

HANSEN AND LAUB GOING THE DISTANCE

GOING THE DISTANCE

7

STEPS TO
PERSONAL
CHANGE



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AND
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DELLA
WHITE



INTRODUCTION

The aim of this book is to share with readers what we have learned about personal change. We want to emphasize at the outset that we don't offer any definitive answers, nor do we offer a quick-fix approach. What we do offer is a unique blend of general principles and practical strategies based on scholarly research and concrete personal experience.

In the years that followed the Man In Motion World Tour, Rick recognized that there were certain consistent principles that helped him achieve his goal. He was also deeply moved by the way in which the tour seemed to transcend the boundaries of disability and influence a much broader spectrum of people. He wanted to find a way to share his discoveries.

It was during this period of reflection that I met Rick. I was conducting a two-year research project on personal transformation at the University of British Columbia. I approached Rick to be part of my study, and he was eager to participate because of his ongoing desire for self-development, and because of the kinds of questions he was grappling with at the time.

My motivation and interest for this research were rooted in the fact that helping people change is what I do for a living. My training and experience as a psychologist notwithstanding, I believe that people are capable of accomplishing personal change without the help of a professional. But, in my quest to understand how people change, I soon learned, strangely enough, that very little research had been done on how people actually accomplish personal change. Instead, most of the research focused on what and why people change, not on how they do it.

So, I set out to assemble and study real-life accounts of personal transformation. I wanted to identify exactly how diverse individuals accomplished personal change and what, if anything, they had in common. Through an intensive analysis of the data, I uncovered significant commonality. This took two forms. First, I discovered consistent principles woven throughout all the individual accounts of change. Second, and most importantly, I found there was an overarching process of change common to all the accounts.

My research findings seemed to validate and were intuitively consistent with Rick's personal experience. We had both approached the same topic from different but complementary angles and arrived at pretty much the same point. We enjoyed the collegial spirit I found in working together, so it was only natural that we join together in creating a book that would allow us to pass on some of our exciting findings to as many people as possible.

We have taken the principles identified in my research and Rick's experience and blended with strategies we have found to be useful in facilitating the change process. Examples from Rick's life are used as illustrations, in order to allow many personal quests for change to speak with a single voice.

The result is this book. We believe that *Going the Distance* will take you step-by-step through an innovative process of personal change that can be effectively and readily applied to anyone's life.

Joan Laub

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FOREWORD

Often, people ask me if I would exchange the life I have led since my accident in return for the use of my legs. Sometimes they seem shocked or disbelieving when I invariably answer, "No."

As do most kids at age 15, I thought I had the world by the tail on June 27, 1973. I had just received athlete-of-the-year honors at my high school and was looking forward to trying out for the provincial volleyball team later in the summer. It was a great life. It was a beautiful day. My friend Don and I were hitchhiking back home from doing a little fishing--even that had been good--and we hoped to get back to Williams Lake in time to watch a local rodeo.

After a while, we caught a ride with a guy and his girlfriend in a pickup. Somehow in my gut I knew it was a mistake--the guy was knocking back a beer as he invited us to hop in. We jumped in the back and the driver headed out along the gravel road toward Williams Lake. It was a long and bumpy trip. Don and I took turns trying to keep the box of fish we'd caught from bouncing out of the truck. We also tried to get a little rest. I had dozed off but was suddenly awakened by a scream and the swerving of the vehicle. I remember looking up and seeing that we were skidding out of control. I glanced quickly at Don; his eyes were as big as saucers. I knew that we were in trouble and was immediately overwhelmed with fear.

The truck lurched from side to side and finally overturned. Don was thrown clear and relatively unhurt. I was not so lucky. The large, steel toolbox that I had been lying on in the back of the truck was pitched out as we overturned. I landed full force on the edge of the box. My back snapped like a twig, and I lost consciousness. When I came to a few moments later, I knew that I would live, and instantly wished that I wouldn't.

