

## Chapter 4: R

### How to make your goal *Realistic*

Has someone ever said to you the following; “You’ve got to be more realistic”

Maybe you were talking about your dreams, hopes, wishes and ambitions for something big, exciting and new. You talked about it with so much enthusiasm and optimism, until some kind person says . . . “Aren’t you hoping for a bit too much there? Try and be a bit more realistic”. Did that bother you? It used to bother me. But now I would respond to that by asking the other person “What do you mean by realistic?” This was often met with a moments silence as they would try to think what they actually meant by that and give me an answer. Sometimes they’d say “Well you know . . . ? Realistic!” and my reply would be “Hmm . . . tell me more!” I wasn’t trying to be a smart arse there, but what’s realistic is a matter of opinion and not the same for everyone.

#### **Imagine this . . .**

It was John Lennon who said “Reality leaves a lot to the imagination”. That’s such a great way to sum up the truth. Our reality is what we imagine it to be. Sure, there are certain things that happen in reality that we didn’t imagine to happen, such as a car accident, plane crash or terrorist bombing. But someone else imagined those happening before they happened.

But what I mean when I argue that our reality is what we imagine it to be, I’m referring to the life situation we find ourselves in as we wake up each morning and go about our day. You are directly responsible for that, and you created that by imagining it first. Everything begins with feeling, which in turn creates a thought. That thought becomes a word, that word



inspires an action, and that action creates a behaviour. As you repeat those behaviours, they become habit or routine, thus making up the reality of your life.

The life you lead right now is always going to be your life. But your life situation won't always be how it is. That's because it is not your life, and any situation can be changed instantly. And change happens instantly by deciding to make a change. Once you decide, you then act on your decision, and even though the first step could seem small and insignificant at the time, it's like a ripple effect. Remember the example of dropping the pebble in the pond? It makes almost no splash, but its impact gains momentum, spreading out further and completely changing the surface of the water. Keep this in mind when taking the first step towards your goal. One small action does make a huge difference.

After September 11th 2001, many people believed that air travel was no longer safe. They would feel uncomfortable flying and have a reaction if they ever saw a large plane flying low above a city's buildings and skyscrapers. Security world-wide has heightened since 9/11 because the ones with the power to change the nature of security interpreted those terrorist attacks on America as the start of a new reality. And we have all been subjected to that reality since; having to check in earlier at the airport, not being allowed to pack liquids in your bag and being randomly checked for possibly concealing weapons or explosives is now accepted as the new reality of air travel.

This wasn't the reality you created, but the reality others create does affect you. We can't always control that, but we can control how we respond to that reality. You can either hide from it, or try to live with it but be afraid and victimised, or accept it as it is and not allow yourself to be affected on a personal level.

## **Seeing life through your own eyes**

If you haven't seen it, I urge you to watch the film "Life is Beautiful". Written, directed by and starring Italian actor Roberto Benigni, this remarkable and award winning film is a magnificent example of how one man chose to see his own reality. Set in World War II, a man and his young son are separated from his wife, and taken to a concentration camp in Italy. For the sake of his son, the man tells him it's all just a game and if he plays along with the rules his father sets out, he will win the game. Armed only with his imagination, this man puts on a brave performance, to protect his son's innocence, and save his life. Even though that's a film, other acts of people fighting for the reality they want in adverse situations exist in history.

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