

THE CODE OF EXTRAORDINARY CHANGE

———— GO DENT THE UNIVERSE ————

GAMEPLAN

WELCOME TO THE GAMEPLAN

The Code of Extraordinary Change Gameplan is my way of getting things done, and it's how you can make the Code of Extraordinary Change come to life in your life, every single day.

If you've followed my stuff for a while you'll know that I don't espouse the use of goals, and so first of all I'll explain to you exactly why I have a problem with them, and then I'll show you my alternative approach (which I think works a whole lot better). I'll take you through the whole lot step by step.

My Beef with Goals

When I started out as a coach in 2002, the core of what a client and I would do was set 2 or 3 goals that would then become the focus for our sessions, and in coaching that way for a good 3 or 4 years I noticed the following problems:

1 Goals create a gulf between where you are and where you want to be, and make it easy to reach the conclusion that you're somewhere you don't want to be or that you're "less

than" because you haven't got that goal nailed already.

- 2** All too often goals are based on what people think they should want. Look at what you think you should be doing or what you think you want and you have a sure-fire way of heading down the wrong road.
- 3** They lack real meaning and personal relevance. You're taking something that doesn't really amount to a hill o' beans and running round in circles to make it happen. That's why the motivation never lasts.
- 4** Goals make you look at what's next, never at what you've got right now. Your vision is squarely on the future rather than noticing what is.

It's all too easy to get sucked into planning for what might be, rather than noticing what is

- 5** There's no link between reaching a goal and happiness. It's now been proven that people who achieve a goal are NO

happier than those who don't set goals or who don't reach them.

- 6 You'll often find something amazing on the way towards a goal that renders the goal obsolete or redundant. The value is in the path you take, not where it ends up.
- 7 Goals are a convenient way to maintain the illusion of control. If you feel like you're able to plan and control things by setting goals then life's uncertainties won't be able to interfere or knock you off track, right? Truth is, life is full of uncertainty and living a life where you strive for certainty and control is incredibly limiting and a huge struggle.
- 8 Goals are largely blind to obstacles you run into along the way, another reason they often never get very far.

The Alternative Approach

Don't get me wrong, goals have their place and can be a useful tactic, but by themselves they're missing the point and can cause the problems I've just described. I don't want you to stumble into these issues (and you're probably keen to avoid them too), so to avoid them here's what I'd suggest instead.

- 1 A system that focuses on the gold you find on the way.
- 2 A mechanism where the perceived gap between you and an

end point or goal either doesn't exist or just doesn't matter.

- 3 A system that strips away all of the "*shoulds*", "*oughts*" and half-hearted "*wants*".
- 4 An approach that makes it easy to find what really matters, so that everything you do is aligned around the things that have personal relevance.
- 5 A way to de-future-fy goals; making sure that where you are right now – *this very moment* – is the most important thing.
- 6 An understanding that your happiness is not dependent on getting what you want but that the most extraordinary value is in the experience, NOT in the end result.
- 7 A way of moving forwards that addresses the obstacles you hit but doesn't involve struggling or suffering.
- 8 A system that gives room for down-time, flexibility and fun.

I don't know about you, but that sounds pretty good to me. So with those needs established here's the approach I've been using for the last few years:

Games.

Whether it's baseball, soccer, Monopoly or Pictionary, the entire, entire point of playing a game is that you get into the game, play it to the best of your ability and enjoy it while you're playing. Right?

The distinction I use is this: goals are things that you work towards, trying to make them happen at some point in the future. Games are things you live (and love) in this very moment. They're here right now.

A goal is something you do. A game is something you live

But we're not just talking about something like baseball or Pictionary, we're talking about you doing creating extraordinary change and putting your dent in the universe. So how do games work in this context?

Simple. There's a need and want you feel which starts from the inside; a need, a will, even a compulsion to engage with what's important and what matters to you. That's your game, and that's the very best place to start making your dent in the universe.

Playing a game that matters means that you have to **make a decision to play**, and then you can get into the flow of playing the game and engage with every moment of it.

That's a level of relevance, meaning, engagement and unstuckness that goals simply don't have.

Importantly, let's not forget that when you decide to get stuck in and play a game to the best of your ability, you stand a chance of winning. A real, tangible and measurable chance of winning at something that matters to you.

Winning is fantastic, and winning at something that matters is even better, but it's not the be all and end all. In the event that you don't win (or don't win in the ways you expected to), you get to enjoy the very act of playing, you learn more about the game and you become a better player.

Not too shabby.

How it Works

There are 4 levels to the Gameplan.



Game

At the top level is your game – the thing where you jump in with both feet because not playing is not an option.

You just gotta play

Your game gets you out into the world around you, participating in the things that matter the most and leaving a “YOU” shaped dent in the universe, a dent that represents the positive difference you’ve made.

The example I’ve used in the diagram is being the world’s best tennis player, but it could be having a \$250,000 business, travelling the world, helping people overcome discrimination, being in the best damn relationship you can imagine, supporting the education of kids in Africa or anything else that gets your heart thumping with excitement.

Strategies

Once you have your game you can look at the strategies you can employ that will get you in the game and bring it to life.

Think of the strategies as a roadmap that help you win your game; broad strokes of activity that will make you the best damn player you can be.

In the tennis example, strategies could include nailing your serve, getting the right tennis shoes or working power into your leg muscles, but outside of tennis this could be building a social media strategy, building your dating confidence, overcoming your fear of failure or connecting with people who have key insights.

Objectives & Obstacles

The next level is where you need to consider 2 things – specific objectives and obstacles.