I lay crumpled against the box, covered with debris. When I tried to move a searing pain raged through my back, blotting out everything except the thought that I wasn't moving. Something was dreadfully wrong. A cold, sick feeling grew deep in my stomach as I realized that my legs weren't working. I sent the messages, but they didn't respond. They just lay there numb, like jelly, like they were dead. The full meaning of fear and dread came at me, full-force. I was still fifteen, but I wasn't a kid anymore.

Deep inside a little voice was telling me that this was serious, very serious. I tried to hold that voice at bay with logic and optimism. Hey, I'd been injured before and had gotten better--how bad could it be? Yes, another voice said, but this time it was going to be different.

I lay there for an hour fighting the pain and fear, and losing. The ambulance arrived and took me to Williams Lake Hospital. There I received emergency

treatment for my injuries, and then, that afternoon, the doctors came in with my x-rays. They told me that I would never walk again. I was torn between disbelief and despair. To never walk again, never run, never do anything. Being alive seemed little consolation.

The doctors decided that I should be transferred to the Royal Columbian Hospital in New Westminster for surgery. The operation repaired whatever could be done and for the next two months I lay in a Stryker Frame. The Stryker Frame is uncomfortable, but ingenious in its simplicity.

It's basically a hard, narrow bed pad set in the middle of a large, circular metal framework. Initially, I was placed within the frame on my stomach. After being in that position for a few hours, another hard, narrow bed pad was laid on my back and bolted in tight. Then the whole thing was rotated 180 degrees and the top bed pad was removed. Voila! I was now lying on my back. This went on every three hours for weeks at a time.

Late one evening I began to feel nauseous and finally vomited about 3 a.m. Fortunately, I was at least in the face-down position, the bed pad supporting my forehead and a cut-out area of the pad framing my face. I called for the duty nurse, but for some reason, no one came for hours. I stared down at what had been my evening meal as the fever continued to ravage my body. I lay there sweating, head pounding, my back on fire with pain. The stench below me wafted up from the floor.

I was unable to move. I was alone, and perhaps for the first time in my life, absolutely helpless. A wave of anxiety crashed over me, bigger and heavier than the ones before . . . bigger and heavier than all the ones before combined. I began to shake in utter despair and cried on into the night.

At that moment I wanted everything to be over. At that moment my life seemed worthless. Nothing I was doing was working. I felt helpless and out of control, and the thought of spending the rest of my life in a wheelchair brought with it visions of unending depression, dependence and confinement. I hoped that it was just a bad dream, that I would wake up and be alright.

It's been about twenty years since that desperate night. How could I have known that I would be able to look back over my life from this vantage point with such a great sense of fulfillment and contentment? It would have been impossible to convince that scared kid lying there in the dark that he would eventually have a wonderful wife and children, a successful career in business and the legacy of the Man In Motion World Tour. He could not have embraced the notion that he would eventually come to be excited and optimistic about his future.

Yet, it is true. How did it happen? Of course I feel fortunate that I was given the chance to bring out the best in myself, but how could others learn from what I

have gone through? How was I able to overcome the barriers, both internal and external? These are the questions that motivated me to begin the journey that culminated in this book.

There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that the following steps, principles and strategies have made a difference in my life, and I am sure that they will apply to your life as well. Whether your personal change goals are big or small, whether you come from the country or the city, whether you are a business person, public employee, millworker, homemaker or student, this book offers something to all who have the desire to make change happen for them. In it, my experience in many ways becomes a metaphor that illustrates the attitude, perspective and skills everyone needs to make life changes. I hope that *Going the Distance* will be a beacon of light to guide you through the change process, allowing you to embrace change and work more effectively as you strive to achieve your own success.

Rick Hansen

PREFACE

My Involvement in this book originates from a two-year research project on personal transformation that I completed in 1991 at the University of British Columbia. My motivation and interest for this research were rooted in the fact that helping people change is what I do for a living. However, my training and experience as a psychologist notwithstanding, I believe that people are capable of accomplishing personal change without the help of a professional.

