

FAMILY AND RELATIONSHIPS

Couples benefit from annual retreat

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Most of us would agree that balance is the key to a happier life. We want to be successful in our careers and still have time to spend with our families, develop ourselves spiritually and interact with friends. Sadly, too many couples indicate a desire for balance without committing to the steps necessary to bring it about. Research indicates that only 3 percent of the population has written goals. And even those usually are financially related: "I want to be debt free by the time I'm 50" or, "I want to be able to retire by the time I'm 55."

Only about 1 percent of the population has written lifetime goals. "I refer to these people as the 'well-rounded group'," said Tommy Newberry, founder of The 1% Club. "I challenge people to be as equally committed in their personal lives as they are in their career lives. To maximize your full potential you must intentionally cultivate an Ultra Positive attitude," said Newberry. "This is especially crucial today in the midst of tough economic times and the aftermath of Sept. 11." That is the concept behind The 1% Club. "It's a lifetime focusing Club I created to help top achievers balance the various aspects of their lives."

Anyone can have a desire to be part of The 1% Club, but specifically it is for people who want to get ahead financially without messing up their family life. They are striving to create the ideal life style with the right mix of work and family, the financial and the spiritual. How does The 1% Club help? After an application process, members are assigned a team of 20 other top achievers. After an initial orientation, this team meets every 90 days for a full day to help keep each other on track. "It's much like a football team that huddles to talk about what play they're going to implement next," said Newberry. Between workshops, members focus on running the plays they set for themselves for the next 90 days. They then come back and report about what they have accomplished during that time.

The value of the program is cumulative. Quarter by quarter, people plan their lives in such a way as to reach the goals they have set for themselves for the next 30 years. "Each member is pushing himself in specific and individual ways," Newberry points out. "It's a coaching system, not a consulting system. Every successful athlete has a coach."

Newberry says that each team creates a quarterly "victory wall". This is a floor to ceiling wall displaying the successes each member has accomplished during the previous 90 days. "Participants are required to bring in something that represents progress for them," said Newberry. "This could be a picture of their new baby, a sports trophy or an article written about them in the newspaper."

What is different about Newberry's system is that he takes it all the way. Throughout the years members have commented that implementing their system would be easier if their spouses could also understand what they are trying to accomplish. To make this happen, Newberry created the "Couples Planning Retreat," which encourages couples to "celebrate another year of victories and blessings, renew their marriage, dream about the future together." "The 1 Percent Club couples retreat is one of the most rewarding experiences my wife and I have ever had," said Atlanta member Dave Armento. "This weekend gave us an opportunity to make plans for the coming year in a quiet environment, without any interruptions from the outside world." "As a result of this weekend, Dave and I are leading our lives according to our schedule and values," said Carrie Armento. "It helped us get on the same page."

Newberry has been conducting these retreats for five years. "We have couples that have attended year after year," he said. "They have recognized that this retreat is an opportunity to pull back and evaluate progress and direction." "Many organizations give lip serve to balance," said Newberry. "However, they have not given people the tools to help them gain their goals. We give them tools."

The 1% Club involves a three-year commitment. Or, as Newberry says, "You cannot get people to change their habits in just one-week end."

(Jaine Carter, Ph.D. and James D. Carter, Ph.D. are management consultants and authors of the book, "He Works She Works - Successful Strategies for Working Couples." (cartercarter.com.)
