

Getting There

There's an interesting question that I've been asked many times in my coaching career, which centres around achieving a goal. Whether that be losing weight, giving something up for Lent or adding something new to their lifestyle.

When I give my answer, many of them nod with understanding, create a plan and start with the best intentions. However, when they don't see the results they want after a few weeks, they become disheartened, disillusioned, decide that my answer wasn't that great and find another person to ask.

That new coach will give them the same answer because there is only one. The answer is consistency. Being consistent means focusing on the activity, not the result. You cannot control the result. At best, you can only influence it and that is by consistently putting in the best effort and thinking you can. Consistency needs to be intelligently applied and nearly always needs others around you to help.

Three years ago, I hauled my overweight, out of shape, unconditioned body to the top of Pen-y-Fan, the highest mountain in Wales. My intention was to reach the summit and with intrepid determination, I set off. The consistent action was theoretically easy, two steps on the flat path and one up to the next level. It was a clear, sunny day and I could see the path laid out before me, disappearing into the cloud that shrouded the summit. However, within ten minutes of plodding, my lungs wanted to burst out of my chest and my quad muscles were on fire.

I stopped and sat down on a rock and thought about what to do. I reviewed my tactics and realised that as it was, I would never even manage a quarter of Pen-y-Fan, let alone the summit. After some thought, I decided to change my actions to taking the same two steps on the flat and then one up, but then a sit and rest for a minute after ten levels up the slope.

With renewed vigour, I was up and at it, all the way until the about the next thirty metres, when I stopped again, this time the pain bringing tears to my eyes. I was done and I wasn't even sure how I was going to walk back. I looked at the summit and realised I wasn't going make the result I had intended, to conquer the dizzying height of Pen-y-Fan, all 886 metres of it, a mere molehill to many. I was even more disheartened to see an ageing dachshund significantly outpacing me.

One of our friends came back down and sat with me, talked to me, and offered to walk at my excruciatingly slow pace, even though he'd already walked nearly three time the distance I'd managed. Without us talking about it, he knew how much this small feat meant to me.

He helped me get up and start slowly marching on. After a while, I had a routine sorted out. I focused on my boots and the steps I was taking, counting them out until I reached the next sitting stone, where I could rest. My mate had made that possible with his encouragement.

Some hours later, in the howling wind, mist and rain I made it and all the group I had started out with were there, encouraging me on.

I learned some great lessons about consistency that day.

1. Once you have set your goal and you have the belief that you will get there, don't let that become your focus. God will manage the outcome.
2. Instead, focus on the steps you need to take consistently knowing that, if you continue, you will reach that goal.

3. Be prepared to review and think into your tactics, and modify them if necessary, making sure you always keep moving towards your goal.
4. Have your team of cheerleaders who will support you to get to your goal.

Consistency is the only way you will achieve what you want from life, your career, your business, and yourself. In our world of instant gratification, despite the promises of pills giving you the result you want right now, the significant changes that really matter will take consistency of thought and effort and over time, you will see the results you want.

God gives us the belief that we can attain the result we want, he is our constant guide and companion and when we sit on our own stones, he will hear us and help us to get back up and continue on.

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