In my quest to understand how people change, I soon learned that, strangely enough, very little research had been done on how people actually accomplish personal change. Instead, most of the research focused on *what* and *why* people change, not on *how* they do it. So, I set out to assemble and study real-life accounts of personal transformation. Rick was among those who agreed to participate in my study.

My overall aim was to identify how *diverse* individuals accomplished accounts of change and what if anything, they had in common. Second, and most importantly I found there was an overarching process of change common to all accounts. These findings were distilled from the research and are summarized within this book.

After the project was completed, Rick approached me about the possibility of collaborating on a book about personal change, a passion and interest we both shared. Over the course of the research study we had enjoyed working together, so it was only natural that we join together again in a project of mutual interest.

Joan Laub

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Virtually anyone interested in personal change can use this book. Regardless of who you are, what you do or how many problems you believe you have, you can use this book and benefit from the application of its principles and strategies. Our intent is not to lead you through a complete personal overhaul. Going the Distance will work for you without a professional advisor, a guru or years of counseling. If you read the book carefully and make a sincere, wholehearted effort to apply the principles and strategies it contains, you will reap the benefits. If you commit yourself to studying and completing this process you will be empowered to live in a more meaningful, productive and fulfilling way.

By selecting this book, it is clear you are seeking or at least you are interested in personal change. Some of you may desire change, but feel blocked. If you need assistance, a little or a lot, this book provides straightforward guidance and direction. It offers practical, easy-to-follow steps for achieving self-directed personal change. You can apply this process to any endeavor, whether it be personal effectiveness, business success or improved athletic performance.

To make the best use of this book, read or at least scan its entirety to get a sense of the process as a whole. Next, read the book again with a focus on its principles or individual parts. Then, return to Step #1 and start, step-by-step, through the process. Specific strategies are included in each chapter to guide you. We recommend that you keep a separate journal for jotting down answers to questions, ideas and insights, and significant thoughts and feelings that arise as you work your way through the process.

Keep in mind that there is no one right way to use this book. Every person is unique, an original. The way in which the change process it outlines is put into effect will vary from person to person. You can use this book most effectively as a guide or a framework for your own change process. Ultimately, your journey to personal change will follow a route that can be led by no one else but you.

STEP #1

STEP #1: SETTING YOUR GOAL

I didn't just wake up one day and decide that I was going to wheel around the world. The Man In Motion project began as an itch in the back of my mind in the days after I left the G.F. Strong Rehabilitation Centre and headed back to my Williams Lake home. At that time, it had nothing to do with disability awareness or fund raising; it had almost everything to do with pure physical challenge.

It was one of those kid dreams where you lie on the grass staring up at the moon and imagining that you'll go there some day. Then, later, as I began to focus on marathoning and enjoyed some success, I realized that I really was physically and emotionally strong enough to wheel around the world--if I wanted to. But so what?

Sure, I could do it with my friends, a tent and a trailer. We could set our own pace--but was it worth it to take three years out of my life? I was working on my college degree in physical education and competing internationally in wheelchair sports. I didn't want to leave all that just so I could come home and say, "Well, I wheeled around the world." Big deal.

Then, in 1980, Terry Fox came striding along on a prosthetic leg, with his Marathon of Hope. He was going to run across Canada on sheer guts and determination to raise money for cancer research. It was his way of fighting back against the disease that cost him his leg. Terry and I had come to know one another--had become teammates and friends--through wheelchair basketball. I watched people respond to him, and later, after his death, how they continued to honor his spirit. They acknowledged how much good came to so many from one young man's dream. Somewhere along in there I realized there was something missing from my own dream.

By that time, I'd talked to scores of disabled people in my travels, and I had discovered what we had in common. No, not the disability factor. So what? That was obvious. What we had in common was that we all faced the same physical, emotional and mental barriers. We lived in a world that saw us, yet didn't know us. Sometimes we felt invisible; sometimes we were invisible. What I began to see was the impact that Terry had on raising the awareness--in individuals, in communities, in governments. He made people see, see the invisible.

