

Re:Focus

simple ideas to help you thrive

by Simon Sinek

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Planning Is Everything. The Plan Is Nothing.

Dwight Eisenhower said, "planning is everything, the plan is nothing." I didn't know what he meant until recently.

Whether you're starting a business or managing your career, when we set out on the journey the plan often look like this:



Our goals are clear and the path is clear. All that's left to do is to follow the plan - to walk down the path.

But when we actually start the business or set out on our careers, the path actually looks more like this:



In reality, most plans are rendered useless almost as soon as they are put in motion. There is still some value in the original plan, however. It defines the goal or the outcome we desire. And that's the most important part of the original plan - that the destination is clear; the reason you're on the journey in the first place.

When you looked at the second picture, did you see only the crowd blocking the path or did you look into the distance to see the buildings - the destination? Even in this little exercise, looking at the building and wondering how to get there is vastly more inspiring than looking at the crowd and wondering how you'll get through it. The same is true in our businesses and in our careers. We often lose sight of the destination and can see only the people coming at us in all directions. We see only obstacles. But simply by looking up, looking ahead, the obstacles seem to become less daunting.

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With your eyes refocused, start planning as you go and start planning ahead. Learn to be flexible. Learn to anticipate; something with which the original plan offers no help.

Should you move to the left or the right of the man in the baseball cap? What about the guy in the sunglasses? Soon you'll have to pass the guy in the orange jacket. Or perhaps there's a completely different route to take altogether.

As a fun little exercise, try this when you actually walk down the street. Focus ahead at what you'll have to pass and have in your mind a plan of action. You'll be amazed how much quicker you get to your destination and you'll be astounded how much more fun you'll have getting there. The crowd will no longer be a sea of obstacles, and the journey will feel like a game.

Then do the same for your business or your career. The plan, you see, is nothing. Planning is everything.