your life so I better be able to answer it for you.

You see this game is full of girls playing softball. They show up. Some do what is asked of them. Others can't even do that most of the time. They "play" the game of softball and nothing more. But when you show up at the field, whether it's for a practice or for a game you are now someone who starts to tie your dreams together with what you do each and every time at the field. When you open your bat bag and you see that baggie taped down you are going to be reminded that you can either ignore the dream and just go back to being another softball player. Or you can actually do something to get closer to making that dream a reality. Every time you see that baggie you can allow it help you get closer to becoming someone who is pursuing her dream through softball, instead of just being another softball player.

So pretty please with sugar on top. I want you to tape that piece of paper down inside your bat bag. (Or at least commit to doing it when dad or mom get home and show you where the duct tape is.) The baggie is to ensure that it doesn't get ruined when you are out in the rain or throw your nasty cleats in it after 6 straight games. The duct tape is to ensure that nobody else can read it. By the time you start reading the next paragraph I want you to mentally have made the transition into someone who is pursuing her dream through softball. Until that happens nothing else in this book is going to matter so you might as well just close it right now and save yourself the time of reading it.

Now we are all on the same wavelength. Because Joni and I work with young ladies and help them pursue their dreams through softball and that's what you've just become. But why all of the drama about writing down a dream when the title of this book is GPS Based Goals? Well that should be pretty easy if you truly think about a GPS. In order for a Global Positioning System to work there are two important things it must know, one of which is your "destination." I propose to you that that's exactly what your dream is. It's where you want to end up. But if you are just showing up at the field like so many other players going through the motions you have no idea if it will come true or not so it's just a dream.

But once you make the decision that you want your dream to become your destination you know where you are going. At this point you still don't have to let anyone else know where you are heading, and you still don't have to believe you will get there. Just agree that you want your dream to be your destination. Suddenly that little piece provides a destination you can head towards. Every time you see that card taped in your bat bag you can make the decision "Do I want to head towards my destination or get off the road and just relax in that ice cream shop over there?"

2

Committing to your Destination

The fact that you are reading this book and made it to chapter 2 is a pretty good sign that you really want to succeed and aren't all about pulling off the course for ice cream. You are going to need that desire because we are going to ask you to make a huge leap of faith in this chapter. We are going to ask you to ... gulp ... commit to the fact that you want your dream to actually come true, that you want to reach your destination. You are still welcome to have doubts that you will at this point, that's still part of the deal.

Before you make that commitment you need to understand that making a commitment is serious business and will require you to make some very serious choices.

To help you understand what it means to commit and to have to make really difficult choices to get to the destination you choose we are going to share with you a way to become a millionaire. One million dollars in your bank account. Seriously! That is something that lots of people say is their dream, and you may be one of them and we will show you a guaranteed way to get there.

I know what you are thinking there is a probably a trick. Be assured there is no trick. But there is also no shortcut. There is no guaranteed way of becoming a millionaire short of making being committed to actually becoming one and making some very difficult choices long the way. So if you are up for a little exercise, go grab a pen and a calculator. You have nothing to lose and if you really get it you will be on your way to one million dollars.

For this exercise we are going to assume you are 22 and have just graduated college. Doesn't matter what your degree was, or if you changed majors 5 times and finally dropped out of college with no degree. Because for the sake of this drill we aren't going to say "you graduate and get a job for \$500,000 per year and can save tons of it." All we are going to ask is that you assume you can earn at least \$20,000 per year after taxes are taken out of your check. Working 40 hours per week, and having 2 weeks of vacation means you would need to make about \$12 per hour in order to earn that much money after taxes. Not unreasonable wages at all.

So lets assume you make \$20,000 after taxes, and we put every penny of that \$20,000 into some type of investment that will pay you 8% per year. That interest rate is also pretty reasonable for investments of the size that you are making. So after 1 year you would have earned \$1,600 in interest on the \$20,000 that you invested, and the total you then have after 1 year is \$21,600.

Below you will see a table with 4 columns. In the first column is your age. So for the age of 22 you need to write in \$20,000 in the second column, \$1,600 in the third column and finally \$21,600 in the last column.

Age	You deposit into your account	You get this much interest	At end of year you have this much money
22			

By now you are probably saying to yourself "There is no way I can make \$20,000 and put \$20,000 into the bank. What about my rent, my car payments, my new clothes, my tv, my cell phone, my ... my ... my ... my" See that's just the problem that keeps all of the millions of others in the world from becoming millionaires. They say they "want" to

be a millionaire, but their actions prove that what they really want more is to “have cool stuff” and to be “independent” to be “free to make their own choices” to “stop having to deal with their crazy parents.” So they talk about “dreaming” of being rich, while their choices prove that they’d rather be “free but in debt” all of their lives.

Let’s pretend you get passed those things and continue to live at home by your parents rules and continue our chart. We’ll assume that you’re a terrible worker and get no raise at all. Don’t complain to us, complain to your boss. So in year 23 write in your \$20,000. In the third column how much interest do you make that year? Now here is the beauty of interest. They aren’t going to pay you the same \$1,600 they did in year 1, they are actually going to pay you \$3,328. That’s 8% interest on the \$21,600 from year 22, plus the \$20,000 you earned this year or the \$41,600. Now add all that up and by the end of year 23 you have \$44,928 in your account. So jot that down.