I enjoyed giving. It made me feel good to help others. So how about continuing Terry's theme? What if I made it the major focus of my wheelchair journey around the world? I could be the catalyst, the messenger, and in that role, perhaps I could

help people with disabilities everywhere. It felt good, but the potential impact was staggering. And as an afterthought--and that's all it was--maybe I could raise not

only

awareness, but money as well. Money that would help people disabled by spinal cord injuries through research, rehabilitation, wheelchair sports and recreation programs.

At that moment, the moon-gazing 'what-ifs' ceased; the tour was no longer something I could do, it became something I had to do. The physical challenge had always been there, I had my mountain to climb. Only now I had a better reason for climbing it.

Now that you have sharpened your awareness about what you would like to change, you must take the first step, which is to identify and commit to a definite and worthwhile goal. What is a goal? A goal is an end toward which a specific effort is directed. Goals can be large or small, simple or complicated. Regardless of their dimensions, goals are a vital force in life. They allow us to exert some control over our lives, and they give our lives meaning. By setting goals, we are making change happen. If we don't set goals, things just happen to us. In these changing times, goals provide stability by giving us direction and focus that is anchored within ourselves and not dependent upon others or our environment. Most importantly, goals enable us to monitor our growth and development, and, ultimately, to shape the course of our lives.

Principle #1

Make your goals personally meaningful.

The goal you set, however big or small, must be anchored in personal meaning. A

goal has personal meaning if it matters to you, if it has personal significance. What is meaningful to one person is not necessarily meaningful to another. 'Meaning' is an individually-defined, subjective experience. What makes an activity meaningful has little to do with the objective value of an activity, but rather with what it represents or means to the person doing it. Therefore, to engage in meaningful goal-setting you must become your own authority about what is meaningful to you and actively resist the undue influence of others. To be meaningful, a goal should be based on authentic personal motives. Your personal motives are the reasons behind what you do; they give meaning to your actions. Uncovering and establishing authentic motives enables you to set meaningful goals. Authentic goals evolve when a person's thoughts, feelings, and actions are in harmony with one another. When you are inauthentic, you are 'out of tune' with yourself and unable to be genuine. You can engage in self-directed change, and you can decide, plan and take action to get things done and do this very effectively. But, if the goals you set are not based on authentic motives, then achieving them will be meaningless.

To have personal meaning, a goal should also be self-initiated. That is, the goal

needs to be motivated from within you rather than imposed from the outside, or directed by other people or by your circumstances. For example, you can set a goal and achieve it, but if the motivation behind the goal is to please others or to gain their approval, achieving it will be meaningless. A good example of this dynamic would be the son or daughter who sets a career goal based upon parental desires, not his or her own aspirations.

The importance of personally meaningful goal-setting is this. You are more likely to commit to goals that are meaningful. Making and keeping commitments results in a greater sense of success. Meaningful goal-setting facilitates a deeper involvement with and a more active participation in the world.

Wheeling around the world was indeed a physical challenge and, therefore, a worthwhile goal, but devoting three years to a pure physical challenge was not enough. What would succeeding mean? It was only after Terry Fox and his Marathon of Hope came along that some personal meaning emerged. When this meaning crystallized--to raise awareness of the potential of people with disabilities--a worthy goal was uncovered.

Strategy: Uncovering Personal Meaning

In your journal, jot down three things that are personally meaningful or significant to you. If necessary, use these general areas as a guide: personal, interpersonal and career.

For example, for Rick, when he was about to embark on the tour, three meaningful things were:

- * Being a pioneer and pursuing unconventional, innovative goals.
- * Being an athlete and undertaking physical challenges.
- * Helping others.

Then, write down three things that are not meaningful. Sometimes to clarify what does matter, we have to first clarify what does not.

Some things which were not meaningful for Rick were:

- * Maintaining the status quo by doing what is considered routine.
- * Living a sedentary life.
- * Being isolated and alone.

Finally, rank the three things that are meaningful to you in order of their

importance.

