

STEP 3: COMMIT TO SOMETHING

'Do or die!'

'Don't give up the ship!'

'Damn the torpedoes and full speed ahead!'

Military expressions are essential during war when the price of failure is death. But they lose their effect in our private or business life - failure is not quite so final.

However, these sayings stem from a principle that applies to every single aspect of our lives: commitment.

The commitment to one's goals is perhaps the most important rule for success. Without it, we can get side-tracked through procrastination, laziness, bad habits, rationalisation and a host of goal-defeating problems.

Commitments usually require sacrifice in order to achieve a particular goal. If your goal is to be self-employed, you will probably have to sacrifice an active social life for a while.

When we are fully committed to our goals, attaining them is easier, and our choices become clearer. If our goal is to become the top salesperson in a company (for example), then the choice between finishing work when everyone else does or staying an extra hour to make courtesy calls may not be easy, but it must be done.

If our goal is to lose 15 pounds, our choice between having a carrot or a piece of carrot cake becomes clearer. When we are not committed to our goals, our choices become hazy.

Being committed means doing whatever it takes. Commitment does not mean stabbing people in the back or walking all over fellow workers to attain our goals. It does mean making those extra phone calls or jogging around the block or working longer hours even when we don't feel like it.

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Being committed to our goals isn't easy, and it takes considerable effort and time. That's why most people make so few commitments and often have serious trouble keeping what commitments they make.

Commitment demands strong self-discipline, and a persistent inner voice urging us on. Self-discipline develops out of our commitment to our goals. Our inner voice may at times conflict with our stated goals.

This voice tries to fight commitments and wants to get out of them. It may say, 'Oh, go home early. You've worked hard. You deserve it.' Like a soldier who's facing his enemy, we face our own inner enemies - 'I'll do it tomorrow,' 'I can't do it.'

When we accept a commitment, it should be with 'do or die' determination. Otherwise, it's only a weak agreement. Real commitment takes courage, sacrifice, and relentless perseverance.

If you are able to hang in there and work towards your main goals (even just a little progress each day), you will eventually fulfil them. Commit yourself to the achievement of your goals, and develop the self-discipline to do what it takes.

As an added benefit, you'll achieve the satisfaction and confidence that comes with your success. Don't let this be said of your life:

'And nothing to look backwards to with pride,
And nothing to look forward to with hope,
So now and never any different.'

In war, in sports, in life, those without a commitment to success and victory often create their own defeat. If we could see the meaning of 'do or die' as does a soldier in battle, we would be victorious more often.

When you are committed in life, everything is possible!