

**REAL RABBITS:
CHASING AN AUTHENTIC LIFE**

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TO JILLIAN - MY LIFE

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ON CHASING RABBITS

A woman sat on her porch one summer evening and talked with her prized possession – a world-renowned racing greyhound named Cash. When he raced, Cash ran with all his might and won and won and won. After each victory, his owner happily deposited the large paychecks into her retirement fund. The two often spent hours on the porch recounting these victories and pondering future races.

This evening was different, however. After decades of success and millions of dollars in winnings, the greyhound told his owner that he was hanging it up. Cash had run his final race. Upon hearing the news, the shocked owner asked:

“Just be honest. Are you getting too old to keep up this pace?”

Cash answered, “No, no, I still have a lot of race left in me.”

Moving on, the owner pried, “So, are you injured?”

“No.” Cash replied, “Actually, I’ve never felt better!”

“Well,” inquired the woman, becoming increasingly frustrated, “do I mistreat you in any way?”

“Come on,” came the response, “you know you always treat me kindly.”

“Then why? Why won’t you race? I must know. You are so good at what you do and you’ve worked for years to get to this point – the pinnacle of your career. If you retire, we will miss out on even larger

paydays, worldwide fame and a chance to go down as the most successful owner-greyhound combo in history!”

To that Cash replied:

“I do not want to race anymore because, after all of that running and running and running, I finally discovered that the rabbits I have been chasing all my life aren’t even real.”¹

¹ This wonderful tale was adapted from a version of the story related to me by John Bogle (founder of the Vanguard Group) during a presentation to the University of Denver’s Daniels College of Business on November 1, 2006. Bogle stated that the story was passed on to him by Reverend Fred Craddock (Professor Emeritus at Emory University’s Candler School of Theology).

INTRODUCTION: LIFE IS TOUGH

“Life is tough. It takes a lot of your time, all your weekends. . . .”

--- JACK KORNFIELD

“Don’t go around saying the world owes you a living. The world owes you nothing. It was here first.”

--- MARK TWAIN

“Life is tough, but it’s tougher when you’re stupid.”

--- JOHN WAYNE

Life is tough. Just ask one of the billions of people across the globe living on less than one dollar per day. Then, talk to anyone suffering from terminal cancer, someone paralyzed from the neck down, any resident of Manhattan on September 11, 2001 or of the Gulf Coast during Hurricane Katrina. Although your life may never be this tough, you can count on encountering many uphill battles during your eighty or so years on Earth. Fortunately, each battle you face presents you with an opportunity to make several key decisions which can influence the outcome. Whether these choices revolve around your attitude, a family relationship or friendship, a spiritual or moral dilemma, peer pressure, your career or education, each decision places you front and center at a pivotal crossroads. Here, you can choose wisely and succeed or choose poorly and struggle. This book exists to help you choose wisely.

A wise choice here and there interrupted by a slew of poor choices will provide you with bits of happiness eclipsed by bouts of struggles. A bunch of wise choices strung together is better, but leaves you vulnerable to failures you could have prevented. The ability to consistently make wise choices, however, punches your ticket to an authentically successful life. Authentic success is not the kind of success much of the world appreciates such as wealth, fame and adoration. These things represent the fake rabbits Cash

the greyhound used to chase. Authentic success is the kind of success that makes a person genuinely happy. As opposed to worldly success, think of authentic success as encompassing basic contentment, a wonderful family, bona fide friendships, a rewarding career and the ability to grow personally, professionally and spiritually. These things represent the real rabbits worth chasing.

Each person's definition of authentic success may vary but invariably revolves around the idea of basic contentment. Basic contentment is a concept that is tough to define but is obvious when you sense it in others or when you possess it yourself.² You are truly content with your life when you can wake up most mornings happy to be alive, progress through most days with a hopeful heart and a desire to improve yourself and the world around you and sleep well at night knowing you have actually helped rather than harmed. Authentically successful people still struggle to get out of bed on some mornings and to motivate themselves for certain tasks like everyone else; the major difference is that authentically successful people spend the vast majority of their time experiencing contentment and happiness rather than anxiety, depression or unhappiness.

