

EXPLORE YOUR ENTHUSIASM

EPISODE 141: THE KEY TO CONSISTENCY + SUCCESS = GRIT

Do you struggle to set goals, because you're afraid of missing out on everything else you should be doing? Do you feel like you're pulled in a million different directions? Today we're going to talk about why that is, and how to clarify what you want from your business, both from the Big Picture to what you'll actually do today, and all the stuff in between.

I was reading Angela Duckworth's Grit last night and I came across a page that totally excited me. I had to interrupt Jay's reading to say: HEY! Look! She's talking about and showing the science behind [Map Your Business!](#)

Now, I don't think I've mentioned in yet on the podcast, but my book Map Your Business is published and will soon be available on Amazon, iBooks and wherever you buy books online, or at my site. As you listen to this, I should be packaging up the pre-orders and shipping them out. You can get a signed copy at taraswiger.com/mapyobiz and I'll put the link in the show notes.

So back to Grit and why I was so excited. The author is a researcher on achievement and what makes people succeed in hard situations, like finishing Navy Seals boot camp or succeeding in a competitive career. She's found that success is less tied to TALENT than we think and much more reliant on what she calls Grit - working on one area, for a long time. She says it's made of both passion - sticking with one area that you're dedicated to instead of dallying in a bunch of different areas - and perseverance, continuing to go on even after it's hard.

Now, it's that finding one area and sticking with that so many of us struggle with. As creatives, we have a million ideas and million things we get excited about. And that's not necessarily a bad thing, it's more important how you frame your many interests and ideas.

So lemme explain the process I've been walking students through every year, to help you reframe your zillion ideas. This was a class that was exclusive to the Starship, but it's now published in Map Your Business; this is a quick overview of the process.

First, we start with where you are right now, and where you want to be. Big picture, what's your mission for what your work does in the world?

Now keep in mind that you probably have a few missions, involving your relationships like being a good daughter, friend, mother or partner. But what we're talking about is professionally. What do you want to do in the world, professionally?

Perhaps it's to provide color and joy to the world. Perhaps it's to help knitters make better fitting sweaters. My mission is to help makers trust themselves, in order to build the life and business they actually want.

From there, we look at what working toward the big mission (even if it's kinda fuzzy) would look like after 1 year. What measurable things would you see: Would you be published? Teaching classes? In retail shops or craft shows?

Then, what will bring you closer to that - is it more sales? Is it submitting to publications? Is it teaching your first class? Is it putting your website up? These are the kinds of goals you can set for the next 2-3 months.

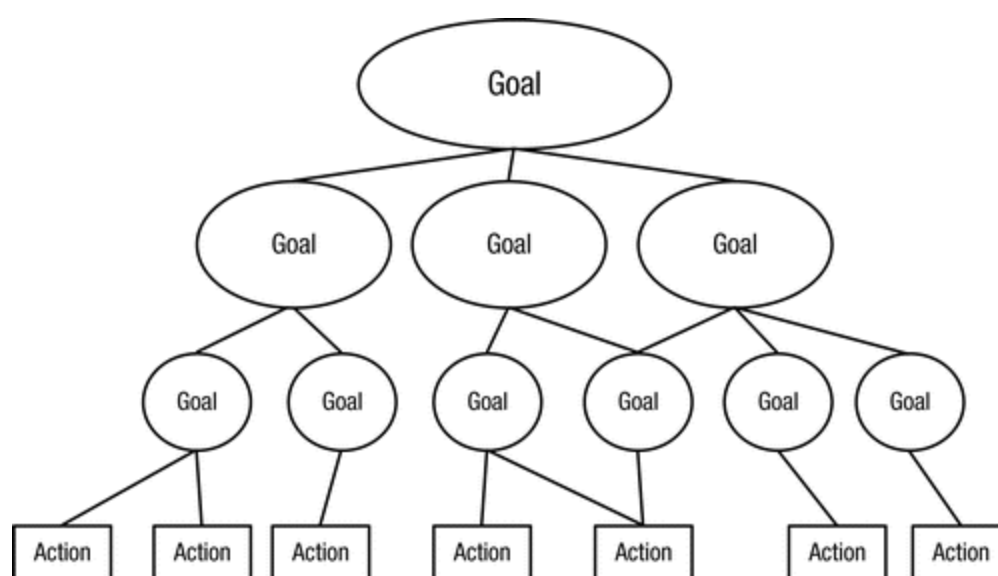
Then (and this is what we do in the Map Making Guide, which is also part of Map Your Business), you take that goal and you break it down further into actions - what are the things you need to DO to make that smaller goal happen?

