

**MICHAEL HEPPELL**

*'The realisation that good is no longer good enough  
will positively change you and transform your business for ever.'*

*Jonathan Raggatt, MD Red Carnation Hotels and Hotelier of the Year*

# *How to Be Brilliant*

*Change your ways  
in 90 days!*

*Brilliant New  
10th  
Anniversary  
Edition*



**10th  
Anniversary  
Edition**

# ***HOW TO BE BRILLIANT***

***Change your ways in 90 days!***

***MICHAEL HEPPELL***

**PEARSON**

Harlow, England • London • New York • Boston • San Francisco • Toronto • Sydney  
Auckland • Singapore • Hong Kong • Tokyo • Seoul • Taipei • New Delhi  
Cape Town • São Paulo • Mexico City • Madrid • Amsterdam • Munich • Paris • Milan

**T**ime to set some goals. Already? But I don't know what I want! **EXACTLY!!!**

This is more exciting than you can imagine because you're going to do most of the work and see most of the results over the next 90 days. Ninety days is long enough to get some serious work done but it's short enough to see some results very quickly.

Let me share with you what I believe are the fundamentals of goal-setting. You'll have read in the introduction that I'm not a huge fan of SMART goals for creating passion and excitement. SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timescale) goals are great if you are doing project planning. But I believe the fundamentals of goal-setting start with a burning desire.

I want to talk to you about a more powerful goal-setting technique using the three Ps. The three Ps are very simple:

**Personal**

**Positive**

**Present tense.**

When you set goals, first of all they need to be **Personal**. Second, they need to be **Positive**. Third, they must be set in the **Present** tense.

When I say a goal has to be personal, it will include the big 'I'. Organizations can have goals, that's great. Shared goals for an organization are exciting; shared goals for a couple are stimulating; shared goals for a family are stirring; but right now we're talking about YOU – the most important person in the world – and what is going to make a difference to you and your life. Does that sound a little selfish? Maybe it's time for you to be a little selfish here.

**BRILL BIT**

When it comes to setting goals, you are going to tune into a radio station called WIFM, that's:

**What's In It For Me?**

When you set a goal and write it down, it's going to start with the word 'I'. Such as – I am, I have. This will really help you to concentrate on what it is that's going to make a difference to *you* when you set your goals.

The second P is that a goal must be positive. I covered positive language earlier, so you should already have an understanding of how this works. Choosing the right words is absolutely critical at this point to make sure that you get the right affirmation created in order to achieve your goal. Let me give you an example. Once somebody said to me, 'I have my goal. There it is. What do you think of that, Michael?' They showed me their goal, which

read, 'I am no longer in debt.' What's the key word in that sentence? It's *debt*.

You may be thinking, 'Why should that make a difference? That's a great goal. They want to get out of debt and they're being positive about it. It even sounds like it's in the present tense.' Positive language means that you would choose a different word (other than debt). The different words I suggested were 'financially free': 'I am now financially free', or 'I am financially free, now' – whichever feels best. 'I'm financially free' is much stronger and uses more positive language than 'I am no longer in debt.'

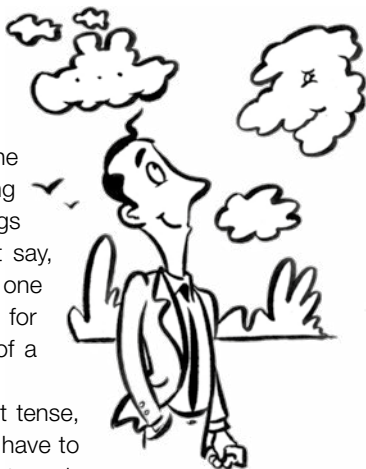
The third P is to set a goal in the present tense. See it as if it has already been achieved. This seems like a crazy idea to a lot of people and you may struggle to get your head around it. You may be thinking, 'Why would I do that? Could I not say, "One day I will be financially free" or "I will be financially free in two years' time?"' When you set a goal in the present tense, your subconscious starts working towards achieving the goal.

## By setting **a goal in the present tense** you create **Gestalt**

Gestalt is a very powerful driving force that can change the speed at which you achieve a goal. Gestalt is your brain's way of wanting to create order. If you were to lie on the grass on a sunny day and look up at a blue sky and see the clouds rolling past, it wouldn't be long before you started to imagine other things those clouds might look like. You might say, 'Oh look, there's a ship' or 'Doesn't that one look like old Uncle Albert?' The reason for this is that your brain is making sense of a random image.

When you create a goal in the present tense, your brain says 'OK, if that's how things have to look, sound and feel, what do I have to do to make that happen now?' This is why a goal will happen so much faster if you set it in the present tense.