Fortunately, membership in the authentic success club is non-exclusive, non-discriminatory and open to people of all ages and abilities. You must understand, however, that the club requires you to commit to three obligations before your membership becomes valid: (1) the development of a solid foundation from which you can base your efforts, (2) effective preparation to handle life's challenges successfully and (3)

² United States Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart used a similar concept in trying to define obscenity in the case of Jacobellis v. Ohio, 378 U.S. 184 (1964): "I shall not today attempt further to define the kinds of material I understand to be embraced within that shorthand description [of obscenity]; and perhaps I could never succeed in intelligibly doing so. **But I know it when I see it**, and the motion picture involved in this case is not that." The point is that basic contentment is tough to define in a precise manner. The concept is something that is best understood by observing contentment in another person or by experiencing contentment yourself.

the ability to do a few important things very well and very consistently as you experience the world in real time.

If you are interested in achieving this type of success, you are in the right place. *Real Rabbits* is a compilation of the hard lessons I have learned thus far in my life as a kid with a tough past, college student, law student, corporate lawyer, small business owner, business law and ethics professor, author, boyfriend, fiancée, husband, friend and sincerely religious person. Organized into three parts – *On Your Mark*, *Get Set*, and *Go* – the next fifteen chapters will introduce you to many of the important roadblocks you must hurdle on the road to authentic success.

Part I develops the idea that authentic success requires a solid foundation made up of a strong work ethic, a virtuous character, a clear set of priorities and the proper perspective on life. Like a long-distance runner, you must find your mark on the track of life and ground yourself there before you can begin the journey to the finish line. Having properly grounded yourself, you will begin to see that authentic success does not depend on luck and that you are able to determine your own destiny if you can incorporate certain foundational attributes into your daily routine.

After finding your mark, you must get set for the journey ahead. Part II elaborates on the idea that getting set requires effective preparation and the honing of life skills necessary for authentic success – skills such as professionalism, learning to think and managing your time effectively. You must also develop the ability to consistently persevere over long periods of time and throughout the moments of despair you will certainly encounter – a skill I refer to as consistent persistence. You must strive to recession-proof your life by finding a way to become more flexible, develop a plethora of different skills and make yourself as irreplaceable as possible.

Finally, after grounding yourself and properly preparing for success, you are ready to go – ready to live your life successfully as it happens (or, as the twenty-first century, technologically-sophisticated world might label it, in real time). Part III encourages you to develop meaningful relationships, make excellent decisions, take personal responsibility for your actions and learn from your failures each and every day. The final few chapters will teach you how to rid your life of less meaningful stressors and to hustle, fight, listen and laugh (even at yourself).

By the end of this journey, you will be well on your way to achieving authentic success. Dedicate yourself to this process and you will finally find a place where the vast majority of your days will be full of contentment and genuine happiness. Even in the midst of a life that is tough, you will shine. And, you will shine in a way that makes others wonder, and maybe even ask, what makes you so happy – not that it should matter to you, remember. After telling your story to these inquirers, they may desire to feel the same contentment and strive to incorporate these principles into their lives. Either way, this book is designed to open up your mind to the idea that life is tough, but that authentic success rests only a few uphill battles away. So fight on and, in this endeavor, I wish you good luck. Just kidding, instead, I wish you the . . .

Best of Success,

Professor C.

Corey A. Ciocchetti

Westminster, Colorado

February 27, 2007

CHAPTER 4: PRIORITIZE YOUR LIFE

“The key is not to prioritize what’s on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities.”

--- STEVEN COVEY

“Wise are those who learn that the bottom line doesn’t always have to be their top priority.”

--- WILLIAM ARTHUR WARD

“You can never get enough of what you don’t need to make you happy.”

--- ERIC HOFFER

BIG-TIME CORPORATE LAW

My weekdays commenced about eight-thirty in the morning and ended around eight o’clock in the evening. My weekends were subject to disappear into the abyss of a looming transaction. I would wake up, get ready for work and think about work – even in the shower. Then, I would go to work and think about work. Much later, I would go home and think about the tasks I needed to accomplish at work the next day. After three years of law school and \$120,000 of debt, I was finally a corporate associate at a powerful law firm.

I was immediately immersed in transactions involving initial public offerings and high-profile mergers. I helped counsel prominent corporations about how to structure their most crucial business transactions. These were the deals young law students discussed in class, read about in newspapers and pondered with their peers. The money was outstanding; I earned an annual income of \$110,000 plus a bonus based on the billable hours I accumulated throughout the year. I was 25 years old and had placed myself squarely in the middle of a world I had desired for years. There was only one problem – I was miserable.

