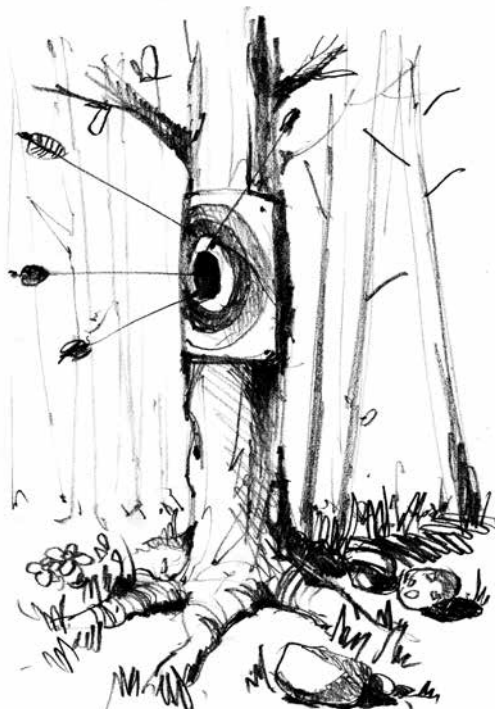


Declare Goals

"If you want to live a happy life, tie it to a goal, not to people or things."

— Albert Einstein



Success is best measured when coherent to one's accord. Vague in recognition, success may be defined in many ways; a lacking track record of loss, the act of pursuing one's passion, achieving results, or even experiencing learning curves. For some, success may even be sustaining silence. Different people have different success stories, and such differences do not necessarily reflect poorer or weaker stories. My personal and professional definition of success is now more firmly defined by the standards I set myself to. No longer do I 'waste' time placing importance on what others think of me, though I too did pass through this phase. There was a time when I was placed in a box criticized for having a seemingly un-entitled level of self-confidence, poorly guided to hold my thoughts and words back, which led to me being convinced that silence may be required in order to be 'successful'. Though I strongly believe otherwise in how success can be achieved today, I played the game. Respective to the time I started my career in, I followed the unofficial rules set while doing my utmost to remain as true to myself and my ways I could manage.

How I was professionally nurtured, is not how I presently nurture. In fact, I firmly promote the opposite. Having lived by the saying, "fake it, 'till you make it" has contributed towards leading me to where I am here today; in a position to promote the opposite. Had I spoken, acted, decided, and managed the way I do currently with my

previous superiors, I may simply not have been promoted in the traditional hierarchy the industry held. The bigger picture, however, was never lost. I knew in order to show there were other ways of leading, I had to first be in a position to lead. Nonetheless, I still found opportunities to do things my way, test my theories, while baring the pressure of having to achieve equal if not greater results than expected. Through repeated trial and error, I learnt what worked and what didn't on my own. I also learnt the importance of having self-reminders and maintaining a constant objective to rely and work towards.

When I was fourteen, I was working casually for the Jewish community in Germany. I started having career-oriented conversations with my elder brother who at the time was 21. He boasted and praised a great place where I could work, develop a steady career, and retire simple. I remember telling him it was not something I saw myself doing for the rest of my life. I assured him I would secure a career in hotel management, travel the world, and achieve my dream of attaining the title of a Hotel General Manager by the age of 35. Appalled and disgusted, my brother mocked my arrogance questioning who the hell I thought I was. I tried to reassure my family that I had this dream not due to a lack of humility, rather was confident in what I wanted to do. Unfortunately, my family referred to me as a lost cause believing I would return to my senses when it was too late.

From that moment, at that age, I declared three specific and time-sensitive goals for myself:

1. I will travel the world;

2. I will become a Hotel General Manager by the age of 35;
3. I will be known for my success and achievements by the age of 40, possibly through my book.

Three goals and three targets; the sum of all I've professionally ever wanted to achieve.

Personally, I also had a goal to get married one day and have children. My first marriage, in hindsight, was not decided upon or celebrated with the right purpose, and so my goals changed. Psychologically, I lost myself in a relationship where I did not belong. I was not anywhere close to the person I wanted to be career-wise, as a husband, or a father. At that time, I believed it to be my sole duty to take on the responsibility and mission of holding the threads a family was supposed to be bound by. A part of me knew, however, that this too was temporary. As the goals changed, a shift in focus allowed for doors to be closed whilst others opened.