"A winner is someone who sets their goals, commits themselves to those goals and then pursues their goals with all the ability that God has given them. That requires someone who believes in himself or herself, who will make self-sacrifices, work hard, and maintain the determination to perform at the best of their ability." C. Leeman Bennett

You start year 24, and for whatever reason you continue to only earn the same amount of money. There could be a pattern here. So add your \$20,000 on year 24. Before you calculate the interest for that year, keep in mind that they are going to pay you that 8% on all \$64,928 you have in your account (last years total + your \$20,000.) So the math $\$64,928 * .08$ (8 percent) and add that to the chart then add

them up and put the total in the last column. What do you have now after 3 years?

Age	You deposit into your account	You get this much interest	At end of year you have this much money
22	\$20,000.00	\$1,600.00	\$21,600.00
23			
24			

If you did your math correctly you will find that after that year you will have \$70,122.24 in your account. Not a million dollars yet, but not a bad savings account for someone who doesn't earn very much money. While it may be difficult to imagine, keep playing along for just a little while longer. Continue the chart for years 25, 26 and 27 and see what you end up. Remember your interest each year is calculated on what you had in your account the year before plus your \$20,000 deposit the year you are on.

Age	You deposit into your account	You get this much interest	At end of year you have this much money
22	\$20,000	\$1,600.00	\$21,600.00
23	\$20,000	\$3,328.00	\$44,928.00
24	\$20,000	\$5,194.24	\$70,122.24
25			
26			
27			

If you did your math correctly on year 27 you made \$11,737.49 that year. Do you realize that you are making more than half of your total annual salary now just by having the money sitting there in the account. Do you get that? It's snowballing now. Your total balance and your interest are growing really quickly now. Yes we know mom and dad are driving you crazy.

We know you want to buy that iPhone Version 87, but lets keep playing the game for just 3 more years. Just 3 more years and magic is going to happen for you. Can you do that? Do the math for years 28, 29 and 30.

Age	You deposit into your account	You get this much interest	At end of year you have this much money
22	\$20,000	\$1,600.00	\$21,600.00
23	\$20,000	\$3,328.00	\$44,928.00
24	\$20,000	\$5,194.24	\$70,122.24
25	\$20,000	\$7,209.78	\$97,332.02
26	\$20,000	\$9,386.56	\$126,718.58
27	\$20,000	\$11,737.49	\$158,456.07
28			
29			
30			

So what did you notice about the amount of interest you made on year 30? Did you see that you are making as much money is interest as you were making. They are handing you your entire salary just for having the money in your account.

Age	You deposit into your account	You get this much interest	At end of year you have this much money
22	\$20,000	\$1,600.00	\$21,600.00
23	\$20,000	\$3,328.00	\$44,928.00
24	\$20,000	\$5,194.24	\$70,122.24
25	\$20,000	\$7,209.78	\$97,332.02
26	\$20,000	\$9,386.56	\$126,718.58
27	\$20,000	\$11,737.49	\$158,456.07
28	\$20,000	\$14,276.49	\$192,732.55
29	\$20,000	\$17,018.60	\$229,751.16
30	\$20,000	\$19,980.09	\$269,731.25

We have good news for you. The point when your money is working for you, is the point at which you can finally leave home and stop saving. You don't need to save anymore, because that pile of money is doing all of the work for you. Not kidding. At the age of 30 you have now saved every penny you ever need to save for the rest of your life. You've made all of the sacrifice you will ever have to make for the rest of your life.

At this point you may be thinking to yourself this is ridiculous. There is no way I could stay at home this long. Of course I will get a raise. I will have a good job. What if I meet Mr. Right and I want to get married? All reasonable thoughts. If you've lost the ability to believe you could live at home until your 30 and save every penny you make that's ok. All you need to do is commit to saving the \$20,000 per year. Every year. No excuses. If you can commit to that thought then put your calculator away now and watch what continues to happen with that money as it works hard for you.

31	\$0.00	\$23,178.50	\$292,909.75
32	\$0.00	\$23,432.78	\$316,342.53
33	\$0.00	\$25,307.40	\$341,649.93
34	\$0.00	\$27,331.99	\$368,981.93
35	\$0.00	\$29,518.55	\$398,500.48
36	\$0.00	\$31,880.04	\$430,380.52
37	\$0.00	\$34,430.44	\$464,810.96
38	\$0.00	\$37,184.88	\$501,995.84
39	\$0.00	\$40,159.67	\$542,155.50
40	\$0.00	\$43,372.44	\$585,527.94
41	\$0.00	\$46,842.24	\$632,370.18
42	\$0.00	\$50,589.61	\$682,959.79
43	\$0.00	\$54,636.78	\$737,596.58
44	\$0.00	\$59,007.73	\$796,604.30
45	\$0.00	\$63,728.34	\$860,332.65
46	\$0.00	\$68,826.61	\$929,159.26

What magically happens when you turn 47. You sacrificed, in a big way for 9 years. You lived at home and followed your parents rules for 9 years. You watched your friends buy the latest this, and the coolest that. You put your needs on hold, while they spent everything that they made. The home. The car. The vacations. Was it worth it. It depends on your perspective. Because if you wanted to become a millionaire. You “dreamed” of being a millionaire. Here is what happens on your 47’th birthday.

