

New Learning, New Leadership: How to Sustain Success for the Long Term

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Have you ever reached a big goal and then found yourself backsliding away?

It's so discouraging. You fought so hard to get up that hill. You got the vision; you learned the steps; you did the work! But somehow, you're going backward again, and the idea of starting over is too deflating.

Backsliding Is Universal

This happens to us over and over again, in both our personal and professional lives. Whether you

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- lost a contract you'd worked hard to win,
- are seeing engagement scores drop after you thought you'd raised them for good,
- got negative feedback about your leadership from a team you'd hoped to build,
- are experiencing a drop in revenue when everything seemed like it was going so well or
- in any other way sadly find yourself further from your vision than you used to be,
- ... you can easily lose confidence and certainly lose steam when you think about having to rally and do it all again.

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There may be comfort in knowing this is a common experience for all of us. It's human. The very nature of improving ourselves moves us away from the fear, urgency and motivation that kickstarted our goals in the first place. We see progress; we feel better; we ease off our efforts—and we lose traction toward our goals.

Fortunately, there's a formula we can use to maintain our successes and prevent backsliding. It goes like this:

Strategy + Execution with Consistency Over Time = Results

I can't claim to have discovered this formula, but I have learned to trust it. Let's look at each element of this strategy and why it's important. As we do, please think about a success you're stretching for and how you can use this formula to stay on track.

Strategy: Strategy is *how* you're choosing to get to the success you seek. If you have a powerful strategy that moves the needle on your goals, great. Now go do that. That's execution.

Execution: Execution is *how well* you're doing what you decided to do. Are you practicing every day? Are you keeping the bar high? Excellent. Now do that consistently.

Consistency: Consistency is *how regularly* you're doing what you've decided to do well. Are you keeping track? Do you see a pattern of commitment? Beautiful. Keep it up over time.

Over Time: Change takes time. Maintaining a changed state may take a lifetime. You will find freedom in accepting your new reality and letting yourself get used to it for good. That's how you get to keep your results.

Results: Good goal-setting techniques involve knowing your goals before you take on any endeavor. If you set those goals at the beginning, you will see the same results at the end. And that's how you know you've succeeded.

A Case Study

Let's look at an example of the formula at work, using one scenario from the experiences I shared earlier.

The Backslide: You've gotten negative feedback about your leadership from a team you'd hoped to build.

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The Better Way:

- **Strategy:** You commit to a positive interpersonal relationship with each and every person on the team.
- **Execution:** You set up one-on-one meetings with each of them to listen to their views.
- **Consistency:** You commit to holding one of those meetings with each team member every quarter.
- **Over Time:** You make these meetings a habit. You prioritize them and come to value them, such that you never cancel or miss a meeting.
- **Results:** You feel as well as see the change in tone as your team becomes closer to each other, closer to you and more committed to your shared goals.

Your Turn

Now, what happens if you apply this same formula to your goals?

The Backslide: What's one area in your professional life where you feel like you're going backward—or at the very least, not making progress?

The Better Way:

- **Strategy:** What is one thing you know you can do to improve the situation—preferably one you strongly believe will work?
- **Execution:** What would it look like for you to do that one thing well?
- **Consistency:** What does consistency look like in this situation? Is it an everyday thing, a moment-to-moment thing, something else?
- **Over Time:** How long do you think it might take, executing your strategy consistently, to get you the results you want?
- **Results:** What are those results, exactly?

Final Thoughts

They say nothing succeeds like success. By using the formula Strategy + Execution with Consistency Over Time = Results, you will not only reach your goals but sustain your success for the long term.

From there, you can build on each success, reach higher and higher aspirations and have confidence you can achieve your ultimate vision.

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