As a young man, I had deliberately prioritized my life and chosen work as my top priority. Further down the list came my friends and family. Even lower were things like playing basketball – something I looked forward to daily in college and law school – and going to church. My most important personal relationships were struggling and I couldn't walk up a few flights of stairs without breaking a sweat.

I was chasing fake rabbits that had taken the form of wealth, prestige and worldly success while ignoring real rabbits such as exercise, personal relationships and religion. I felt that placing my career as my first priority was what young professionals were supposed to do in order to be successful. I had always assumed that a prestigious legal career – and all the money and professional rewards that accompany it – was something to be sought after. After all, I had paid a lot of money to attend four years of college, one year of graduate school and three years of law school to get to this exact place. I had taken the SAT, ACT (twice), LSAT and the Colorado Bar Exam. I had sacrificed many evenings and weekends to studying and extracurricular activities. Knowing that I treasured my family, friends and religion, I was convinced that I could place my young career first and these other priorities a bit lower while still treating everything as if it was at the top of my list. I was wrong.

Today – at thirty years old and as a recovering lawyer – I have completely revamped my list of priorities. My religion, spending quality time with my wife and my friends and improving relationships with my family now take top billing. Exercise has moved up my list as well – although at this age I have to stretch before playing basketball. My career is now fifth in line, down four spots from its previous lofty perch.

Are my reshaped priorities acceptable for a young professional in the twenty-first century? Must I change to a less demanding field if I choose to prioritize my career in fifth place? Do I experience pressure from my employer to “reevaluate” my priority structure? The remainder of this chapter will answer these questions and encourage you to determine what your priorities are and then actually prioritize (or potentially reprioritize) your life.

PRIORITIZE YOUR LIFE

The previous story need not revolve around corporate law. If you choose to place your career first on your list of priorities, just subtract the lawyer part and fill in your chosen career field. Don't worry the results will be the same.

First, you will desire to be the best in your chosen field. This desire is actually a good thing and you should try to be very good at whatever you pick as your top priority. Second, you will want to impress your colleagues, clients and superiors. This is a natural tendency and impressed superiors often bring quality work to the employees who impress them. Third, you will need to learn the basics and the nuances of your new field. This will not come easy to you as a novice professional. Becoming fluent in the language, topics and procedures of your new career will require great energy and patience. Finally, you will feel intense pressure to put in the time and effort required to accomplish everything mentioned above. You have chosen to place your career above everything else and, both consciously and subconsciously, it will come first.

Please read this paragraph carefully and read the "A Word about Careers" section below very carefully when you get there. I am neither trying to dissuade you from placing your career first on your priorities list nor am I advocating that you do not need to work hard to succeed in the professional world. I am merely advising you that the things placed lower on your list will inevitably suffer while your attention is focused on your top priority. This is just the way priorities work. There is not enough time in each day to accomplish everything that you desire to accomplish. An illustration of these time constraints will help put this time crunch in perspective.

No matter how you frame it, each and every day is confined to twenty-four hours. At least one-fourth of that time should be allocated to sleep.³ You now have eighteen hours from which you can divide your daily awake time. A high-powered career – your first priority, remember – required at least ten hours from me every day and you should expect a similar time commitment. That leaves eight hours of awake time in your day. But wait, getting ready in the morning, looking professional and eating breakfast combined with getting ready for bed at night and eating dinner takes time. And, don't forget your commute to and from work. Allocate at least two hours per day for these activities. You now have six hours remaining. Most young professionals have phone calls and e-mails to return every day and errands to run (i.e., picking up groceries, dry cleaning and attending various appointments) at least a few times per week. If you value exercise at all, working out can take up one hour per day.

Average all of this out and you should have around four hours each day to spend on the items lower down on your list. And, you only have these four hours if you are as efficient as you can be with your time, if your job does not keep you later than planned and if you do not allocate any time to stop and take some deep breaths. Remember, you will face the same dilemma tomorrow and the next day. Will you head to church with your extra time or will you try and fit in your friends/family in those few remaining hours before heading to bed? Trust me, your friends and your family will not always find it meaningful when you fit them into a two-hour “quality time” time slot. Would you if the roles were reversed?

I hope I have convinced you that your top priority will dominate your life even if you wish it were otherwise. There just are not enough hours in the day. Steven Covey, a noted expert on time management, once said: “Whatever is at the center of our life will be the source of our security, guidance, wisdom, and power.” If your career is at the center, then you will derive your security, guidance, wisdom and power from your job. If your religion, spouse or personal relationships are at the center then these different

³ Medical research claims that adults need between six and eight hours of sleep to function correctly.

sources will provide such necessities. Just keep in mind that items further down on your priorities list will merit less time. You won't have it – you'll be focusing on your top priority.

