

## Anything That Is Not Managed Will Deteriorate

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

Managing your life is like managing a business. When you look at a typical business there are an incredible number of procedures in place to keep the business running. Take a McDonald's, for example:

Each day the [restaurant](#) opens at a certain time and people arrive before opening to make sure the coffee is made, the ovens and grills are heated, the lights are turned on, and other procedures are followed. The restaurant is cleaned top to bottom the night before. Outside, the parking lot is maintained a certain way. The lines are painted and repainted according to a schedule. The drive-thru has the newest menu items on it. There is a list of shift responsibilities posted. The bathrooms are scheduled for cleaning several times throughout the day. The oil for the hash browns and French fries is changed according to a rigid schedule. Not only are the manager and the employees of this individual restaurant responsible for all of these tasks, but regional and national managers inspect to make sure all of this is functioning exactly as it should. The books and accounting of the restaurant are required to be done in a certain manner and each year the taxes are also done in a certain way. The food deliveries throughout the day are only from approved suppliers, who are also forced to follow certain processes and procedures. In addition, the company is constantly keeping its ear to the ground and conducting studies to see what sorts of [foods](#) and other services the public wants. This "market research" is then used to develop new products the franchises will sell.

From top to bottom, a McDonald's is being managed by a myriad of processes and procedures to ensure it remains a smooth running operation. This will ensure the McDonald's, wherever it is, offers a consistent product to the public. Moreover, this will also ensure the McDonald's succeeds wherever it is. Very few McDonald's go out of business due to poor sales. Most of them go out of business due to processes and procedures not being rigidly followed.

One of the greatest secrets in your own life and business is this: *Anything that is not managed will deteriorate.*

It is as simple as that. If a business is not managed very closely, it will likely go out of business, or suffer abysmal sales. McDonald's typically succeed wherever they are, probably due more to the tight management than anything else. The most important thing an owner or a manager can do for a business is to manage it. This simple truth applies to managing your life as well.

You need to manage your own life just like a business. The closer you manage your life, the better you will ultimately do and the more success you will have. You will go through ups and downs but you will almost certainly remain on track and improve. Better management of your life is essential for success.

The most successful people in every realm of life know where they are going. When you start managing yourself, you start setting goals and developing a road map to achieve them. When you know where you want to go you need to write it down. Then you need to remind yourself of this again and again and create a procedure for doing this. Knowing where you want to go and how to get there is your ticket to a happier and more productive life.

Over the past several years, I have developed a very simple method of managing myself and my goals. Once a year I sit down and over the space of a few days I concentrate on making several commitments for what I want to achieve over the next year. I simply write down what I call my "Top 1 Year Results" and list them out on a sheet of paper. Each year I list no more than 10 to 15 of these goals. Then I do the same thing at the beginning of each month and week on a separate sheet of paper. Each week, I make myself aware of how I am doing in terms of my goals and I set my goals for the following week based on how I did in the last week.

**YEARLY GOALS** – Major goals to achieve throughout the year. These are big goals that could involve things like making sure I go out to eat with my wife alone at least once a week, starting a new business, or paying something off. I allow myself each January to write down goals which are attainable but seem far off.

For example, a yearly goal of yours might be to increase your salary by 50% and move to a warmer part of the United States. This is something you can do but you need to constantly remind yourself of it. Writing this down is going to make you accountable and bring you closer to this goal.

**MONTHLY GOALS** – These monthly goals are almost always ones which bring me one step closer to achieving my yearly goals. They are related and are projects and goals that allow me to get closer to these yearly goals.

If your yearly goal is to increase your salary by 50% and move to a warmer part of the United States, the smartest thing you can do is to schedule a goal to bring you closer to this at the beginning of the month. A goal along this direction could be to apply to one job per day per month--or a total of 30 jobs throughout the whole month. This monthly goal is going to bring you one step closer to what you seek to do.

**WEEKLY GOALS** – These are goals I need to accomplish during the week to take me closer to my monthly goals and my yearly goals.

If you are looking to increase your salary by 50% and move to a warmer climate, your weekly goal may be to apply to 7 jobs this week, get your resume done and make 7 phone calls to companies in your preferred area of the United States to see if they received your resume the week before.

This method of setting goals works. If you are able to make just a 1% improvement each week, the improvement you have made after one year is absolutely phenomenal. You will watch your life and career continually improve as long as you make sure you are accountable. What this simple system forces you to do is manage yourself. You need to continually be managing yourself because if you don't, someone else will.

Most people coast through life and their careers not knowing what is going to come next. The wonderful thing is you can

really have practically anything you want out of life as long as you write it down, take action on it, and follow through. The most important aspect of your goal setting activity is following through. That means reviewing your goals at least once a week and seeing exactly how you are doing. The more closely you're reviewing your goals, the better off you're going to be. Continually watching, readjusting, and setting micro goals is effective for taking you where you want to go.

The wonderful thing about this sort of goal setting activity and self management is that it works. Every week at the beginning of each year when I look at what I need to achieve I cringe. I feel like it will never be possible. But what ends up happening when you are continually and consistently reviewing your goals is that you make things happen. You figure out a way during the week to get closer to your goals. You see opportunities where you would normally see nothing. You take advantage of so many things that normally would simply pass you by. You see people around you who have information that could get you closer to your goal and you speak with them.

You will get better at anything on which you focus. Most people spend their time focusing on the wrong things. You need to remain focused on your goals. Repetition is the mother of skill. When you set goals for yourself, it is like setting a thermometer. If you check in each week and you are looking to be at 75 degrees and you are, instead, at 45 degrees then you are going to take action and do whatever you can to raise the temperature. You will find a way. This is how it is with goal setting and creating goals for your life. You are setting a temperature at which you want to be operating and you are making sure you are there. No matter what you have done with your life in the past, when you set goals for yourself and manage your life, you are ensuring the future won't be the same as the past.

The best thing about self management is that it gives you the power of momentum. The best thing you can do is get the power of momentum working for you. This momentum will keep you going forward and ensure you are moving exactly where you want to go.

You need to manage yourself. The best businesses are well managed and so are the best people.

### **THE LESSON**

Anything that is not managed will eventually deteriorate. Set goals and develop a road map to achieve them, as goals function as a roadmap, forcing you to take action and follow through. Self-management provides you momentum to tackle other obstacles moving forward. The best businesses and people are well managed, so you must be, too.

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