

Neither Success Nor Failure Is An Accident

Written By: Bill and Kim Cook

The week between Christmas and New Year's day is one of my favorite times of the year. Kim and I spend these days writing down our goals, including our REI (Real Estate Investing) goals. We plan how to achieve our goals, and we review and adjust our long-term goals.

We learned years ago that neither success nor failure is an accident. It is something we work toward everyday. Life is full of choices. We are where we are because of the choices we've made in the past. For example, let's say my goal is to complete a marathon, which is a run of 26.2 miles. For six months I run between 7 and 18 miles, five times per week. The day of the race, what are my chances of completing the marathon? Pretty good, don't you think?

Given the same goal, what if every day instead of going out to run, I sat on the couch eating Bon Bons and watched TV? Now what do you think about my chances for success? Heck, I probably could not drive a car 26.2 miles, much less run that far!

When it came to goal setting, I was a lucky teen. My mother encouraged me to read three books that had a profound affect on my life. The first was *Think and Grow Rich* by Napoleon Hill. The second was *The Power of Positive Thinking* by Norman Vincent Peal. The third was *See You at The Top* by Zig Ziglar. If you haven't read these books, you owe it to yourself to do so. They are easy reads, can be checked out from your local library, and are life changers.

These books taught me seven important lessons about setting goals. First, make your goal as specific as possible. Second, make a detailed plan for achieving your goal. Third, write your goal on a 3x5 index card. Fourth, put your goal card where you can see it every day. Fifth, every morning and evening read your goal out loud. Sixth, visualize yourself having already attained your goal. Seventh, each day do something that brings you one step closer to achieving your goal.

Let's look at an example of successful goal setting. Dallas Short is a good friend of mine who lives in Calhoun. Other than having a cat named Fuzzy Wuzzy that he talks about with pride, he's a pretty normal guy. He and his bride, Tamra, decided to get into REI at the beginning of 2004. Like many of us, he had been interested in REI for a long time, but didn't know how or where to begin. After joining our Real Estate Investors group which meets monthly in Cartersville, he was off to the races.

In the beginning, Dallas' goal was a bit vague. He wanted to buy one investment property. As his investment knowledge level improved, so did his ability to set goals. Dallas updated his REI goal to wanting to buy two single-family rental properties in Calhoun with each having a minimum of \$20,000 in equity.

It pleases me to say that as of a few weeks ago Dallas reached his 2004 goal! Better still, he surpassed his equity goal by picking up \$50,000 in equity for the year! Not a bad part-time job.

But it gets better. Last week Dallas told me that due to another company buying his company, there was a good chance that his job would be phased out or moved. Dallas didn't want to move to Houston, but what choice did he have?

What choice did he have indeed. Because Dallas had succeeded in reaching his goal of buying two investment properties in 2004, he now has the freedom to choose where he will work, for whom he will work, and what he will do. Saying Dallas was "lucky" to find his two investment deals in 2004 is like saying the guy who ran five days a week preparing for the marathon was lucky to finish the race. Dallas' success is no accident. He earned it.