

107 Ways to STICK TO IT

Practical Tips to Achieve the
Success You Deserve

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Dedication

*To our parents who lived lives
of sticking to it
so we could achieve our goals.
Thanks for setting
a stellar example of true success.*

How to Use This Book

Every quick tip in this book has been selected to directly or indirectly help you stick to your plans.

Read through all 107 tips and mark those that can really make a difference for you. Then, review the ones you marked and select a few as starting points.

Involve your team, family and friends on your journey. The support from those who care about your success is a key to sticking to it.

Revisit this book in 30 days since that is how long it takes to create a new habit. As your situation changes, look for new tips to take your success to the next level.

Remember, these 107 tips have been proven to achieve success for many people in all walks of life. They have worked for others and they will work for you!

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*“Effort only fully releases
its reward after a person
refuses to quit.”*

- Napoleon Hill

INTRODUCTION

How much longer are you going to quest for success?

What is it that sends us searching for ways to create success in our lives?

Throughout our lifetime, we grasp at the latest fads and the newest techniques, all with the hope of capturing the magic we see in others who are highly successful. We emulate strong role models, we study, we strive – all to find the secret of success.

Ultimately, scientific studies reveal this secret is not necessarily a matter of talent, intelligence, creativity or strategy. As the winds of change continue to stir our world, the question of what it takes to achieve success remains as important today as ever. Interestingly, the answer to that question is also the same as it was 100 years ago.

Success on any level requires the ability to follow through, to execute a plan, to persevere ... to stick to it.

In fact, sticking to it may be the very best gauge of success. In a series of studies by University of Pennsylvania, researchers found those who persevere are more likely to achieve success than those who cannot or do not. Martin E. P. Seligman, a noted researcher in

personal attributes, asserts, “Unless you're a genius, I don't think you can ever out-achieve your competitors without a quality like perseverance.”

A good plan might get you into the game, but sticking to it catapults you into the winner's circle.

In our book, *Sticking to It: The Art of Adherence*, we introduced the Adherence Equation. It is based on research and real-life experiences of the **absolute highest-achieving people**.

In this equation, there are three success factors that high achievers practice. They continually:

- ◆ Sharpen their **Focus**
- ◆ Build their **Competence**
- ◆ Ignite their **Passion**

To make this book immediately applicable and valuable to your life, the 107 tips that follow are organized by these three success factors.

As you read, take time to think about each tip. Circle the tips that make the most sense for you and your goals.

In just a few minutes, you can be closer to achieving the success you deserve!

“It's hard to beat a person who never gives up.”

– Babe Ruth

*Sharpening
Your*
FOCUS

*“Be like a postage stamp.
Stick to one thing until you get there.”*

– Josh Billings

Think of the last time you went to the circus. Remember the lion tamer? Every courageous lion tamer uses three tools to control his fierce companions prowling around the cage: a whip, a stool and a handful of tasty snacks. But, which of these tools is most valuable to the tamer?

When the lion tamer lifts the stool to face his snarling friends, the lions see the four stool legs and cannot focus on a particular leg. As a result, they stand frozen. Unfortunately, the same can happen to us when we try to focus on too many things – we freeze or we might focus on the wrong things. Either option will take the roar out of our success.

Dave Thomas' life shows how a sharp focus can yield the results we desire. Given up for adoption soon after he was born, his adoptive mother died when he was five, and he spent the remainder of his childhood moving around as his adoptive father looked for employment.

Never having a traditional family, one of his earliest pleasures was eating at restaurants and watching families enjoying being together ... a memory that focused all of his efforts, ultimately, fueled his success.

Dave worked at several restaurants as a child, even getting fired once when his employer discovered his young age.

Never losing sight of his goal, as soon as his Army enlistment was up, Dave went back to work at the Hobby House Restaurant.

Then, in 1962, Dave received an offer of a lifetime – if he could

bring four Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurants out of the red, his boss would give him a whopping 45 percent of the business.

Always focused and ready for a challenge, Dave went right to work – first reducing the menu to only a few choices and then using clever ads to bring business to the four restaurants. As business began picking up and the restaurant became profitable, Dave opened four more locations.

Six short years after this challenge, 35-year-old Dave Thomas felt it was now time to realize his life-long dream. So, in 1969, he opened his first Wendy's Old-Fashioned Hamburger Restaurant, naming his business after his youngest daughter.