Here's an example of the person who I really believe was one of the greatest ever goal-setters – Muhammad Ali. Do you remember what Muhammad Ali would say? Do you remember the affirmation he would use? Four simple words:



*'I am the greatest.'*

**BRILL BIT**

What did Muhammad Ali say before he was the world champion?

'I am the greatest.'

What did he say when he was the world champion? 'I am the greatest.'

What did he say when he was no longer the world champion? 'I am the greatest.'

It's the perfect affirmation.

Think about the phrase, 'I am the greatest'. Is it personal? Is it positive? Is it in the present tense? Yes. Yes. Yes!

But to be the greatest, Muhammad Ali did more than just say he was the greatest. Ali would set goals in an altogether different way. Do you remember in pre-fight press conferences when he would turn to his opponent, look him in the eye and then make one of his famous predictions? Ali would say, 'You're going down in the second minute of the third round.' He would say it with such certainty and such belief that even though his opponent would say 'Yeah, right!', he knew that he was in trouble.

After the press conference, Ali would then do something very interesting. He would go back to his hotel room, or back to his home, lie down and relax from head to toe. In his imagination he would see the press conference just as it had been. He would see himself make that prediction, but then he would start to visualize the days and weeks ahead and see himself build up to the fight. He would see himself doing amazing training; he would imagine himself preparing and getting stronger and better than the other guy. He knew if his opponent was up at 5 am running, then he'd be up at 4 am. He envisioned himself during his sparring sessions, getting bigger and stronger.

Then he would imagine the day of the fight. He would arrive outside the stadium and when he got out of the car, the crowd would be chanting only one name. He would hear it repeated over and over again: 'Ali, Ali, Ali ...' He would intensify the image. Increase the feeling. Bring it closer to him, imagining and feeling every single word, every single emotion that went with it.

Then he would see himself go into the dressing room and feel the bandages go on to his hands, he would feel the gloves go on and see himself standing strong. Then he would hear his name announced as he walks out. In his mind he senses the crowd going crazy, screaming just for him. Only his name would be screamed; everybody is on his side.

Then he would spring into the ring and look across the crowd, seeing every person screaming his name. He would hear it over and over again, intensifying it, increasing the volume, increasing the emotion: 'Ali, Ali, Ali, Ali'.

Then he would turn to his opponent and see him shrink small. They would touch gloves and begin to fight.

He would then visualize each round – mentally rehearsing the outcome he wanted. He would see the first round exactly as he'd planned it, exactly as he'd mentally rehearsed it. Connecting, brilliant blows, doing the famous Ali shuffle – float like a butterfly, sting like a bee!

Then he would visualize the second round, even stronger, even greater, intensifying every moment. Then came the third round and, more importantly, the second minute of the third round. At that moment – boom! He would connect with his opponent with an almighty punch, then see him go down. When his opponent fell, Ali would imagine standing over him and hearing the referee making the count – 'One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine – you're out!' At that point, when he knew that he had won, he would freeze-frame the image and surround it in brilliant white light. He called this creating a 'future history'.

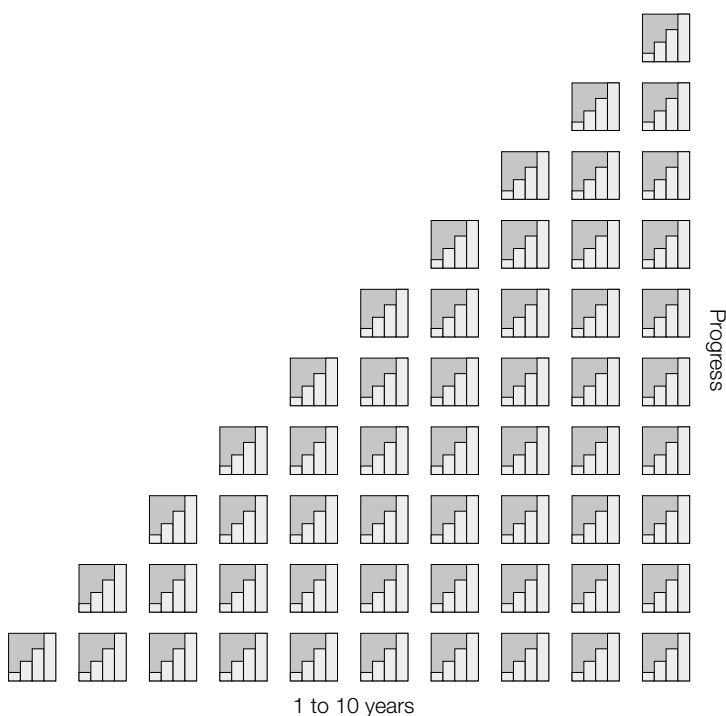
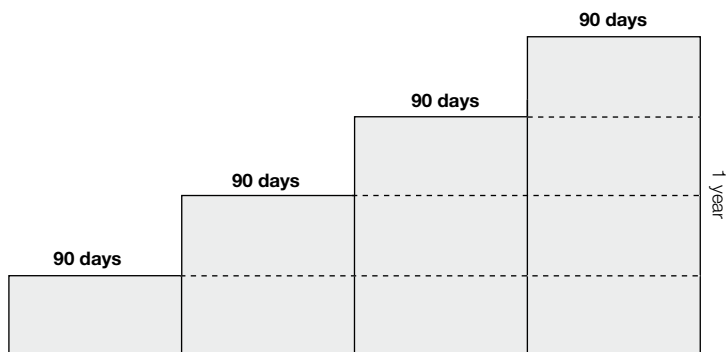
Never again would he consider an outcome other than his future history. All the time that he trained, he would see his future history. Every time anybody asked him about the fight, his future history was the image he would see. Every morning when he woke up, he would visualize his future history. Every night when he went to bed, his future history was the image that he would visualize. It was a future that he was so certain about, it was as if it had already been documented by the historians.