Now I call these actions, because they need to be do-able, but Duckworth refers to these as smaller, lower level goals. Things like: Finish the pattern, make 10 products, call that shop.

And then, you DO stuff, day by day. But the process goes both ways - you both use the big picture to choose your actions, and you can then filter your actions through your Big Picture - is this in alignment? Is this moving me where I actually want to go? (I remind you to do this with monthly Reassessment worksheets in Map Your Business.)

Ok, as you think about this process, you can see that there's still a lot of room for different ideas or areas. Your Big Picture can stay cohesive and allow you to do a lot of experiments to figure out what gets you there. And MUCH of what you want to do as a creative is not necessarily related to or in alignment with your Big Picture and that's ok - it can be your hobby. Like, I like to quilt, handpiece, and knit. I also write, record and teach. But only the last list is what I do professionally, because it's in alignment with my mission. I leave the crafting as part of who I am, but I don't spend my work hours doing them.

That's the process I've been teaching for over 5 years, so I got very excited when I saw this in Grit. Now, if you're listening to the podcast, you can watch the video over at [Taraswiger.com/podcast141](https://www.taraswiger.com/podcast141), but I'll explain - it's a hierarchy with big circles at the top, with a row of smaller circles coming off them, with a row of smaller circles coming off them. Duckworth calls this the goal hierarchy:



What I wanted to share with you today is a few notes she makes about the problems people often face - and if YOU are having a hard time reaching your goals or getting where you want to be, I want you to see if you can identify yourself, in the following problems.

So some people have a big picture clearly in mind, but they have no idea what actions to take or smaller goals to make it happen. This is like my brothers who wanted to play for the NBA. They could imagine what it'd be like to reach it, but weren't sure about the steps to take to make it happen. Psychologists call this "Positive XX". It can feel very pleasant in the moment, but become a downer in the long term if you're always wanting something but not feeling like you're making progress towards reaching it.

I meet a lot of people without businesses who dream of what it'd be like to be self-employed. Until they commit to doing the steps to having a business, it's just going to be a dream. My answer to this problem is always: Read books. If you wanna be in the NBA, read biographies of NBA stars and make a plan to do what they did. If you wanna own a business, read "how to start a business" books and start doing the actions to start a business.

Other people have a lot of things to do. They spend all their days DOING, but it doesn't add up to anything. Now many people who are a year or two into running their business are in this space. They've either met their initial big picture dream and they haven't stopped to think what's next. (What comes after starting the business?) Or, they've read too many posts and books that tell them to do all the things and they don't know what it leads it to.

The solution is to go back to the big picture, pick a very specific goal for the next three months and then filter everything on your To Do list through that goal. If it's not related, don't do it.

And the final problem people have with this is they have too many conflicting high level goals.

If you both want to grow your product sales and get your first book published, well those are both mid-level goals that serve a higher purpose, so you can take them one at a time.

But a high level goals that might conflict would be: I want to create handmade products that are in shops around the world and I want to travel the world teaching. One requires you to be home, improving your product and shipping to shops, the other requires you to get good at teaching and travel around. It's not that you can't do both, as you could certainly hire manufacturers and do drop shipping, but you'll have to make decisions prioritizing one goal over another.

And part of the tension of being a human being is that our professional goals are often in conflict with our personal goals. That's totally normal, but you complicate this if you set too many high level professional goals.

Resources:

[Map Your Business](#)

[Grit](#)

Goal hierarchy comes from [Self-Control and Grit, Angela Duckworth, James J. Gross](#)

[Current Directions in Psychological Science](#)

[Vol 23, Issue 5, pp. 319 - 325](#)

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