Today, Wendy's has grown to more than 5,000 restaurants, scattered across the United States and 34 foreign countries. Dave far surpassed the dream of a little boy who, not having a real family of his own, enjoyed seeing families dining together at family restaurants.

Here are some practical tips that Dave Thomas and other highly successful people have used to sharpen their focus and stick to it:

I Determine one goal, the “one thing” that is most important to you or your team. Never let anything less important take priority over it. To help identify your “one thing,” ask yourself two questions:

- ◆ What can I be the very best at?
- ◆ What am I absolutely passionate about?

The place where your two answers intersect will help you focus in on your “one thing.”

2 Know when to say “No.” Your time, energy and money are precious resources – if you spend them in one area, you cannot spend them in another area. Saying “Yes” to one thing means saying “No” to something else. **Say “No” to anything that prevents you from focusing on what’s most important to you.**

3 **Create a “Stop Doing” list.** Identify those activities, tasks, reports, meetings and projects that do not directly support what is most important to you. Your “Stop Doing” list can have a greater impact on your ability to focus than your “To Do” list.

4 **Keep it very simple.** Complexity is the enemy of focus. Simplicity keeps the line of sight to your goal clear and direct.

5 Apply the 80/20 rule in your life. This means that the most productive 20% of your activities is 16 times more productive than the remaining 80%. **Identify the 20% of your tasks or activities that produce 80% of your results.** Then, focus on the “vital few” – the 20% – instead the “trivial many.”

6 **Schedule “focus time” to address what is most important to you.** Block out this time at the beginning of each day to prevent other priorities from squeezing this time out of your schedule.

7 **Write down your goal.** This will help you start focusing your thoughts and actions toward achieving your goal.

8

Keep your goal visible at all times ... literally!

Keep your goal on your desk, in your wallet or purse, on your bathroom mirror, on your refrigerator. This plants the seeds of success in your mind and focuses your attention on things that will help you achieve your goal.

*“Persistent people begin their success
where others end in failure.”*

– Edward Eggleston

9

Look for yellow cars. When was the last time you saw a yellow car? You might see a yellow car once a day or so. Now, for the next week, check out how many yellow cars you see. Since you’ve now been alerted to yellow cars, you will probably observe many more of them than you had previously. Is it because there are more yellow cars on the street? Of course not. You just sharpened your alertness. When we become aware of something – a new goal, a new way of doing things, an opportunity – we tend to see more of that thing. **Pay attention to the “yellow cars” – those people, opportunities, insights and skills around you that might help you achieve your goals.**

10

Make a list and check it twice. Start each day with a list of what you need to achieve. End each day with another look at your list. Cross some off, reassess some and rollover others. One caution: Don’t get blinded by your list of tasks. They are only stepping-stones to your goal ... keep your eye on the prize!

11 Discipline is doing what you have to do so you can do what you want to. **Start chipping away at your toughest tasks.** Doing this provides greater clarity of purpose and focus than starting with the no-brainers.

12 **Delegate, delegate, delegate ... anything that others can do better than you.** Now you are free to achieve the “highest and best use” of your time and skills ... and you can focus on your “one thing.”

13 **To stop procrastination, imagine your life in one year if you do not complete the task at hand.** Procrastination is a slippery slope, because you are not saying you won't do something – you just won't do it *today*. It seems harmless, but it's lethal to your focus. A year from now, you'll wish you had started today. No time like the present – get it done today!

*“Counting time is not nearly as important
as making time count.”*

– Anonymous

14 **As unpleasant or personally disturbing things occur during the day, put them into a mental “parking lot” for the day to retain your focus.**

Take a quick break or brisk walk to process what just happened, then refocus on your priorities. Handle your “parking lot” issues the next morning when you are fresh and have a better perspective on the prior day.

15 **Life rewards action ... so dive in and get to work!**
Future tasks usually appear larger than they really are. Being in the process provides clarity, diminishes the perceived effort required, and builds momentum toward your goal.

16 **Paint a vivid mental picture of your goal onto the walls of your mind.** Keep this image in your mind's eye and carry it wherever you go to keep you focused on your goal.

17 **Once you achieve your goal, set a new one.**
Remember: The harder it is to achieve, the more you build your discipline and confidence ... and the better you focus your efforts on getting to the next level!

18 Measure every thought, word and action against your goal. **Ask yourself, "Is it obvious to others what my 'one thing' is?"**

19 To stick with "least preferred tasks," those tasks that always find their way to the bottom of the stack, **set up a reward for yourself upon completion.** The reward might be to switch to another task you like better (or to have an ice-cream sundae!)

