

Introduction

I was standing in front of the flip-chart extolling the virtues of goal setting to a room full of young managers. As I explained the various techniques and started selling the benefits of clear, written, goals I could see eyes slowly dropping and faces closing.

As I droned on and on, even I began to realise this wasn't quite the reaction I'd hoped for. So I stopped mid-sentence...

"What's wrong?"

After lots of foot shuffling and several attempts to avoid eye contact, one of them raised a hand.

"This is great Andrew but the problem is we don't know what we want. How can we set goals for the future if we don't know what we really want?"

I stopped right there. It had simply never occurred to me that they might not know. That night I put together a presentation for them 'Four Ways To Know What You Want'. And the more I worked with clients, the more it became obvious that there is an epidemic of not knowing what we want. As demand for my presentation grew, it became the book you are holding.

If you are having trouble knowing what you want, then this is the book for you. In it you will find an insider's guide to knowing your own mind. You'll get direct practical help (that you cannot find elsewhere) to help you know what you want and, if you wish, recover the motivation to go after it.

Who Should Read This Book?

If any of these statements sound familiar, this is for you:

- You know what you DON'T want but struggle to be clear about what you DO want.
- You could do almost anything but you end up doing almost nothing because you lack the certainty to pick something.
- You don't like where you are but can't figure out where you should be.
- You know you are holding yourself back but you are not sure from what.
- You have let others make the bigger decisions about your life; you suspect you might be coasting.
- You carry around a vague but pressing feeling that there is something else for you, if only you could know what it is.
- When asked what you want your mind goes blank or your heart starts racing. It scares you.
- You're facing a big decision and you don't know what to do or you have a feeling you might know but are afraid of the answer.
- You're scared of making the changes that you know you could be making.
- Somehow, you know that your life would be different, if only you could work out what you wanted.

Using It With Others

Maybe you are a parent or concerned friend looking to help someone decide what they want. Or maybe you are a professional with clients who struggle to create a direction for themselves. You'll benefit from a wealth of insider tips and learn conversational 'stealth' tools so that you can help them help themselves. You'll be able to create change in others just by talking.

If You Don't Know What You Want, You Will Follow Someone Who Does

The facts are:

- Those who know what they want experience more clarity, better focus and higher levels of energy and success
- If you don't know what you want then you will end up working for or following someone who does
- Any time that you are not hard at work on your agenda, you're working on somebody else's

A Book For The Rest Of Us

Some people are born knowing what they want. As they grow they quickly embrace the idea of setting strong or challenging goals and something ignites them to pursue those goals. Some grow to become sports stars, some politicians, some become over excited motivational speakers and others end up as high achieving business people. Almost all of them, if they gain financial success, publish a book laying out their philosophy of understanding what you want and pursuing it with determination. It all seems so easy.

Then there are the rest of us.

Our goals, if we think of them as such, are modest. A life partner, a family, making a small contribution, security. When challenged to say what we want, our most honest answer is that we don't know and if we do know then it's because we stumbled across it while doing something else. We can only stand aside slightly shamefaced as the motivated and driven yell about the process of goal setting. We tried it once and it didn't work.

This is a book for the rest of us...

Before You Can Have What You Want, You Need To Know What You Want

Before you can have what you want, you have to know what you want. That's what makes this book different from all the other self-help books out there.

This is not a book about the glory of setting goals. Neither is it a cheerleading book written to drive you to the heights of success. It's not a book about getting.

It's a book about being. Being a person who knows who they are. Who knows themselves well enough to be clear about what they want and motivated enough to move towards it.

I'm simply going to help you work out, perhaps for the first time, what you want.

This is the book you should read *before* you read anything about how to ‘sell more’, ‘score big’ or ‘move to the next level’.

Setting Goals Does Not Work For Most People

If you are wandering through life with a nagging sense that you could be doing more or you’ve actively tried to set goals for yourself without much success, this is the book for you. This is the book that will give you the missing piece that comes before goal setting. Before you can set a goal you have to know what you want.

There are myriad goal setting books on the market and an equal number of goal setting systems, each with its own set of fans defending their way of setting goals.

Much of this ignores the plain truth that most people, when you ask them, don’t know what they want. Goals, beyond a daily to-do list, are a hazy concept for most – they don’t know what they want, so they can’t and don’t have goals. An even greater mass of people have not made it as far as using an effective to-do list.

What accounts for these masses of people who are quite happy to let life pull them along, simply reacting to what turns up? Is it fear? Lack of a good technique? Or simply that no one ever gave them permission to know what they want?

They follow along with the fashions of the day, driven by advertisers, politicians and the values of their friends while steadfastly ignoring their feeling that there has to be more.

I wrote this book to remedy this situation. To directly help those who honestly don’t know what they want. If you’ve picked this up in a bookshop wondering whether it is for you then it probably is. It will help you know your own mind and then you can make a decision about which goal setting system you use to help you.

How Celebrities and Stars Make It Hard For Us

If I hear another famous person say “I knew when I was six years old that I wanted to be on the stage” I will scream. Why? Because they make it sound so easy, so effortless. They were six years old and, as they tell it, ambition floated down to rest on their shoulder, igniting a life long drive to get to where they are now.

We love these stories. We love them because they are so rare. Most of us do not know what we want, it got buried in the hurly burly of our lives. To read about a celebrity, who always knew, comforts us. We can let ourselves off the hook because we don’t know, we’re not clear and ambition hasn’t floated down on to our shoulders (or not so we’ve noticed). And yet. And yet...

Come And Sit By The Fire

There’s something nagging at you isn’t there? A vague feeling of discontent. A low internal murmur that you can hear at odd moments. A confession when alcohol loosens your tongue. You want something. Something other than what you’ve got. The trouble is that you do not know what it is but you have a suspicion. You suspect that if you could work it out then it would light a fire under your life.

And here you hover, half afraid of the fire, half drawn to its warmth. What will you do? Why not come in and sit down beside this fire for a while and let's see if we can help you figure it all out.

In the following pages I've distilled everything I know into a simple program that will lead you step by step to knowing what you want:

- Part One covers the three main reasons that we struggle to know what we want
- Part Three introduces your first decision, the one that affects all the others
- Part Four will take you step by step through a series of exercises to discover your deepest longings. After each step is a practical exercise to help you discover what you want and a deeper explanation for those who want to use these tips with others.
- Part Five suggests a way to start having what you want
- Part Six summarises the twelve rules for knowing what you want
- Part Seven points out some common problems with keeping this going and gives you tips to overcome them
- Part Eight looks at two useful ways of maintaining the habit of knowing your own mind
- Part Nine shows you how to use your holiday to set successful goals
- Part Ten looks at the most frequently asked questions about knowing what you want
- And we end with some references and ideas for further help

In the next section I explain how to get the best from this book.