



“Live and Work On Purpose” Newsletter

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The Power of Focus

by Bradley Davidson

It was 2:00 a.m. The heavy sleet-snow mixture pelted the big black funeral hearse I was driving down the stretch of the dark interstate highway. The headlights of the hearse tried to pierce the white sheet of winter storm but instead reflected off the whiteness, nearly blinding me. I couldn't see where I was going. I was in the middle of nowhere, alone. I was 19 years old and I was scared.

When I was a college student in a small town in central Oklahoma, I worked part-time at a local funeral home. Being the most junior member of the staff (and, shall I say, the most naïve), I was always the first choice of staff members to make the “middle-of-the-night” calls. I had been sent to Oklahoma City to retrieve the remains of a deceased person. The winter storm had just begun when I drove the “first call” hearse from the funeral home parking lot to begin my unforgettable trek to Oklahoma City. By the time I began my journey home, the winter storm was hitting full force.

As I was driving through the snowy, icy blanket, I kept thinking of all the terrible things that could happen to me. Because I couldn't see, I could drive off the highway and be trapped in a snowy embankment for weeks! (No, I was not a drama major!) Or, I could pull over to the side of the road and wait for the storm to subside but I might not be noticed by a big truck and be hit from behind. My heart raced. My choices were limited. I was in danger. My heart was beating out of my chest!

Then, I realized that, if I put my headlights on the dim setting, I could faintly see the tail lights of an eighteen-wheel rig just ahead of me. I thought, “OK, if I can only keep those lights as my focus, I can follow that truck through the storm.” Then, I realized that, between my hearse and that truck, there could be dips and curves in the road. So, I thought, “If I can keep the yellow strip in the center of the road (barely visible just over the front left corner of the car hood), I can stay on the road.” For the next hour, I focused on the comforting red lights of the truck ahead and watched the yellow line in the road. I (and my passenger) made it back home safely.

Many times since that experience, I have faced challenging and seemingly insurmountable goals in my life. I always think back to my experience of driving in that icy storm. What kept me on course then can keep me on course now; the power of focus (and a lot of prayer).

What's Blinding You?

The falling snow and ice blinded me that dark night on the highway. What is blinding you from your goals? What is preventing you from focusing on the destination? Many things in our lives can become obstacles to focusing on what is important, including:

§ Poorly defined destination – We usually know the general vicinity of where we want to go in our lives but often do not define the destination clearly enough. This confusion can become a barrier to focusing on what is important because we may not *know* our destination.

§ Fear – Fear of failure, fear of success, fear of the unknown, and other fears can often blind us from focusing on the goals in our lives.



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§ Lack of confidence – Thinking “I can’t” sometimes takes over our willingness to focus on what is important. Sometimes these messages come from within; sometimes they come from others in our life.

§ Not knowing *how* to focus – The lack of skill in finding and maintaining the focus prevents many of us from focusing on the goals in our lives.

The first step is to identify the goal (or the vision), then identify what barriers are standing in the way of focusing on that goal.

Four Steps to Establishing and Maintaining Focus

Much like my success in navigating the snowstorm and arriving safely home, achieving your life purpose and goals relies heavily on four key elements:

1. Know your destination even if it is far away. Know where you are trying to go. Understand the vision and purpose you are trying to realize. Unless you have the destination clearly in mind, you will not be able to gauge your progress in getting there. Several tools are available on my website (www.liveandworkonpurpose.com) to help you identify your vision and purpose.
2. Identify the tail lights in your life. Just like I focused on the red tail lights of the truck ahead of me in the storm, you can identify and focus on the milestones between where you are and where you want to be. In other words, set “step by step” goals along the road that will lead you to your ultimate purpose. Then, stay focused on them.
3. Watch the road. While it’s important to focus on the goal and the milestones, it’s also important to watch the yellow strip along the highway of your life. This will help you ensure you are not veering off course as you move toward your goals. A useful tool for watching the road is my “Purpose Foundation Program”, also available on my website.
4. Prayer. Constantly asking for direction and help in maintaining faith and focus is critical.

Maintaining the Focus

Once you’ve established your vision, milestone goals, and understand where you are in the road, you are well on your way to reaching your vision destination. Keep your focus on what is important. And remember, the journey is just as important as the destination. During that terrible snowstorm, my growth occurred not at my destination, but on the road.

Now, start your engine and get on the road.

Bradley Davidson is a certified personal & professional coach whose personal mission is to empower people and organizations to lead their lives and worlds with purpose, vision, passion, and integrity by providing individuals life-changing learning, coaching, and support. He may be contacted through his website at www.liveandworkonpurpose.com.