47	\$0.00	\$74,332.74	\$1,003,492.00
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You did it.

You are a millionaire.

You didn’t need a high paying job.

You didn’t even need a raise.

You didn’t need to hit the lottery.

All you needed to do was make the sacrifice.

That’s kind of the whole point about any dream.

There are always millions of reasons why others don’t succeed. Reasons why you should give up your dream. There are always choices that have to be made. Hard choices. Choices you don’t want to have to make. But when you are willing to really commit. To make the sacrifice. Those dreams start getting closer and closer and closer.

Would your parents really let you stay at home until you are 30? Would they keep paying for your food? Would they pay for your gas? Don’t they want you to move out and become

responsible? They probably do want you to become responsible. If you promised them you would follow their rules and sacrifice your own freedom in order to save every penny you made to ensure the legacy of your future children, their grand children, they just might see that as being responsible. They will be skeptical at first. Just like you will be. But when you turn 25 and have the amount of money in your account that you had planned, both of you will begin really believing that you will hit your dream.

The question is ... is your dream worth committing to? Is it worth it? Is it worth the sacrifices you may have to make to ensure that it comes true and that you do in fact reach your destination. Remember you can still have doubts that you can accomplish it. So here it is, what could be the turning point in your life ... now that you've written your dream will you commit to it?

Question: In a bacon-and-egg breakfast, what's the difference between the Chicken and the Pig?

Answer: The Chicken is involved, but the Pig is committed!

3

Getting your Directions

Have you ever sat through a team meeting before where your coach hands you a piece of paper and says “Ok I’m going to give you 15 minutes to write down 5 goals for this season?”

The older girls on the team have heard the goals in the past that the coach has commented on so they have the advantage and they write something similar. But the newer players struggle to think. They start fidgeting. Asking each other “what are you going to write?”

We propose to you that those kind of team meetings, and goals that you write down in a 15 minute timeframe serve little purpose. You see the dictionary defines a goal in this way:

Goal: [gohl] noun - The result or achievement toward which effort is directed; aim; end.
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If a goal is intended to get you to an intended result; an achievement; aim you; get you to a desired end; then you better have first identified what you are aiming at. Right?

If you don’t know where you are going then writing down goals is a pretty useless exercise. Because if you don’t know where you are going then any path will take you there. If I just write down “Run 10 miles north, turn right, jog 20 miles to the east.” The coach might say “great job, you are committed to going 30 miles.” Everyone should be more like you. But maybe being there won’t mean a thing to me, because my dream, the place I always wanted to end up was 10 miles southwest of where I am.

But when you know exactly where you want to end up, and are committed to getting there then goals are the steps that you need to take to get there. They are just like the directions that you get out of a GPS after you have entered your destination. They are the incremental steps that get you to your destination. But more than that they are the incremental steps that help you gain confidence you will get there.

Over and over you've been told you don't have to believe you will get there yet, because doubts are normal. But if you do commit to your dream and are willing to work hard to get there, then goals are those incremental directions that will get you there and help you build your confidence that you will arrive where you want to.

Imagine starting out with the daunting task of walking from one of the United States to the other. It sounds like a great goal. A goal that a coach would say "woo-hoo" to. It's reasonable that people would doubt that they could ever finish, and that many would give up if they just walked out of their house and started walking. Those that are a little tough might make it a few miles from their house and then return when it starts to rain. Those that are really competitive might make it until it starts to snow. If you didn't really want to walk across the entire country ... you will give up.

"Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail." -Ralph Waldo Emerson

Your goals have to be aligned with the dream that you want to achieve. If you really wanted to accomplish that feat then you would spend the time to figure out ways to break the trip up before you ever get started. You wouldn't just lace up your shoes and head out the door in order to appear tough.

You might start by finding out how many miles it really is. Did you know that Maine to California is 3,300 miles. Wow that's a lot of miles, and it would only be natural that you aren't sure if it can be done.

You might then figure out how many miles you can walk in a day. Most people can comfortably walk about 3 miles an hour. So if they walked 10 hours per day and let their bodies rest the other 14 hours per day they could travel 30 miles per day.

You would then get some directions on paper from a GPS, that are broken up in increments of 30 miles per day and when you chart that course you will see it would take 110 days. While 110 days is a big number, it's less than 4 months. It's less than the amount of time you spend for 1 spring softball season. Suddenly impossible, now seems tough, but entirely manageable.

Imagine what happens to your confidence at the end of the first day when you look at your directions and realize that you needed to go 30 miles today and you did it. Now you only have 109 to go and you've turned impossible, into just hard work.

