

**LeaderPerfect Newsletter**  
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**Getting What You *Really* Want**

by Dr. Mike Armour

"Picture this . . . ," says the salesman as he describes how his product will benefit you. Or maybe he personalizes the line by saying, "I can just picture you . . . ."

Sales professionals, like master motivators, know the power of pictures created in your mind. Compelling pictures yield compelling motivation. But they need to be compelling pictures of what we want, not what we *don't* want.

**Revisiting the DQ**

In our last installment we discussed the importance of getting beyond what dissatisfies us (our Dissatisfaction Quotient or DQ, as we called it) to a distinct picture of what we want in its place. We noted that we have a proclivity for being much clearer about what we don't want than about what we truly want.

A mid-level manager, upset with being micro-managed, tells me, "I want my boss to quit checking and rechecking everything I do."

"Okay," I answer, "you don't want your boss micro-managing you. And what is it that you want him to do instead?"

He shoots back, "I just want him to stop looking over my shoulder all the time."

I nod knowingly, then add, "That's well and good. But you've just told me something else you don't want. I'm curious to know what it is you want."

The conversation may go through several exchanges like this before we ever get to what he wants. Or we may not get there at all. Occasionally I talk with people who seem incapable of articulating what they want. Their fixation is entirely on what they don't want.

There's a simple reason for this. Things we don't want usually have pain or discomfort associated with them. Painful memories or anticipated discomfort gives us instant clarity on what we want to avoid.

There's no parallel mechanism in the brain to give us instant clarity on what we desire. We have to generate that clarity. And we generate it at the level of the conscious mind. We purposefully create a distinct, appealing picture of what we genuinely want, then hold up this picture regularly for the eye of the unconscious mind.

The unconscious mind, as we saw in the last issue, "steers" us toward the pictures we hold before it. If we do not give it a clear, compelling picture of where we want to go, we limit its ability to muster internal resources to reach our goal. One writer put it aptly three decades ago when he titled a book, "If You Don't Know Where You're Going, You'll Probably End Up Somewhere Else."

## A "Notty" Problem

There's an intriguing limitation to the unconscious mind. In computer parlance, it has no logic gate. That is, it imposes no logic on what it processes. You know this well from your own dream life, that wonderland of unconscious creativity. How logical are your dreams? How often have you laughed about the crazy things you dreamed the night before?

By contrast, the conscious mind is extremely logical. It makes constant decisions about what is right or wrong, true or false, rational or irrational. It not only has a logic gate, it depends on it incessantly.

Now, because the unconscious mind is absent a logic gate, it cannot process negations, statements formed with the word "not." Put another way, it cannot make logical distinctions between X and not-X. That's up to the conscious mind.

So, when we say, "I don't want X," the unconscious mind has no facility for handling the "not." It can only form a picture of X.

It then passes this picture of X to the conscious mind, which says, "Yes, that's what I don't want" (which, ironically, invites the unconscious mind to see still another picture of X, since the unconscious mind is again unable to facilitate the "not" in "what I do not want").

Thus, when we repeatedly say, "I don't want X," we focus the unconscious mind on X. This does two things, neither of them helpful.

First, it deepens our upset, since we dislike what we see in the picture. And second, it opens the way for the unconscious mind to steer us toward the very thing we don't want.

On the other hand, if our aversion for X is strong enough, the unconscious mind may respond with a simple strategy of "let's go any place but X." Unfortunately, "any place but X" may itself be less than satisfying.

## Stages of Satisfaction

Neurologically there's an intermediate state between dissatisfaction and satisfaction. You might call it "not dissatisfied." Just because we are "not dissatisfied," it does not follow that we are necessarily "satisfied."

When we pursue a strategy of "any place but X," we rarely end up with true satisfaction. At best, we may end up "not dissatisfied." Even worse, "any place but X" may turn out to be just as unsatisfactory as X itself.

Only when we help the unconscious mind steer us toward genuine satisfaction are we likely to get there. Remember, if you don't know where you're going, you may end up somewhere else. And you may not like somewhere else any better than the place you left.

## A Plan of Action

Here then is your action plan, based on concepts in this newsletter and the previous one:

1. With pencil and paper, list the major areas of your life: family, career, spirituality, personal development, community involvement, etc.
2. For each one, ask yourself, "Do I sense dissatisfaction in this part of my life?"

If the answer is, "Yes," identify the source of your greatest dissatisfaction. Name it and write it down. Then assign it a DQ, using a scale of 1 to 10 (ten being the highest). In some areas you may have several sources of dissatisfaction. Repeat this process with each of them.

3. Next, pick out an area with a high DQ. Translate it into a picture of what you don't want. Notice the clarity of your picture.
4. Now ask yourself, "What do I want instead?" Begin to create a picture of it. Then develop the picture further. And further. Continue to enhance it until it's more vivid than the picture of what you don't want. (We offered steps in the last issue for enhancing this picture.)
5. Frequently call up this picture of what you want. Hold it before your mind's eye for several minutes before you go to sleep at night. Use it to interrupt yourself whenever you are about to say (or think), "I don't want X." Catch your words and immediately put the picture of what you want in front of your mind's eye. Really focus on it. Then, using the most self-confident tone of your inner voice say, "Yes, this is what I really want."
6. Once this picture is second nature to you, take another life area with a high DQ and repeat the process.

These pictures of what you want will now prompt the unconscious mind to steer you in a beneficial direction.

Is this enough to get you to your goal? Probably not. You will still need a "conscious mind" plan that moves you step by step from where you are today to where you want to be tomorrow. But having aligned your unconscious mind energies with your conscious mind goals, you've vastly increased your odds of success.

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