Fortunately, your life does not have to follow this script. As you build your foundation, you will begin to determine which things are most important to you in your life. You might think your career should be your number one priority until your perspective and character tell you that it should be your family. Regardless of your overall priority structure, this chapter will provide you with the tools necessary to discover the most important things in your life, craft them into a written priorities list and then stick to this list even when it is not convenient and when times get tough.

STEP ONE: SET PRIORITIES

The first step in this process is to actually set some priorities in your life. The bullet points below represent the most important things in many people's lives in no particular order. Take this list, add items to it and subtract items from it as necessary, think about what each of these things means to you and then create a written draft of your priorities. Remember, this list can change – mine did. Sit down in a place where you have peace, quiet and a piece of paper and really think about each category below and what it means to you. Try your best to keep the fake rabbits out of the picture as you jot things down – remember, we are chasing real rabbits now.

- RELIGION
- NEIGHBORS
- CLOSE FRIENDS
- CAREER
- SPOUSE/GIRLFRIEND/BOYFRIEND
- EDUCATION
- PARENTS
- EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES
- SIBLINGS
- COMMUNITY SERVICE
- GRANDPARENTS
- HEALTH & EXERCISE
- OTHER RELATIVES
- HOBBIES & OTHER FUN PURSUITS
- RELAXATION
- FINANCES
- DISTANT FRIENDS

STEP TWO: STICK WITH YOUR PRIORITIES (EVEN WHEN THE HEAT IS ON)

Okay, now that your new list of priorities is complete, go put it on your refrigerator and read on. Thus far, it has been fairly easy to nod along with the concept that you need priorities in your life. It might have been a bit tougher to recognize the implications of placing your career at the very top of the list, but hopefully you can see what happens when this occurs as well. Now is the part where this discussion becomes the most difficult. When the heat is put on you, when somebody important in your life pressures you to alter your priority structure or break your commitment to it, can you stick with your list or will you collapse and put lower priorities above higher priorities? If you bow to this pressure and cut and paste your priorities as different situations dictate, then you have not developed this crucial part of your foundation. You are like a ship lost in the sea of your life and it will be tough to find contentment on a consistent basis.

You have to stick with your priorities even if your decision is unpopular and potentially harmful to your professional life. If you place your career fifth on your list and your spouse at the top but you continually put your work first you are deceiving yourself and your list is a mere sham. A list of priorities does not work merely because you numbered and memorialized your priorities on a piece of paper. You have to stick to them in order for this process to be effective. The problem is that you can count on the application of major pressure on a rather consistent basis as a young professional. Your boss and/or your colleagues will demand that you “rededicate yourself” to your career, “take one for the team,” or take your work commitments more seriously. This is likely to happen even if you are working as hard as you can or as hard as your priorities will allow. When the heat is on, you must find a way to stick to your priorities.

A WORD ABOUT CAREERS

Careers have a way of demanding much of our time regardless of their significance on our priority ladder. This is a good thing. We can and should find much fulfillment in our work and in the people we meet along the way. The vast majority of us also need to work to earn a living. Because of the significance careers have in our lives, I encourage you take your career seriously regardless of where you place it on your priorities list. While you are at work, give it a good faith effort. When you have a big project, you may have to work overtime and sacrifice a bit. I encourage you to do these things with a joyful heart. At least you have a job.

The key is for you to know where you have to draw the line – a line that you are unwilling to cross. If your employer will not let you make travel commitments because you might be needed that weekend or if you feel that you need to be home with your family for dinner most nights, it might be time to choose a different company to work for. If you feel trapped in a job, you can generally choose to leave and go elsewhere. The money and prestige may be lower but you can counter these losses with gains in the form of increased time spent on things that rank higher on your priorities list.

I joked earlier about being a recovering lawyer. While that is true – and a bit funny – I still love the law and I do enjoy working hard in my professional endeavors. As a professor of business law and ethics, I have dedicated my professional life to helping young people learn as well as pushing knowledge of the law beyond its current boundaries through my writing and lecturing. These are important tasks and they take a lot of time. Although I do not feel tied to the workplace as I did as a corporate lawyer, my current job requires me to put in significant hours during the week and on some weekends.