Imagine what happens to your confidence on day 54 and you are really tired but you look at your list of directions and realize that you are now half way to your destination.

How much more will you believe you can make it all the way across the entire United States after day 100 than you did before you left?

In just the same way your belief that you will reach your dream is going to continue to increase as you identify the goals, the directions to get there, and begin seeing your progress on that journey. But just like a trip across the entire

country, your dream right now can seem like it would be impossible. That's ok.

That's precisely what goals are for. They are to help you break up impossible into manageable, doable, accomplishable, "I got this" sized bits. And each time you kick the butt of one of those bits your confidence continues to grow. Continues to fuel your drive that you are now even closer to where you ultimately want to be.

About this point you should be pretty charged up, because while a long way off you might actually believe for the first time in your life that you can reach your dream. So how do you get started writing goals? Not the write down 5 things in 15 minute kind that you forgot by the end of the season but rather the ones that you are going to refer to for the next several years. The ones that will be your road map.

Step 1 is to solidify your destination. It's in your head all of the time and you have it written down and taped in your bat bag. Right? But right now it's very likely like heading across the country to just some random spot in California. Do you really want to make a grueling 110 day track across the country and just end up anywhere in California? What you have to do is solidify exactly what achieving your dream would look like.

The easiest way to do that is to picture what others look like who have accomplished the same dream you have. Those who have already reached the destination you have in mind. Those who have achieved what you are trying to achieve. How would you describe them in terms related to the game?

If this wasn't your dream, and you didn't really care about whether you accomplish it or not you could just take your best guess as to what things they've done to get where you want to be. But if you are really committed to the fact that you do want to reach your destination then your goals just

might ... gulp ... require you to do some research. What??? This isn't school. You can't honestly expect to sit down and in 10 minutes write goals that are going to take you some where unless you spend the time to find out where it is you really want to go.

The truly amazing thing is that most others who've accomplished their dreams are very normal, very down to earth, very willing to help others. Find them online and then write to them, ask them questions, pick their brains. Go to camps where they are doing instruction. Talk to others that know them best. Find out what traits separate them from everyone else.

Some of the directions, goals, are going to be easy ones to research and write down. Imagine that your dream is to play for the best fictional softball program in the world, East Podunk University. East Podunk is no different than any other softball program and they place a lot of emphasis on hitting which is good because hitting has all kinds of statistics that are recorded and you can track them. As you do your research into those statistics you discover that the minimum batting average for every incoming freshman the past 5 years was .473 their senior season in high school.

While there are many complicated factors that go into recruiting players, so just hitting .473 alone isn't what got any of those fictional players recruited to that fictional school. By the very definition of the word if what you write down isn't going to help you achieve, get you to an end, then it isn't really a goal. So it would be silly for you to write down a batting average goal of .350 because that isn't going to be enough to get you into East Podunk University.

We aren't trying to imply that every goal you need to write down is going to be handed to you because they aren't. Some are much more difficult to figure out. At this point you don't need to over think the difficult ones or worry about the goals

you don't know. Start with the ones you can identify. Start by taking some guesses about general things that you think would certainly be required.

Let's do a practice run together. There is a fictional player named Suzy Smith who is a pitcher. Suzy is currently a high school sophomore who's dream is to pitch in the Universal Softball Championship Series (USCS) with East Podunk University when she's a senior at the school.

"I've worked too hard and too long to let anything stand in the way of my goals. I will not let my teammates down and I will not let myself down." Mia Hamm

On the next page you are going to see a map that shows you where Suzy is now and where she ultimately wants to be with some blank lines along the way. Steps that get her from her sophomore year to the USCS. Those steps are the goals that will get her there. Before looking at the suggestions that follow, spend some time imagining what those steps might be and write them in. What are the most obvious things that pitchers are evaluated on? What are some of the more complicated things? Don't worry about filling in all of the lines, and don't hesitate to draw your own lines in if you have more steps Suzy can take. But take the time to really think it through. What steps can't Suzy take to get her from her sophomore year in high school to the Universal Softball Championship Series her senior year at East Podunk University?

If you are like most athletes that is not a very easy drill for two reasons:

1. You have never really learned what goals were or how to write them.
2. You may have assumed that fate just randomly chooses those who will accomplish their dreams and those who won't.

The entire point of this book is to help you ensure that when all is said and done in your career, there will be more done than said. In other words you will have reached your dream instead of sharing stories about what your dream was for the rest of your life.

The easiest way to start working on goals is to actually envision them as steps. So the first thing you could do is break the lines into 2 groups separated by Suzy entering her freshman year at East Podunk University. Yes it's really that simple. She can't possibly pitch the championship game her senior year, if she never starts her freshman year.

Now let's take just one step back from that mid point. One small very simple step. A logical one that has to be taken. Can you guess what that is?

If you guessed that the step just before that one is Suzy being offered a position to play for East Podunk University or being accepted into the school you are dead on. She can't start her freshman year if she isn't offered a spot on the team and isn't accepted into the school. Is that cheating, or is that only logical?

