

# **Are You Willing To Do What the Goal Demands?**

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You already know what it takes to succeed: Fill your appointment calendar with qualified people, convert many of those prospects into clients, competently do your job, and deliver an experience for people that creates loyalty and motivates them to introduce you to others.

Easier said than done, though, right? When you read something like this, or how-to information to help you actually do those things, what kind of reaction do you have? Does it feel like a burden, just more “stuff” someone else wants you to do—and that you don’t want to do? Or are you able to see it impersonally, as what the *goal* requires of you?

Six-time Ironman triathlon world champion Mark Allen spoke to a group of participants in one of our programs, and he illustrated this distinction perfectly. When he trains, he trains to win. The swimming, biking, running, weight training, and stretching are simply what’s between him and his goal. If something comes up that makes the race more difficult, such as the wind or heat on the island of Kona, again, that’s just what’s between him and his goal.

For financial professionals, success may demand that you focus on acquiring a specific type of client, or that you manage your business so that it’s populated only with ideal clients, or that you find a way to meet your quarterly objectives despite what’s going on in the marketplace. There’s no more room for a financial professional to argue with the market than for a triathlete to argue with the weather. But many advisors, when things get tough, will say, “Nope, I’m not willing to do what the goal demands,” and they fall short.

Other advisors say, “I’m not willing to accept lower production just because things are more difficult.” It’s a matter of having greater range. When you take on the goal of success in this business, you have to be willing to do what is necessary under a variety of circumstances and do it. No one who knows what they’re talking about says the financial services industry is *easy*, just that it’s lucrative.

Where can you find the motivation to do what it takes? Some people are naturally in love with the ‘job,’ but that’s not what I’m talking about. Most people need to find reasons other than the joy of being a financial professional to keep them inspired and willing to press on even when it’s difficult.

Recently, I was talking with a fellow who was considering leaving the profession. His motivation was gone. So he had to consider whether he could really go back to an old job (he couldn’t for various reasons), or whether he could just dig deep and find a way to be more successful in his current career. Like most financial advisors, unless he was willing to take a significant step back financially, there wasn’t a job available to him that would support the kind of life he wanted. At age 49, he ultimately decided he was just going to have to make it work. What he realized was that he didn’t have any financially feasible options, and the most likely thing to get him where he wanted to go was to suck it up and do what it takes in this business.

Once he realized that, he crossed a threshold. He was ready to move on from bemoaning his narrow alternatives and just get the work done. In his words, he was willing to be a grown-up about it.

So for him, the motivation comes from his desire to maintain a certain lifestyle. But each person has to find his or her own particular reason that is uniquely compelling. For one person it might be a Ferrari, but for someone else, it might be simply, “I want to keep my quality of life.”

This may not sit well with the follow-your-bliss crowd. But sometimes in life, you just don’t have the choice between something great and something awful. Sometimes the choices are harder, between two less-than-perfect possibilities. This man chose between either sucking it up and making his career work despite his lack of enthusiasm or completely revamping his life where his children would flip burgers after high school instead of heading straight for college.

I’m over-simplifying here, I know, but you get the point. This reminds me of one of my parents’ favorite stories to tell about my childhood. We were at a restaurant to celebrate my birthday, and the server offered me, “What kind of vegetable would you like? You have a choice of spinach or peas.” Having just turned five or six (and not liking either vegetable), I was blunt: “Some choice!”

Yes, sometimes the work required to be a financial advisor is difficult and challenging and outside your comfort zone, but the alternative is worse. Basically, both choices involve some level of discomfort, but at least one creates a good outcome. As Jim Rohn said, discipline weighs only ounces, while regret weighs tons.

The good news is those things that seem nearly unbearable become non-issues in time. Not long ago, I had fallen behind in my own triathlon training and found myself sitting uncomfortably in the saddle riding the bike. I had the bike checked, and everything was fine—it was just me. For weeks I griped to Anne, my wife, about how sore my seat was. One day, she told me, “I have never heard you complain so much about how uncomfortable you are in the saddle. What are you going to do?” And I said, “I’m going to keep riding until my butt doesn’t hurt anymore.”

About two months later, I had forgotten my discomfort. I don’t remember when the change happened, but it did. And why? Because I was so committed to the larger goal—competing successfully in a triathlon—I was willing to endure the literal pain in the butt to get there.

Are you willing to do what *your* goal requires so ultimately you can fulfill what truly is important to you?

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