Here is the difference. Although the demands are similar, a glance at my revamped list of priorities gives me the strength to make better decisions about my work commitments. Today, when I have to choose between concentrating on a work-related task and seeing a movie with my wife, I will now choose the movie. I will exercise an hour a day, even if that puts me a bit behind in my to-do list.

I must admit that sometimes these choices are difficult and place me at a disadvantage in relation to my colleagues. Sometimes, I find myself drawn to the idea that I need to be more dedicated to my career so that I can be the best I can be. Old habits die hard I guess. Sometimes, I struggle to keep my priorities in their proper order and that's a good thing. If this process was not a struggle then it would be much easier to take for granted. After reading this chapter, you should be more confident in the order of your priorities and the importance of sticking to them through tough times. Now, you just have to find the guts to do it. The following discussion will help you develop some of this necessary courage.

TOUGH QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS WITH PROFESSOR C

Let's return to the three tough questions posed at the beginning of this chapter:

***ARE MY RESHAPED PRIORITIES ACCEPTABLE FOR A YOUNG
PROFESSIONAL IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY?***

Anyone who chooses to chase real rabbits takes a leap of faith. These brave souls deliberately choose to pursue things that our materialistic world does not outwardly appreciate. One of the first things we are asked in social settings is what we do for a living or what schools we attended. People envy their neighbor's cars, homes and holiday decorations. "Desperate Housewives" is America's highest rated television drama. So, my answer to this seemingly difficult question of whether my reshaped priorities are acceptable is – "Who Cares?!" Are these reshaped priorities acceptable? Acceptable to whom? Please recall that we are working on your life here – not your parents' lives, not your colleagues' lives and definitely not your boss's life.

As long as you are comfortable with your priorities and the potential professional repercussions of sticking to them, then place them on your list and hold on tight. You can still be a successful professional and be respected in your community with work falling below family and friends on your list of priorities. In fact, this change has been a breath of fresh air in my life. I consider myself a successful young professional. I am one of the youngest and highest-rated professors in a department and a college that ranks third in the world for producing ethical graduates – and my career rests fifth on my list. Ironically, many of my law school colleagues with high-powered legal careers often joke about trading jobs with me. I work diligently; however, when it comes time to choose, I think back to my priorities and choose the ones at the top both consistently and confidently.

***MUST I CHANGE TO A LESS DEMANDING FIELD IF I CHOOSE TO
PRIORITIZE MY CAREER IN FIFTH PLACE?***

Young professionals who rank their careers lower on their list of priorities may find themselves limited within their chosen career field. The key phrase here is “limited within” and not “banned from” their chosen field. My job as a corporate lawyer was on a collision course with my amended priorities list. It was impossible for me to place that particular job fifth on my list and, at the same time, survive long enough to become a partner. It was possible, however, for me to work within a different area of the legal profession with my career in fifth place.

While practicing big-time corporate law proved to be untenable, teaching at my alma mater presented itself as a perfect alternative. As a legal studies professor, I am able to deal with the law everyday and still structure my time around my other priorities. I continue to work very hard – between fifty and sixty hours per week – but I have the privilege of setting my own schedule. I was not forced to give up my career in law even though I completely retooled my priorities. The bottom line is that, by placing your job fifth or so on your list, you may be forced to choose a different type of job within your career field but you need not abandon your chosen field altogether.

DO I EXPERIENCE PRESSURE FROM MY EMPLOYER TO “REEVALUATE” MY PRIORITY STRUCTURE?

I have experienced pressure in the past from employers urging me to “reevaluate” my priorities. Interestingly, similar pressures came from my colleagues. It was a groupthink type of mentality – something similar to: “we’re all putting in long hours, this sucks, we can’t change anything, so you just need to tough it out with us.” Looking back, I can see how ridiculous it sounds. When I was in the midst of it, however, I started to think that my

colleagues were right and that I needed to sacrifice all else for my job. Be careful that you don't join in on such a dangerous groupthink mentality.

In my newest endeavor, I have avoided the application of this type of pressure. This avoidance stems from the fact that I have developed the ability to get difficult projects done well and done quickly. I avoid most of the heat because I have heeded my own advice from this book and developed the ability to think (see Chapter Seven) and the skill of consistent-persistence (see Chapter Eight). These qualities allow me to be successful without working the ridiculous hours I had in the past.

I guess it's an experience thing combined with more flexible job duties. I am sure that the pressure would be more noticeable if I was not as productive or if I did not care about my students as much as I do. At the end of the day, I consider it a good thing that my department and my administration expect me to be a top-notch professor. This reasonable expectation is in both my and my employer's best interests and is manageable because I possess the skills necessary to effectively achieve it.