Rick's priority was:

1. Helping others.
2. Being a pioneer and pursuing unconventional, innovative goals.
3. Being an athlete and undertaking physical challenges.

Principle #2

Make your goals personally challenging.

The goal you set must be challenging. At the same time, it should be realistic and attainable, not impossible, to reach. It should be challenging enough to make you stretch, but not so far that you break. If the goal is unrealistic or too difficult, you will likely fail. On the other hand, if the goal is too easy, achieving it will be insignificant and irrelevant. Therefore, the key is to find a balance between a goal that is challenging and your ability to meet that challenge. Wheeling around the world may seem to be an unrealistic goal for some. Given five years of training it was challenging, but not unrealistic. Having achieved the title of best wheelchair marathoner in the world, this journey would be the ultimate marathon--one long wheelchair race broken into a series of marathons all strung together. Certainly, there was the physical challenge, but the greater challenge was to successfully communicate the message, the meaning behind the goal.

The notion of personal best is crucial here. Personal best means trying to be the best that you can be, given your unique personal circumstances, skills and abilities.

Understanding your personal best requires a realistic self-appraisal. You must be able to identify your strengths and weaknesses as well as your limits and potential. It also involves defining your personal standards for success and failure. Many people do not reach their goals because they misguidedly seek perfection or someone else's standard of success. Setting unrealistic standards often renders the goal unattainable by being so overwhelming that it keeps you from starting in the first place. Striving to achieve your personal best is always realistic and possible. As your goals are reached, new and higher goals can then be identified and sought after as your personal standards continue to be revised and upgraded.

Disabled athletes were first included in the Olympic Games in 1984, and the 1,500-metre wheelchair race had been chosen as an exhibition event. The Olympic qualifying races were to be held in New York the preceding June, and the eight highest finishers would go to Los Angeles and become a part of Olympic history.

While in training that April, I was testing a new wheelchair which had been giving us steering problems. Coming down a steep hill, I thought I had it under control, but I was going about 30 miles an hour when I hit a section of bumpy road surface. I went airborne and the chair flipped sideways. The result was a dislocated left shoulder and considerable road rash. I was taken to the hospital where my arm was relocated. The prognosis was grim: I couldn't compete again until fall. There went my chance for the Olympics.

While I did listen to the doctor's medical advice, I also knew I needed to define and set my own limits, to push myself to my potential. So, instead of focusing on my disappointment and the very real possibility that I would miss the opportunity of a lifetime, I threw myself into my rehab. I worked daily with my coach on overall physical conditioning and specifically on my shoulder with my physiotherapist. After only four weeks of treatment and reconditioning, I wheeled back on the track and returned slowly to form. By the end of May, my 400-metre interval times were within .001 second of my pre-injury times. It looked like I would be going to New York for the qualifying races after all.

In New York there were three heats, and each time I was able to advance. The two semi-final heats remained, and from them only the eight fastest qualifiers would make it to the Games. I was in the first heat. I pushed as hard as I could, and placed fourth. Then I had to sit back helplessly and watch the second heat. It was so close I couldn't tell where I placed. We had to wait until they announced the names. I knew who the first four would be based on their heat finishes. Fifth place was announced, then sixth; seventh place was called and still no Hansen. Finally, my name--the eighth-place finisher--came over the loudspeaker. I had managed to qualify by .001 second over the ninth-place competitor from Sweden.

I had placed eighth and barely qualified by the skin of my teeth. I've won world championships and gold medals, yet no other athletic success has ever matched the feeling of personal victory and fulfillment I carried away from New York. The accomplishment of overcoming the obstacles and qualifying despite the challenge Faced made it my biggest success ever.

Strategy: Realistically Assessing Your Strengths and Weaknesses

In order to be able to set your goal and achieve an appropriate balance between challenge and possibility, it is important to develop a clear idea of your personal abilities and limitations. Try not to put a value judgement on each listing. Instead, try to be realistic and accurate in your evaluation of yourself. In your journal, write down your strengths. Next, write down your weaknesses. Now, honestly assess both. See if any of the weaknesses are 'fatal'. Can your strengths outweigh your shortcomings?