You need to identify some specific objectives to hit, measurable targets that will stretch you and deliver something concrete. This is where the more traditional goal setting techniques come in (notice how it's just a small part of the Gameplan?) and you should include anything that will help to deliver on one of your strategies.

You also need to identify the stuff that can get in your way; the things that might derail you or take away from your ability to play the best game you can. As a guide, you'll need at least 5 of each.

Adding 10mph to your serve, mitigating ill-health, creating a guest post diary, going on 1 date a week, doing 5 things that will take you out of your comfort zone or noticing every time you hear your inner critic, are all examples of specific objectives.

Obstacles can include things like the arrival of a new project that derails things, the lack of the right kind of support, a fear of success that holds you back or an individual who blocks you.

Without getting to know your objectives and obstacles you're playing blind.

Actions

This level is all about execution - taking action. These are the specific things you can do – *at a specific time or by a specific date* - to do one of 2 things:

- 1 Help to make an objective happen, or
- 2 Overcome, reduce or eliminate an obstacle.

Taking action is where you get to roll your sleeves up and play the game.

An Example For Ya

Let's say that you're someone who's set the much-set goal of going to the gym 3 times a week. First of all, yawn. Second of all, if that's all you've got, it won't work. Goals like these are all about execution; it's a specific action point for you implement and by itself you'll never see it through.

What's missing from it? The other 3 levels of the Gameplan.

So think about the reason you want to hit the gym 3 times per week. What's that? You want to lose ten pounds, be able to run for 5 kilometres and still feel ready for more? Okay, now we're getting somewhere, you've identified a couple of specific objectives for your action to fit into.

But what could stop you? Yep, those cup cakes might derail your plans, and your work or family commitments could easily overtake your gym time too.

That's a good beginning, but how do these objectives and obstacles fit into the bigger picture? What strategies are they a part of that add to something amazing? Well, if you've lost that weight and can easily run for 5 kilometres you may well be in the best shape you've ever been physically. That's a strategy right there – *“Get myself in tip-top physical shape”*.

And then the big one. What's the reason you want to be in tip-top physical shape? What does that contribute to? What matters to you that would be helped by being in prime physical shape? This could be something like running the New York marathon, walking the Inca trail, climbing Kilimanjaro for a charity that has a personal relevance, changing career or even being able to join in and play sports with your family.

See how it works? You can start big or start small, and **you can start from any level in the model** as long as you consider the other levels.

The point is to have it connect with who you are and what matters to you so that the option of not doing it eliminates itself.

**Make it matter, then
not doing it is not an option**

The example of hitting the gym 3 times a week started with an action at the bottom level of the Gameplan, but you could just as easily have started at the top level with the game *“Loving my vibrant, healthy, fun-loving family”* and worked down. You just have to be sure to visit the other layers too, so that the whole Gameplan is considered.

To add even more flexibility you can swap around the two middle layers – strategies and objectives/obstacles – if it's easier to work and think that way. That means that you can define an objective (e.g. to add 10 mph to your serve, move to a company who match your values, put together a fantastic seminar, etc.) and then figure out the strategies you need to employ to bring about that objective.

Whichever way works for you is just peachy with me.

Now it's Your Turn

Okay, that's enough reading – this is about you applying this stuff to your own game, right?

Over the page you'll find a template worksheet that gets you implementing this model in your own life - use one of these for each game you want to engage with. Feel free to grab pen and paper if you want more space (I'm in love with A3 pads and Sharpies, loads of space and different colours).

I've included some key questions at each level to help you think along the right lines, and don't feel like you have to do it all in one sitting – you can go as far as you can and then come back in a couple of hours or the next day to add more ideas as they come together.

1Game

What matters to you right now? What moves you?
What do you want the next year to really be all about?
6 months from now, what would you love to have been a part of?
What would make you bounce with excitement or enthusiasm?
What can't you wait to jump into with both feet?

2Strategies

What could you work on that would help?
What could you put in place to make you more likely to win?
What would make it fun?

3

Objectives	Obstacles
What specific target can you aim for? What would be a great end result? What specific achievement would help you be the best damn player you can be?	What might derail your efforts? What could take away from your ability to play this game brilliantly? What is there in your life that might stop you?

4

Actions	
What	When
Looking at your objectives and obstacles, what's one thing you can start? What regular activity or behaviour will you commit to? What can you do to get in the game right now? What can you do to move one step closer to one of your objectives?	

Bringing it Together

You might have one game that drives your efforts or you might have 5. That's entirely up to you and this model is flexible enough for you to keep coming back to add more strategies, more objectives, more obstacles and more actions to each of your games.

Try a couple of different ways to phrase your game too. Some words will work better than others, and when you've got it you'll feel it click. You might hit the right combination of words to describe your game pretty quickly, or it might need you to write down 50 different versions before you hit gold.

Wrapping Up

I use this model myself as well as with clients, and with it you can avoid many of the traps that conventional goals lead to and see some really cool stuff happen.

And this really works. Promise.

Of course, this is just the start. Now, it's down to you.

Let me know how you get on by dropping me a line on steve@thecoec.com. Feel free to ask me any questions and let me know what's happening.

Have fun, learn lots.



PS: This approach I've shown you in the Gameplan works really well when coupled with the Gameplan Journal, which gives you:

- A central place to document every piece of your gameplan.
- A way of defining the core purpose of your game along with the results you'd love to see as a result of playing.
- A method to check-in with your progress to see how you're doing, what you're missing and what decisions you can make to help you win.
- A template you can use year after year to make extraordinary things happen, instead of making ridiculous New Years Resolutions that you know full well won't last.

[Go get it by clicking here.](#)