In Judaism, it is said that when you are born, the cards have already been laid out for you – the colouring book has already been outlined; who you are, what you do, your big choices, your ultimate impact on the world – this is all pre-destined. Changes by human choice may trigger other repercussions and side effects, though ultimately, the framework of purpose is already set to be achieved. It is my deep belief that every human has the power to do and become absolutely whatever it is they believe they can become. Limitations themselves are limited in impacting your greater purpose. This testimony, though

spiritual, is one I live by having been proven so time and time again throughout my own life.

In 2011, when I was promoted to Assistant Food and Beverage Manager, I was asked to write down where I saw myself in the next five to ten years. I wrote, word for word the following, on a piece of paper I still, to this day, have with me:

“5 years: The General Manager of an InterContinental Hotel.”

Despite being asked to aspire to great things, I was discouraged by a very unsettled General Manager protesting to my heavily over-estimated target. I was, to him, too audacious, and not in a good way. Repeatedly, I was told I had no idea what it took to achieve such a title, especially that of a brand such as the InterContinental. I continued, however, to share how, though I appreciated his experience and the journey he took to attain his success, I was certain I was capable of abiding to my five year time-frame.

Following the initial doubt and genuine parental ‘tough love’, both my father and mother began to see my passion and willingness to persevere through the hardships to be able to achieve something much greater than they may have initially given me credit for. Even with their grown belief and support, I had to curb their enthusiasm and remain grounded. Yes, I trusted in myself to get where I wanted to be. I also trusted in the trials and tribulations ahead. This is the part of the story where an opportunity, at the right time and right place, almost too right to simply be a coincidence, came into play; someone else also

believed I could do it. A former General Manager once told me, “I bet you are good. I am not sure you are that good.” In his eyes, I was ‘good enough’ to manage the hotel yet, still not ‘good enough’ to represent his values the way he would have preferred me to in such a role. This became my chance to show him that his values were not the only ones that were ‘good enough’ – there were others that could be great. It became a secondary goal of mine to show him how.

As the saying goes, there are managers and there are leaders. There are superiors who aim to create replicas of themselves. I have found, more often than not, these replicas become prototypes – sycophants, even – and settle with aspiring to be obedient, submissive, and approved. They are not nurtured to think, rather to do what they have been told to do – and developed no differently. I believe one needs to build and develop their own ways of doing things customizing the process with their personality, their strengths, their weaknesses, and their vision. This internal development reflects on external developments and ultimately contributes to the optimization of the available human capital. As a leader, I wanted to reintroduce purpose via the declaring of goals. Spending more than 40-hours a week with colleagues, I believed it to be crucial for everyone to understand the “why”. Why do hoteliers choose to work in this industry?

A hotel is a mini-city. As the General Manager, I became a first-time mini-mayor. My responsibility was to watch over and hold final accountability for the different divisions and departments. I continue to also be empowered

to make my own rules, my own laws, according to my own agenda, based on my own values. Who primarily judges my results? My guests. In a hotel, we have the traditional purpose to create a feeling. How my guests *feel* in my hotel hold direct repercussion, whether positive or negative, on my results. I know everything that happens in my hotel, and believe me, what happens is incredibly powerful. To this day, I have moments where I am in awe of how my 'city' demonstrates their hospitality. In my leadership, I seek to instil this feeling of pride and choice at every level. Together with my team, I prepare to allow for the ripple effect to take its course analysing what works, what doesn't, recovering, testing, rebuilding, redefining and growing. Trusting in my people and having them establish their trust in me amplifies every effort I could possibly do alone. I extend the creation of a nurturing feeling beyond my guests and to my team. Leading requires the humility to re-soil and allow for growth in hopes the fruit re-seeds on its own and continues the cycle with inspiring, mentorship, and guiding independent individuals resourced with the tools to achieve their utmost.

To merely make an impact, anything goes. To ensure that impact is positive and grand, is one of the greatest and most rewarding challenges I believe someone could have; to leave a footprint behind knowing you made your place a little bit better than how it was when you first came.

There will almost always be hurdles; whether they be people, hierarchy, the status quo, or other elements that demotivate – you name it. *Murphy's Law*, right?

Right.

So, allow your worst case scenario to not be so bad. Reset your goals and recompose, when needed, going back to your fundamentals for a solid foundation allows the building of a superstructure. What is my solid foundation? I have three pillars:

Trust. Loyalty. And Humility.

I have found that, when I fall, and I do fall, having these three pillars grace me with a refreshed perspective to get back up – recomposed. In my team, their failures are my failures. Their goals are my goals. Their successes are my successes. Do not, however, underestimate the population of humans that would mistake another's success as stolen, unentitled victory.