Here are Rick's lists:

Strengths Weaknesses

Athletic Stubborn

Mentally tough Perfectionist

Caring Idealist

Risk-taker Not well organized

Honest No specific project experience

Team builder/player

Communicator

Principle #3

Make your goals specific and definable.

Keep the goal challenging, but break it down into small, manageable parts. Be specific and concrete, and clearly define your goal. For example, a general goal of

physical fitness needs to be translated into something more specific such as starting a physical fitness program, including learning about nutrition, relaxation techniques and exercise. Or, the general goal of increasing your income needs to be translated into something such as consulting a financial advisor for advice on how to increase your investment income and buy a home. Improving your leadership skills as a general goal may need to be defined in terms of reading four books on leadership skills and enrolling in a leadership seminar or training program.

Making your goal specific and definable is important because it allows you to measure, monitor and evaluate your progress. If a goal has been adequately specified and defined, you are then in a position to know exactly when you have completed it. The goal of the Man In Motion World Tour was to raise awareness of the potential of people with disabilities. Measuring awareness was not realistic so the goal was translated into objective terms--raising \$10 million for spinal cord injury research and rehabilitation.

Refer to your notes in the Preparing for Change section where you identified aspects of yourself that you wanted to improve, develop or change. Here, you will need to translate those responses into specific goals. Given the number of areas from which to choose and the multitude of possibilities, remember to select a goal that is right for you at this particular moment in your life. Goals can be set in

a variety of different areas.

Here are some examples:

Types of Personal Goals

- ** Overcoming a fear, such as public speaking
- ** Stopping a self-destructive pattern such as smoking
- ** Physical fitness
- ** Exploring and developing your spiritual self

Types of Interpersonal Goals

- ** Improving communication skills
- ** Volunteering your time
- ** Increasing intimacy with others
- ** Making new friends

Types of Career Goals

- ** Seeking a promotion
- ** Changing careers
- ** Improving leadership skills
- ** Increasing income

For example, here were Rick's goals in 1984:

- ** Be a physical education teacher
- ** Train for a fourth wheelchair marathon World Championship
- ** Wheel around the world in wheelchair to help others
- ** Learn how to fly
- ** Get married

** Become financially independent

In order to make them more specific and definable, he revised them to read:

** Take two years of teacher training to qualify myself to teach physical education in the provincial school system

** Train to win a fourth wheelchair marathon World Championship by July 1985

** Wheel 24,901.55 miles around the world in eighteen months to raise public awareness about capabilities of people with disabilities

** Obtain pilot's license and fly solo

** Get married and start a family

** Through investments in the stock market make \$1 million

Now make your own list of possible goals. Remember to:

* List meaningful goals. Ask yourself the following questions as a guide: Does this goal matter to me? Why and how does it matter? What is the reason or motive for my goal? Who would I be doing it for?

* List challenging but realistic goals. Ask yourself the following questions as a guide: Is this goal a stretch for me? Is this goal attainable? Do I know what my personal best will be?

* List specific and definable goals. Ask yourself the following questions as a guide: Is this goal specific? Have I defined my goal clearly? How will I measure my progress? How will I know when I have reached my goal?

Next, rank each of your goals in light of what matters to you, as you identified it in the Preparing for Change section.

This was Rick's priority:

1. Wheel 24,901.55 miles around the world in eighteen months to raise public awareness about capabilities of people with disabilities

2. Train to win a fourth wheelchair marathon World Championship by July 1985

3. Take two years of teacher training to qualify myself to teach physical education in the provincial school system
4. Get married and start a family
5. Through investments in the stock market make \$1 million
6. Obtain pilot's license and fly solo

Now, it's time to select your goal. Usually, it is best to pursue one personal change goal at a time. However, there are people who effectively manage several simultaneously. If you think you can handle it, go right ahead. For those of you who are less confident, we recommend that you try a single goal first, then as you familiarize yourself with this process you can add goals that reflect your comfort level. Also, the goal you choose may not necessarily be the most important goal on the list, but it may be the goal that fits best with your current situation.