It would only follow that one of the goals for Suzy prior to that one would be "make initial contact with Coach at East Podunk University".

Before we finish going through some this would be an important place to stop and re-emphasize the importance of these steps. As a sophomore Suzy probably doesn't believe that her dream of playing in the USCS will come true. But imagine how those negative thoughts in her head will start becoming more positive when she starts completing each of those goals.

More importantly if you can chart our goals like the steps we are taking for Suzy how much more will you begin that you can make your dreams come true? How much more will you put into making them come true?

Back to our fictional pitcher Suzy. In order for Suzy to be accepted into the school what must happen? That whole application process thing. What else? She has to take those pesky admission tests and have the scores sent to them. She has to earn grades good enough to be accepted.

What is it going to take for the coach to offer her a position? Oh yeah that whole make the ball dance after it leaves her hand and before arriving in the catchers glove. She better learn some of those pitches and be able to throw them with confidence. But which ones should she learn? The polka? The tango? The waltz? All of them? The one that is written about the most on blog sites? The ones that she likes the most? Or is this where research might really be needed?

What if she finds out that for the past 5 years every starting pitcher in the USCS can make the ball do a really gorgeous fox trot on the way to the catcher's mitt but she's been working on that pitch with her coach for the past 2 years and it still looks awful? Maybe she will need a goal of finding a pitching coach that can teach her that pitch. Or maybe she will have to be honest and admit that she never liked that pitch so she really never practiced it outside of her lessons and set a goal of honestly putting forth the effort. Then

setting a goal that in 2 tournaments she will throw that pitch at least 2 times per inning.

When you got started you probably thought there is no way to set a goal for each of those blank lines, but now you probably realize that there aren't nearly enough lines. Now we need to start filling in those lines after she's started her freshman year. What would those goals be?

Earning a starting spot in the rotation would be nice right? Just because Suzy got into the school doesn't mean she'll be the one pitching.

A more complicated one that you may or may not understand might be a goal for leadership qualities. If she is going to take the team to the USCS she better figure out how to lead college level ball players.

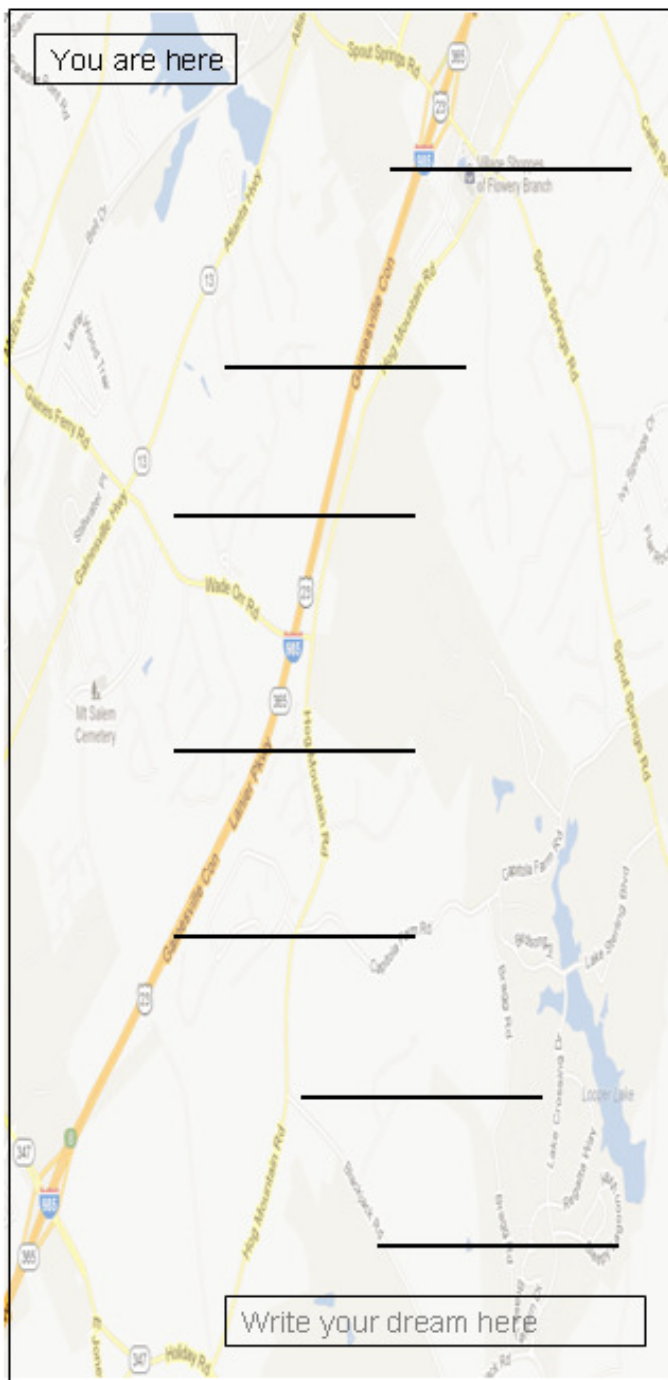
Another complicated one that you may not be aware of is how much pounding your body takes as a college athlete. Playing games on Saturday and Sunday is one thing. But practicing 2, 3, 4 hours a day 3-4 days a week, and playing the rest puts a lot of stress on your body. Suzy will have to set a goal of learning how to properly take care of her body so that it doesn't give out on her.

