

**'When a man does not know what harbour
he is making for, no wind is the right wind'**

– *Seneca* –

■ The importance of goal planning

- ➊ Human beings are goal-directed creatures constantly striving for meaning, significance and purpose. A lack of achievable goals results in stress and tension. We all need a role, something to work towards, to give us a sense of value and control.
- ➋ Stress can be either the result of not having goals, having too many goals, having conflicting goals, or working towards somebody else's goals.
- ➌ Your goals should help you to centre your life. You need to be clear about your values, what you believe in, what is important to you, before you set goals. What kind of person do you want to be?
- ➍ In the study of the psychology of achievement, almost all successful people have one thing in common: they work towards set goals.
- ➎ Setting and working towards goals increases motivation and releases an enormous store of energy.
- ➏ In studies of survivors of stressful environments, such as concentration camps and prisons, those best equipped to survive were those who had or could create goals to work towards.

■ Why don't people set goals?

- ➊ Because they don't realise the importance of setting goals. It is amazing that given the importance of the skill of goal planning, it is a subject rarely taught in schools.
- ➋ People might not set goals because they don't know how to.
- ➌ People often don't set goals because of a deep seated 'fear of failure'. Once a goal is set, you either succeed or fail to achieve it.

■ Why goals should be written down and made specific

- ➊ Writing a goal down makes it visible, obvious, concrete and specific. There it is in front of you. This has the effect of waking up the unconscious and releasing energy.
- ➋ Writing a goal down entails a commitment. If you don't write it down, you can always say to yourself, 'I never really meant to do that anyway' and you leave your options open. Writing goals down challenges procrastination.