Principle #4

Commit to your goal.

Once you have selected your goal, you must commit to it. To commit is to become deeply involved with your goal. You cannot be deeply involved with or committed to something that lacks meaning. Therefore, your choice of a worthwhile goal is crucial. Ultimately, committing to your goal means committing to yourself, and taking yourself seriously.

The purpose of making a commitment is to give yourself 'staying power', the power you must have in order to keep going in the face of obstacles. The stronger your commitment, the stronger the chances of success.

One practical way to strengthen your commitment is to make your goal public. Going public can add incentive by increasing personal accountability. You can do this in many ways. Make a public declaration about your goal to a friend, announce your intentions at a club meeting or join someone in the pursuit of a common goal.

The most important commitment, however, is the one you make to yourself. To assist you in making your personal commitment the following

commitment contract is a way of externalizing your intentions and making them explicit. Many people find that the ritual of signing this contract is valuable and helps during trying times when motivation lags.

COMMITMENT CONTRACT

I, _____, have set a personal change

goal to:

By signing this agreement, I am committing myself to the completion of my goal.

Signature:

Witness:

By signing this agreement, you are taking the first step. You have identified your goal and committed to it. As you move through the other steps in the change process, your commitment will inevitably deepen and broaden. By the end of the process, your commitment will not merely be something you did, it will be a personal quality you have developed. That is, the ability to commit to yourself and to your goals. Ultimately, through pursuing self-directed change, you are committing yourself to shaping the course of your own life.

Ultimately, making a commitment is essential to successfully achieving your goal. However, your commitment does not have to be total or complete at this exact point. You may find that, in going through the next two steps, envisioning and planning for your goal, you are able to more fully realize and solidify your commitment.

But, the final piece to the puzzle was missing. If we were going to tour the world, we must not only open doors, but borders as well. An effort such as ours would need the sponsorship of an organization that was recognized and accepted throughout the world; an organization whose status alone would help get us a hearing from the governments of other countries. Without this kind of assistance, it would be next to impossible to enter and exit other countries with any ease. We would need to arrange visas, and organize the routing through each country and gain the support of the disability organizations along the way. And, of course, the hundreds of other things that had to be done if this was to be anything more than just a push around the world in a chair with wheels.

But for a chance meeting with Bill McIntosh, a friend I'd met through marathon racing, we might never have found the missing piece. He suggested that I use EXPO 86, the world exposition to be held in Vancouver, as a vehicle to achieve that objective. The theme of EXPO was Man In Motion--transportation and communication. It seemed to fit. Bingo! The last piece to the puzzle.

This, then, was a turning point. I stopped dreaming and for the first time, actually committed myself to the project. Prior to that moment, I had no actual responsibility or concern about success or failure. Sure, I had committed myself to the tour, but I was only accountable to myself. Once I confided in my close friends and family, I had upped the ante considerably. By doing that, others now expected me not only to get started but to finish. To just walk away now would now be difficult, to say the least. I would lose credibility if I couldn't get it started; I would be embarrassed and ashamed if I started and couldn't finish. I suppose, even then, I still could have walked away from it with minimal damage. I'm sure those close to me would have understood.

However, when I broadened my commitment to include promises to other individuals and organizations, the obligations and responsibilities increased

accordingly. When I first approached EXPO officials asking for sponsorship, I remember thinking, what if they say "Yes"? Then the whole world will be watching; I'll not only be doing the tour, I will be promoting EXPO, Vancouver and my country. With each successive patron's pledge, my fear increased, but so did my commitment. But most importantly, the strength of my commitment came from inside. The external incentives and pressures were still there, but this tour had become significant; it had become a part of me.

STEP #1: SETTING YOUR GOAL

PRINCIPLES

- #1: Make your goals personally meaningful.
- #2: Make your goals personally challenging.
- #3: Make your goals specific and definable.
- #4: Commit to your goal.