

PLANNING

If you fail to plan, you plan to fail

Like it or not, we all plan. The problem is when we do not plan in advance or with enough forethought. Every action starts with a plan. With no plan, our plan is go to with the wind, and wherever life takes us.

There are many types of planning

A specific project: One needs to list what has to be done, in what order, and by whom in order to complete the project. Without a plan, steps can be missed, duplicated, and people will not be aware of who is to do what. Be it in writing or not, it's a plan.

Today: Most people start the day with the plan to survive at work for another day. Then, planning what they will do after work, even if it is the usual of going home, eating, and watching TV. On the weekends, people have far more plans of things to get done, places to go, and people to see. Often, the weekend plan is the one focused on.

Week: Schedule the week in advance. Often the calendar is full in advance of the week with work, meetings, kids' activities, and social obligations. Then, the holes are filled in with things that need to be done from either a written list or one kept in one's head.

Month / Quarter / Annual: This plan is best done in December for the upcoming year. Plan the vacations, fill in the commitments, and then schedule the items from your goals for the year you want to accomplish. If it's not scheduled, it is not going to get done. If it's not scheduled, the year will slip by and you are not likely to 'get around to it'. Planning the year in advance is critical to your success and accomplishment. It also makes the year far more interesting and exciting.

5 year plan / 10 year plan / My Life's Plan: We each need a plan of what we want our lives to be. The best ways to look at our life plan is to look at it backwards. Write your obituary, the one you'd be proud of, listing your accomplishments in your life as well as your adventures. Make a bucket list

of all the things, regardless of time, money, or talent, you'd like to do, be, have, and see before you die. Then, with your life partner put both lists on a timeline (current age to age 100) and schedule in the bucket list items on the timeline. That's planning your life so you get to do what you desire. It's that simple. We should die with a full 'in basket' of things to do and accomplish.

Often people feel they are too busy to plan, or planning does not work because of interruptions or other people. I dare say, they are too busy as they have not planned. Interruptions are part of life and you need to plan for them. Your planning needs to leave time in the schedule for interruptions.

Planning allows you to do things when needed, in advance, and not at the dreaded last minute. It also allows you the luxury of saying no to someone who wants you to do something so they don't have to. You can tell them it just does not fit into your plan right now, there is no time for it.

The ideal is to decide what you want your life to be and to work backwards from the life plan, to the time line, and back to the daily plan. No, it's not hard as you are just breaking the life plan into bite size pieces.

Michaelangelo worked from a master plan, a life plan for the Sistine Chapel when he started to paint it. He visualized the end result and then daily worked the plan until he was finished.

So, you've never done a life plan

Start today. It's not cast in stone, it can be added to, changed, items deleted, as needed and as time goes on. In the journey of life we have to have a plan as to where to go, just as a ship at sea has a port that it is heading for. The ship may have to change course and go to a different port, just as we may have to change our plan. But, first, we have to have a plan to change.

Illness and family issues will cause you to change your plan. That's OK, when something comes up, you can change your plan. You can delete less important things, and you can spread things out into the future. Planning helps to adjust for the interruptions.

There are no unreasonable goals. There are only unreasonable time lines

Try it. The more time you put into it, the better it will be, and the better you will feel. It's for you. It's your life. It's your obituary. It's your bucket list. It's you today. Plan to make the most of your life. You'll be glad you did.