GOALS

“If you are failing to plan, you are planning to fail.”

--- TARIQ SIDDIQUE

“A goal properly set is halfway reached.”

--- ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Your priorities are now in order (congratulations!). At this point, you need to figure out how to order your life accordingly. How, for instance, are you going to put your family first, treat your

friends with more respect or excel at your education? To properly execute your priorities, you need goals. A goal is something you desire to achieve in your life accompanied by a timeframe within which you aspire to achieve it. Goals focus your mind on an endeavor and give you something to strive for.

It is time for you to set some goals. Begin the goal-setting process by utilizing your list of priorities as your guide. Your most important goals should be tied to your top priorities. You also need goals for your lowest priorities as these are still important – they merited a place on your list didn't they? Merely thinking about your goals is good but writing them down is even better.

Therefore, strive to write your goals down on a piece of paper, draft them as positive statements and aim high (not astronomically high and unachievable but high enough that you will have to struggle to get there). Start this process by creating goals for the following time periods: three months, six months, one year, and three years in the future. Your goals for the one and three-month periods should be somewhat specific, while your goals for the more distant periods can be more abstract.

SET YOUR GOALS

Carefully analyze the following example. The priorities and goals stated in the charts below come from a freshman in college (let's call her Katie) who desires to attend medical school upon graduation. Katie just completed her first semester and has a 3.0 GPA. She is involved in five extracurricular activities but is not truly dedicated to any of them. She has no clue about how the medical school application process works and has poor study habits (sometimes going a full week without picking up a textbook or looking at her notes). She knows that she needs to work out for her mental and physical health but was not raised in a family that valued exercise.

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The first chart indicates Katie’s top five priorities. The second chart provides an example of how Katie could emphasize these priorities in her life by creating a list of goals. Notice how each of her top five priorities finds a place in each period of time on her list. Notice also that each goal is both ambitious and achievable at the same time. For instance, Katie desires her GPA to improve from a 3.0 to a 3.5 in a three-year period. This is a tough task, but one that a dedicated student can achieve. Once you analyze this chart, please try and craft your own list of goals for the same time periods. Remember to start by listing your priorities and then insure that each priority finds a spot on your list.

KATIE’S PRIORITIES

- | | |
|--------------|----------------------|
| 1. FAMILY | 4. PLAYING THE PIANO |
| 2. EDUCATION | 5. EXERCISE |
| 3. FRIENDS | |

KATIE’S GOALS (USING HER PRIORITIES AS HER GUIDE)

TIME PERIOD	GOALS
THREE MONTHS (THE MIDDLE OF KATIE’S SPRING SEMESTER)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call my family twice per week • Study every night for one hour • Spend quality time with friends • Exercise one hour per week
SIX MONTHS (THE END OF KATIE’S FRESHMAN YEAR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call my family twice per week • Obtain a GPA of 3.3 • Study every night for one hour • Declare my major and minor • Spend quality time with friends • Reserve one hour per week for playing the piano • Exercise two hours per week

<p style="text-align: center;">ONE YEAR (THE MIDDLE OF KATIE'S SOPHOMORE YEAR)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call my family twice per week • Obtain a GPA of 3.4 • Study every night for two hours • Understand the school admissions process • Get my resume together • Spend quality time with friends • Reserve one hour per week for playing the piano • Exercise two hours per week
<p style="text-align: center;">THREE YEARS (THE MIDDLE OF KATIE'S SENIOR YEAR)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call my family twice per week • Obtain a GPA of 3.5 (graduate with this GPA) • Take the MCAT test • Select ten medical schools to apply to and apply • Spend quality time with friends • Reserve one hour per week for playing the piano • Exercise three hours per week

Your list of goals will likely be longer than the illustration above. A more elaborate list is a good thing, just make sure not to write too much down about each goal – remember, these are goals and not journal entries. Make sure you update your goals often and create new goals when your current time periods expire. Also, make sure to save your old lists so that you can look back to see how much you have accomplished. If you are diligent, you will be amazed at how many of these goals you have actually achieved within the given time parameters.

At this point, you have a list of priorities, a set of goals and the motivation to stick to them when the pressure is applied. You are well on your way to developing the foundation necessary for authentic success. The only remaining foundational principle you need to adopt is the proper perspective about life. We head in that direction right now.