"If you think you can, you can. And if you think you can't, you're right" -- Henry Ford

Again the important thing isn't so much exactly what those steps, those goals, are right now for Suzy or for you. The important thing is that you understand that just like with a GPS those goals are the directions that will get you to your destination. They will provide that confidence you need in knowing that you are on the right path each time you accomplish one of them. Each one you complete will give

you more fuel to work even harder to complete the remaining goals.

As a young lady pursuing her dream in softball what are your goals? What steps will get you from where you are right now to your dream? Write them down. Write your dream in the bottom rectangle and then start filling in the blanks. Don't wait. Write them down now.



4

Ensure your directions are S.M.A.R.T.

While GPS devices are wonderful inventions and help a great deal when you are behind the wheel driving somewhere you haven't been they have one huge flaw. Something that can drive you bonkers when you encounter it. Do you know what that is?

It's the fact that after you plug in your destination it just starts out by giving the directions for your first turn. It doesn't show you the big picture of where you are heading. So if you start inputting a street name "Peachtree" and it guesses what the rest of it is say "Peachtree Street NE" and you just blindly accept the directions it yields you may very well end up where you didn't really want to go and by the time you realize it it's too late to get back on track to "Peachtree Drive SW." Like the infamous Bugs Bunny frequently said in his cartoon "I should have made a left turn in Albuquerque."

It's important even when using a magical GPS device to ensure that you are using smart directions by having the big picture of where they are taking you. Likewise just because you've now written down goals doesn't ensure that they are S.M.A.R.T. ones. Notice that the word is an acronym and isn't implying anything about your intellect.

The acronym S.M.A.R.T. has been around for a long time. But like so many other things the problem is in the lack of application and not the lack of information being available. So in this chapter we are going to elaborate on each aspect of S.M.A.R.T. goals, apply our own spin and ask you to really spend the time applying them to the goals/directions you've already written down.

S – Specific

Specific means that the goal must be precise. Someone else would have to understand it without question. It has to be exact. You may be asking yourself why? And that's a fair question. Believe it or not some people might make emotional decisions as to whether or not they have achieved their goal. Not you of course, just others out there in the world. If the goal isn't specific they might evaluate their success or failure based on the results of only the last swing, last pitch, last throw or last catch. Can you believe that?

One of the easiest ways to learn something new is to see bad examples. Unfortunately the bad example that you are about to read may very well be something you've heard every one of your teammates say. Something your parents have said you should do. Something you may have actually written down. But here goes, here is a goal that is not specific: "I want to be a better hitter."

Even sounding that out just makes our ears hurt. What does "better" even mean? Can't you just see the millions who have stated that before you making completely inaccurate assessments of whether or not they completed that goal? Meet our fictional goal setter Sally and the predicament she is in. Championship game. Bottom of the seventh inning. Bases loaded. Two outs. Her team is trailing by 1 run. Fans are going crazy in the stands. She strikes out.

"All men dream, but not equally. Those who dream by night in the duty recesses of their minds wake in the day to find that it was vanity; but the dreamers of the day are the dangerous men, for they may act their dream with open eyes to make it possible."

T.E. Lawrence

Do you see how her emotions just might cloud her judgment in determining if she was now a “better hitter” than she was at the beginning of the season. Likewise, imagine that the situation was reversed and she came through with a bases loaded double.

While it isn’t even fair to look at that one isolated at bat in determining success or failure that is precisely the kind of unfair evaluation that a goal like “I want to be a better hitter” lends itself to. Specific goals on the other hand stop you from making emotional decisions, and those that are based on one success or failure. They are written in such a way that if you shared them with 100 people. And shared the results with 100 people. They would all evaluate your success/failure in the same manner.

If Sally’s goal was stated as “I want to be able to approach the plate in pressure situations without gripping the bat like it was the ledge of a mountain I was hanging off” then everyone at the game would say she failed if the umpire had to call time out when she snapped the bat in half with her hands because she gripped it to tight. The fact that she got a triple after she borrowed a teammates bat wouldn’t matter. Likewise if they saw her rhythm, saw that she was able to lay off the low outside junk, and finally struck out on a high rise ball after fouling off 6 straight 3-2 count pitches, then she did in fact succeed in her goal, despite the lack of a hit in that 1 isolated emotional incident.

Don’t just say your goal is to go somewhere warm if you really want to be laying in the sand at a particular resort in the Caribbean. Or else you may find yourself in a tanning booth in Alaska. Likewise your softball goals have to be specific in order to ensure that they are in fact steps that will get you to your dream.