20 **Reassess and reflect upon your focus.** How you spend your time is a perfect mirror for your focus. Are you spending time on your goal or are extraneous tasks/priorities stealing your time?

21 Use **SMART goals**: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-framed. Pay particular attention to Specific and Measurable – if you forget these, you just get ART ... not results. A goal without a measure is just a wish.

22 Keep moving. Life's adversities often paralyze us and diffuse our focus if we do not keep moving through them. **Convert your turning points into learning points.** Use these to sharpen your focus and find deeper meaning in your "one thing."

23 Breath! A little anxiety can help us focus and perform at peak levels, but too much anxiety sends us down the back side of the performance slope. Oxygen is a key element for our performance and endurance. Before you go into a tough discussion, big presentation or strained negotiation, **take five deep breaths** to increase your oxygen intake and exhale to release your butterflies. Focus on your desired outcome as you breathe.

24 **Schedule "free time" to rest and rejuvenate.** This helps you maintain a laser-like focus over the long haul. Prepare for success as if you were a marathoner not a sprinter.

25 Worry wrecks your focus. **We all worry ... the trick is to minimize the time between your first worried thought and your first action to attack it.** Remember, much of our worry is based on concerns in our minds, not reality. Mark Twain once said, "I've suffered a great many catastrophes in my life. Most of them never happened."

26 **Chunk your big goals into smaller ones** to help you focus on the next step to achieve your ultimate goal.

27 Your mind is your ultimate personal computer. Sometimes you forget to update your mental virus protection program, allowing negative thoughts to invade your mind without realizing it. So, the old adage “Garbage in, garbage out” becomes “Garbage in, garbage stays.” Remember to **scan for and delete negative mental input regularly**.

“We become what we think about.”

– Earl Nightingale

28 We draw into our lives what we constantly think about – good or bad. If you are always thinking about why you can't seem to get a break, when the next shoe will drop in your relationship, or why you don't get as much recognition as your colleague, you are programming your mind (and those around you) to make those thoughts your reality. **If you find yourself having a negative thought, say “STOP!” out loud and replace it with a positive thought.** Saying “STOP!” out loud is important so that you can hear yourself controlling your own thinking.

29 Whatever your mind hears from others, and especially from you, it records and stores. The mind doesn't discriminate between what's good and what's harmful – it collects all input. **Control your inputs** by monitoring what you watch on television, finishing your daily newspaper or online reading with an inspiring story and spending time with people who have positive outlooks.

30 Tame your technology ... or it will become your master. In today's highly connected world, you have to **define boundaries around your time.**

Just because your cell phone notifies you of a new message doesn't mean you have to shift your focus to attend to it. Constant accessibility can blur your focus. Block out time to respond to voice and e-mail messages.

31 **Plan for the unexpected.** Unexpected demands pop up every day. Rather than allow the inevitable to interrupt your daily focus, plan some "reactive" time into your day. This enables you to deal with the unexpected without sacrificing the tasks that support your "one thing."

32 **Prioritize your daily activities.** Assign them by High, Medium or Low impact on your "one thing." Start with your Highs and work your way down, even if your Lows are easy to perform. This helps hone your focus.

33 **Get a clear line of sight into your work – eliminate your clutter!** Regardless of your personal work style, looking for things and shuffling through papers are focus diffusers ... and time wasters.

34 **Communicate simply and concisely.** Don't find yourself saying, "If I had more time I would make this two-page letter a one-page letter." To focus your communication, **use the PAR structure** by addressing three simple questions:

- ◆ What's the Problem or situation?
- ◆ What Action needs to be taken?
- ◆ What Result is expected?

35

Analyze your opportunities. It's easy to get seduced by the appeal and promise of new opportunities (e.g., projects, jobs, territories, products, relationships) so define clear criteria for considering if a new opportunity fits into your plan.

36

Have a need? Help someone else succeed. If you find yourself feeling discouraged, visit children in the hospital or cheer up a friend who is lonely. If you are looking for a job, help someone else with their job search. Helping others not only helps you shift your focus outward, but also stimulates feelings of gratitude. There is nothing like a dose of gratitude to pick us up and refocus us on what really matters. Most importantly, meeting others' needs brings out our true spirit – it reflects our positive human character.

*“Think like a man of action,
and act like a man of thought.”*

– Henri L. Bergson
