

## Lesson 5: Planning Your Journey a.k.a Good Plans Work BACKWARDS!

Welcome back! Andy Vellacott here with another episode of The 10X Effect, and this time we're talking about planning, *what is a plan, why do we need one, why's it so important?* It doesn't sound like it's going to be quite as deep as the other episodes, but let's go ahead and see.

So I'm going to start this episode off with a story about a farmer. You know, I grew up on a farm, so I found this story kind of interesting. Anyway, this farmer has the most beautiful farm, you know, the fences are all perfectly painted white, his house is immaculate, his fields look amazing. He's out there every day, at like 5am, and he's ploughing his fields and cutting the hedgerows, and all of the furrows in the field are perfectly straight, and all the seeds are starting to come up in perfect straight lines, and it looks amazing. So, one day this farmer spots a guy who is leaning on his fence by the side of the road, so he goes over to him and he says can I help you, and the guy says I was just admiring your farm. You know your farm is the nicest looking farm I've ever seen and I wish I had a farm like this. In fact I'm very envious of you because you have such a nice farm and you seem so happy doing nothing but tending to it. So the farmer just smiles but doesn't say anything. So the guy continues and asks the farmer where could he buy a farm like this, so that he could have one the same. And the farmer replies, sir, a farm like this one does not exist anywhere else except here. So the guy asks him if he could buy this farm. And the farmer replies, no sir, you cannot buy this farm because without me the farm would not look as it does. So the guy says supposing I bought a different farm and you came to look after it for me. And the farmer says no sir, I cannot look after it for you, because then my own farm would not look as it does. So the guy gets depressed and says I guess I'll never have a farm as nice as yours then and starts to head back to his car, but the farmer stops him and says, but sir I can tell you how you can have a farm just as nice as mine. You see me enjoying my work, and living on this beautiful farm and you are envious. I just wish you could have seen it before I got here when it was just an empty field! Let me teach you what I have learned and you will be able to create your own farm just as nice as mine.

So we all get caught up in this kind of envy for what other people have, and we kind of want there to be a shortcut to us having that ourselves. But the reality is we all have an empty field in front of us and it's down to us to create what it is we want to experience in our lives. But we don't have to figure it all out by ourselves. That's when you need to go out and find a great teacher, who has done it themselves and can tell you how to do it too. And the first thing that any good teacher will ask you is, what is it you want me to help you create? And you don't want to be like the guy who says he just wants exactly what you've got, because that's not really going to fit for you. So you have an empty field and you can turn it into anything you want. But to do it you are going to need a plan, or a blueprint, or some way to plan what you want it to look like and what you're going to need to build it. And unless you're already an expert builder, you're going to need a plan that details all the steps you need to take in order to put all these pieces together.

Now that all makes sense, right, I mean you've got to know which piece to work on first, and which bit fits where, but here's where again, most people get it backwards and end up lost! Because imagine you are travelling on a road and you come to a fork. One's way's going to be good for you getting to where you want to go and one's going to take you in the wrong direction. So you choose one, but then you come to another fork, and another one. It doesn't take many forks before you arrive at a completely different location to the one you actually wanted.

So when you plan a journey you need to start with your destination, and trace it backwards to where you are right now. This is what I call the Decision Path. You're going to find the same forks and have to make the same choices whether you have a plan or not, but with a good plan you're going to know which way is best because you already know where you want to get to.

Why is it that we'll do this for a car journey, but we never seem to do it in any other area of our lives? Well, it's because we can't see all of the choices we're going to have to make until we get to them, so we end up either choosing randomly, or more often than not even realise that we're making a choice. So what is important, and this is super-important, is that you have a clear destination in mind BEFORE you start your journey so you know which way to turn when you're faced with a choice. And that doesn't mean you have to know all the details before you set off, it's better to get moving, and you'll be able to refine your plan as you go.

So you gotta have a plan, that's pretty obvious. But you also have to know, and again this might sound a bit backwards to you if you haven't heard this before, that a good plan **isn't** a complete plan. A good plan is one that plans for the unexpected. You know, because life is going to happen. Life is going to throw things at you that you weren't expecting. And if all you've got is a complete plan then it all goes pear shaped as soon as it gets derailed by something unexpected.

There's a saying from I think it was World War One general who said No Plan Survives First Contact. What he didn't mean is that there's no point in making a plan to start with. You've still got to go in with some kind of plan to get things in order and get your pieces in the right places, but you also have to know that you can't know everything, and that's what makes life kind of fun anyway. You know, the nice surprises we get. Sometimes something unexpectedly *GOOD* happens, like you come across a new piece of information that unlocks a new world for you, or you find a new way of learning, or you discover a new passion.

We tend to think of unexpected things as being bad for us, because that's how our instincts have evolved in order to protect us. But that is not the case anymore. We don't live in a world where everything is trying to eat us! So having a plan that is flexible and adaptable and not complete can be a good thing, because it allows the space for new things and better things to enter into our lives.

Ok, so a final thought on planning and how good plans work backwards. First of all don't sweat it. This is one of those areas where people think they have to get it all worked out before they can get started. Either that or they don't think about it at all and just go steaming in without any kind of plan, then wonder why it all seems so damn complicated! Having a plan makes things simple for you, so you start by getting clear on what you're trying to build, what pieces you need and how to fit them together. And then once you get moving it's also going to keep you on the right track and help you avoid distractions, but is open enough and flexible enough to absorb and even incorporate all of the unexpected things that are going to happen, whether they're good or not.

And I can't understate this enough, just how much time and energy a good plan can save you by helping you to get organised, plan your time, get prepared and be consistent. Having a plan is a bit like having a coach who's keeping you on track and getting on your back when you're skimping out. And being consistent is the key to EVERYTHING, but to be consistent you also have to make sure it's SUSTAINABLE.

And sustainable means that you can keep doing it over the long-term without burning out, and the key to that is making it short, clear and simple, because that's the only way to keep doing something every day, which we all know, even if we like to try and pretend that we don't, is the key to making any kind of impactful progress.

So if you're only going to be having short sessions every day because you want this to be sustainable, you have to make them count, and make sure that you are getting what you need, taking the right steps and concentrating all of that energy into that particular moment, and I'm going to talk more about that in the next episode, so I'll see you there.