M – Measurable

One easy way that you can ensure you will measure your success/failure fairly is to ensure that you can take the inverse of the 4th dimensional square root of the circumference of the total angle of the values. Just kidding the math doesn't have to be so complicated that only Albert Einstein could figure it out. But your goals do have to be measurable. They have to have those pesky numbers associated with them in some form or another so that you can evaluate your success/failure based on them.

“I want to improve my batting average this year” qualifies as being specific and is a gajillion times better than “I want to be a better hitter.” If it was 1 percent better there are those who might say “Well it appears that every average on the team went up about 20 percent because we had a different scorekeeper this year and since you only went up 1 percent, I'm not sure you really improved.

Put a number to it that is impossible to refute. Remember that your goals are not just things to write on paper that meet the minimum requirements. You are writing them to ensure that you reach your dream. After all how many years will it then take you to go from the .125 batting average you had last year to that .473 needed for East Podunk University if you just “improve over last year” and 1 percent qualifies you to succeed in achieving your goal.

Assigning a number to each of your goals adds a whole new layer of undeniable accountability. It takes your goals from “everyone who watches me will judge me the same” to “everyone who reads about my goal and my results will judge me the same.” You either have a batting average at the end of the season of .380 or it is higher or lower. No guess work.

A – Achievable by you

All that really means is that it's realistic for you to be able to achieve it. But in order to make an acronym work sometimes we have to use more complicated phrases. Insert a smiley face emoticon in your head to imagine that was a text message.

Seriously, it's important as you refine your goals and you make them specific, and you make them measurable that you keep them realistic for you. Your dream didn't have to be realistic but your goals do.

If you could hit the ball 832.7 feet you would get an offer to play for any softball program in the country. The head coach might even volunteer to carry your bat bag for you and bake you homemade chocolate chip cookies. But writing a goal like that down would be useless if you studied the history of this game at all. While there is a chance that you are stronger than Crystl Bustos. You may even worker harder than Crystl Bustos. Your daddy may have bought you a bat better than the one that Crystl used. But the fact that she is considered to be the strongest hitter in the game and her longest was a mere 460 feet I don't like the odds of you realistically being able to beat her mark by hitting it 832.7 feet.

“Aerodynamically the bumble bee shouldn't be able to fly, but the bumble bee doesn't know that so it goes on flying anyway” Mary Kay Ash

This is another area of the goal setting process where you have to do some research in order to find out what is achievable. Then judge yourself according to where you are now compared to those achievements in order to come up with what is achievable by you. Don't misinterpret that as meaning that you should set specific, measurable goals that

are easy to achieve. If you want to hit further than Crystl and be more feared than she is then go for it. Challenge how she did it. Find new ways to drive the ball that she didn't have at her disposal and beat her record. Eventually someone will hit the ball harder than her, but realistically that will be an incremental step forward they aren't going to double her mark. And unless you are reading this at the age 4 you probably don't have enough time to work hard enough and gain enough knowledge and confidence to do it yourself.

*"I have always tried to go a step past
wherever people expected me to end up."*

Beverly Sills

Read the words carefully again "Achievable by you." Does that imply any limitation that you have to be able to achieve it by you with the tools you currently have? Your current strength? Your current speed? Your current abilities as a leader? Your current level of confidence?

Clearly we have stated over and over that like directions coming out of a GPS your goals are the road map that will get you to your dream. But unless you dream of laying in a bed and taking a nap your dream should challenge you to grow. This like other aspects of your goals needs to challenge you. Not cause you to become super human and break the laws of physics, but challenge you to grow. So they need to be achievable by you ... after pushing yourself to grow your God given gifts.

R – Reach forward

The only goal we dislike hearing more than “I want to become a better hitter” is “I want to strike out less this year than I did last year.”

All that statement does is help you avoid something negative, it does not help you accomplish a single thing. Would it make any sense for a person to state “My dream is to walk the entire Appalachian Trail” but then state that their goal as “I want to avoid sweating, or getting any blisters, or having my legs ever be sore, or ever get thirsty?” Of course not.

Typically goals that are written to avoid something negative come from a desire to avoid negative consequences like mom and dad yelling, they don’t come from a desire to accomplish something. They don’t come from a sincere desire to want to reach a dream. You simply can’t walk up to the plate with a fear in your head wanting to avoid striking out if you expect to play at any high level of competition in this game. As instructors and coaches we tend to see girls that want to avoid striking out succeed very little in getting on base. Instead of attacking the ball, those players tend to try and be goalies waiting until the last possible second, taking slow, weak swings, only intended to keep the ball out of the catchers mitt.

“The bravest sight in the world is to see a great man struggling against adversity”

Seneca

A pitcher could succeed in “not allowing any home runs” by walking everyone.

An outfielder could succeed in “not dropping any catches” by never getting in a position close enough to catch the ball.

Your goals absolutely have to inspire you to succeed in something.

Your goals absolutely have to push through where you currently are in your talent.

Your goals absolutely have to help increase your desire to work hard in order to achieve them.

Your goals absolutely have to help you build your confidence as you achieve them.

Just as you can't possibly make a great omelet if your goal is to avoid breaking any eggs you can't succeed if your goal is to avoid failure.