With that level of certainty, when it came to the day of the fight, you know what happened? His opponent would be knocked out in the second minute of the third round, exactly as he'd predicted.

That's how to set goals. Would Ali have been as successful if he had been taught to set SMART goals? 'OK Muhammad, make them specific, make them measurable, ensure they are achievable, realistic and with a timescale!'

Ali created a belief and a passion and brought it very much into his whole physiology so every moment he lived it, every moment he ate it, every moment he breathed it, every moment he felt it. With that level of certainty, and with that level of passion, you can achieve anything, anything that you put your mind to.

To create that level of intensity requires passion and a need to make a goal a 'must'. Here's your homework. Right now focus on the areas that are important to you. Think clearly about what exactly you want to achieve. To begin with, you're going to set some short-term goals. By this I mean things that are going to happen in the next 90 days. I also want you to have a look at where you want to be in one year; remember, that is only four batches of 90 days (see figure overleaf). Then think about where you want to be in five years and where you want to be in 10 years. Ten years is a long time and the only limit should be your own imagination. Remember this brilliant quote from Michelangelo:



*'The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it.'*

Think about that for a moment.

In 10 years you will have grown and developed massively. You could do whatever you choose to; you could be anywhere that you want to be. Just

break it down into 90-day programmes, 90 days of doing the right actions. Do this and the 90-day chunks will start to build (see figure on p. 44). Your daily actions build up and you'll see yourself step up, step up so much that after three or four batches of 90 days, you're going to say: 'Wow. Look what I have achieved!'

It will be like a boat going through a lock system; every 90 days you get higher and higher towards achieving your goal. After 10 years you'll have travelled so high, you'll be amazed how far you have come.

So get practical and plan your first batch of 90 days. It won't always be easy, and some batches of 90 days will be tougher than others, but over time they will even out. After doing this, you'll see how easily you can plan your first year, the next five years and 10 years of this exciting new journey. Start by looking at the actions you have to take right now.

First question: which areas in your life do you want to set goals in? Remember when you first started to read *How to be Brilliant*, you looked at the Wheel of Life (p. 3). Eight different key areas in life. Some of the areas flagged up challenges where you knew you had to take action right now. They are the first areas to work on. Look carefully at your Wheel of Life. If you have a low mark in any area then you must set a goal there. It's an absolute must. The reason why? That area is holding you back – it's holding you back from getting the balance in your life that you deserve. A balanced wheel is the foundation. You will find it difficult to set big stretch goals later unless you have a balance first. So set some goals in each section of your wheel.

Do you have career goals? Do you have some areas within work where you say: 'Yes. I would really love to achieve that. That's where I want to be. This is how much money I want to be earning within my career. This is how many sales I want to be making. This is how many people I want to serve. This is the type of position that I want to have within this organization.' If so, you can create goals around your career.

What about within your relationships? What type of relationships do you want to have with people? Where do you want to be? How do you want people to view you? How do you want to be as a friend? How do you want to be as a partner? How do you want to be as a parent, an auntie, uncle, son or daughter? Could you have a goal in those areas as well?

What about your health? Do you want to make a difference to your health, to the way that you feel about yourself and the levels of energy that you have?

What about the things you really want? Do you want a particular car? Do you want to go on great holidays? Do you want to go and experience things that you could probably only have dreamt about?

Start to think about the things that really excite you, that really juice you up. Take a moment to write down a few ideas. Write down all the different things that come to mind with those areas. Think about the parts that might be missing from your life – what are they? How are you going to fill the gaps? Remember to