Simply put your goals cannot allow you to retreat they must cause you to reach forward.

Simply put your goals cannot allow you to retreat they must cause you to reach forward.

Just in case you thought that was a copy/paste mistake here it is again to ensure you don't miss this point:

Simply put your goals cannot allow you to retreat they must cause you to reach forward.

If there is any element of your game that you know is being controlled by fear of failure, then you need to write down a goal of overcoming that fear. "I will play at East Podunk University in 4 years. I will crush the ball in order to get seen and recruited as demonstrated through a slugging percentage of .650. As I begin driving the ball I will cause my parents to change the "not again" screams into screams like "yeah she killed another one."

T – Time based

They say that time heals all wounds. They say that you can never go back in time. They say that time is the most expensive thing in this world. Time is important in life and a very important aspect of goals. Unfortunately time is the one aspect of goal setting that is often overlooked.

Remember the key to always remember about goals is that they are supposed to point along the way that get you to your dream. They are supposed to continually help fuel your desire to work hard as you build confidence that you are going in the right direction and you will accomplish your dream. However not placing a deadline on a goal like “I want to have a batting average of .475” while specific, measurable, achievable by you and causes you to reach forward” ignores the fact that it will take time.

If you don't establish any time line for that goal then while you could very well move forward 1 or 2 percent per year, you will not reach the goal before you have long since missed the window of time to achieve your dream. Thus it was then a terrible goal because it didn't serve its purpose.

If your current batting average is .125, having a goal of .475 and expecting that in your head you will accomplish it this season probably breaks the rule of being “achievable by you” because the odds are not very good that you will go from a weak hitter to a great hitter in 2-3 months. Not impossible, just improbable.

Instead of just trying to attack the entire difference between .125 and .475 in 1 season break it up. Use time to your advantage so that the goals help you instead of destroying your confidence. If you have 3 years before you will need to leave for East Podunk University then do the math and realize that instead of improving .350 in 1 season, you really have 3 full years. That means that you only need to improve

your batting average by .116 each year. So you would have 3 goals: “I want to bat .241 12 months from now.” “I want to bat .357 24 months from now.” “I want to bat .475 36 months from now.”

Not so scary after all. Each year you can reward yourself by achieving a goal. In fact who said your goals have to be a full year out in time. You have both a HS season and a travel ball season so why not split the goals up into those seasons. That means each of your goals would only require a .058 improvement in your batting average.

“If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.”
Henry David Thoreau.

The big cheeses that come up with the fancy sayings would tell you that your overall goal of trying to hit .475 is called a Long Term Goal. That just means that they are longer in time than you can realistically benefit from. But they provide the target for you to keep shooting for. Typically long term goals are measured in multiple years.

While your year by year goals are called Mid Term Goals. That means that they are mid-points that mark your progress to ensure that you are on course. Points that are closer in time and manageable for you to keep working towards. Typically mid term goals are measured in relation to a single year, or close to an entire year.

There is also another term that they use all the time which is Short Term Goals. Short term goals are those that are set for a very small amount of time. One that is very manageable for your mind to focus on because it is so soon compared to where you are currently at. The time length for short term

goals varies from athlete to athlete. If you are the type of person that loses attention easily you want to keep your short term goals to very small increments of time. If you can push yourself and stay focused longer your short term goal time frames may be as long as 2-3 months. Essentially it takes you 3 weeks to break an old habit, and 3 weeks to secure a new habit. Followed by a few weeks time to ensure that you have mastered that new habit.

Of all the key terms relating to time the most important. The one that you better not avoid. The one that will change everything about your future is the term Immediate. That word is defined as

Adjective - Ih-mee-dee-it “occurring or accomplished without delay; instant.” Also “following or preceding without a lapse of time.”
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In terms that anyone should be able to understand it means “If you want to reach your dream then identify what you can do right now to start moving in that direction.”

If you are batting .125 today, then what you are doing isn't working. In order to get to .475 in 3 years you better get some help. So your first goal could be “I want to find 5 different batting coaches in the next 2 days.” A second one might be “I want to visit each of the 5 batting coaches within 2 weeks and make the decision who I think will help me the most.”

In chapter 3 we asked you to spend time writing out your goals. Your next step is to evaluate those that you have written against the 5 principles of the acronym S.M.A.R.T. using the chart that follows. If the goal doesn't meet all 5 of the criteria then rewrite the goal in a way that does.

Some of your goals will lend themselves perfectly to breaking them up into a long range, mid term and short term version of them. So do that.

In the chart there are a couple of goals already written out as illustrations to help you see that some things you hear a lot do fit some of the criteria but don't meet all of them and should be rewritten. Remember the key for every goal you come up with is that you believe in it. You trust that if you follow them and work hard to accomplish them. You will accomplish your dream.

Once you write each one you also need to commit that you will do everything you possibly can to ensuring that you meet it. If you are batting .125 right now and write down that you want to bat .475 but don't do anything different than what you are doing right now the odds aren't good you are going to magically accomplish the goal. Commit that you will put the effort into making each goal come true, one at a time.

