

Olive Tree: List Your Goals

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Olive Tree: List Your Goals

The second letter of our acronym **OLIVE** is **L** for **LIST**.

YOU ARE GOD'S UNIQUE CREATION

The planting of the olive grove must be carried out with regard to the requirements of individual trees. Each tree should be separated from the others by a length of thirty strides.

Scripture tells us that we are unique creations of God.

Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! It is amazing to think about. Your workmanship is marvelous- and how well I know it.

Psalms 139:14

Living Bib.

Job 37:7 (New American Standard Bible) reveals that each of us is uniquely marked by the unlimited creativity of God.

He seals the hand of every man, that all men may know his work.

Our fingerprints leave an image of our individuality on everything we touch. Even “identical” twins receive distinct fingerprints. Their outward appearance may look the same to others, but God has given each of them – each of us - divine identity and purpose shared by no other.

Just as olive trees are separated by distance for proper growth to occur and to allow their traits to be observed and cared for, you must realize you are unlike every other person and have special requirements for optimum growth. You, too, require time and room to grow as an individual without a constant barrage of external influence or distractions from others in the grove of your life.

The real person God has purposed you to become is realized through knowledge of Him and developing an intimate relationship with Him. Your potential is known by God alone. He made you to be fruitful as you deeply plant your roots in His kingdom. Embrace your uniqueness, and ask God to begin fully forming you from the inside out. Dr. Robert H. Schuller sums it up this way:

Any man can count the seeds in an apple, but only God can count the apples in a seed.

Pray and ask God for direction. List Your Goals-revisit them. Write down your goals in a private and permanent journal. The Personal Discovery Journal was created to help you “record your vision” and stay on course. Begin to develop plans to accomplish your vision.

Then the Lord answered me and said, “Record the vision and inscribe it on tablets, that the one who reads it may run. “ For the vision is yet for the appointed time; it hastens toward the goal, and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; for it will certainly come, it will not delay.

Habakkuk 2:2-3

New American Standard Bible

If you do not record your goals, then you have the liberty of conveniently changing direction or forgetting them. This is the difference between “pie in the sky” and vision. A true vision never seems to leave you alone. It is persistent. If your goal is really important to you, write it down!

As you begin to write down your goals, you must be totally honest with yourself. After all, you are the only one privy to your hidden desires and dreams. Do not solicit other people’s opinions, lest you fall prey to copying someone else’s blueprint for life. What may be a calling for one person could very well be imprisonment for another.

Clarifying your vision and goals may seem like a difficult task initially. You may have stifled your dreams for so long or have been enveloped in the dreams of another to the extent that you’re not in touch with your goals on a conscious level. You may need to “dig deep” to unleash your visionary abilities. Just as any athletic ability is developed through repeated exercises to develop strength and skill, your vision muscle will strengthen by reason of use.

Realizing your dreams starts with a simple act of writing down your goals one by one. Most people take weeks, months, even years to determine their life plan: the practical 1, 2, 3 - A, B, C steps required to get to their “happy ending”.

Reflect on the olive tree for inspiration. It doesn’t produce a full crop for years, but it stands the test of time. Exercise patience, knowing that your life is a sacred design of God. The dreams, goals, and visions He has placed within you should be nurtured as a sacred trust.

For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. They are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

Jeremiah 29:11

Living Bible

God’s empowerment to achieve your goals is not “a given”. Becoming a true partner with God may require you to make significant changes. It is not enough to be “spiritual” or “religious” as is a commonly held cultural belief today. The God of the Bible is not “lousy-geesey” about His expectations for us. He has given us high directives for patterning our lives after the virtues modeled before us in the life of His Son, Jesus Christ.

You cannot expect God’s blessing to comply with an uninformed understanding of His benevolence... or your rules. He’s the One who directs. He is a loving Father! You can easily discover if you’re living outside of the guidelines for His participation in your success. The more you read Scripture, the clearer His new covenant with you will become. Talk to Him naturally as a child would talk to His father.

God doesn't ask you to guess how to please Him; He has outlined his requirements specifically in His Word. Living in willful disobedience (sin) limits His blessings. Pray for God's help and guidance. Be open to His correction. Have confidence in His goodness. Choose wisely the path to true success.

And this is the confidence (the assurance, the privilege of boldness) which we have in Him: [we are sure] that if we ask anything (make any request) according to His will (in agreement with His plan), He listens to and hears us.

And if (since) we [positively] know that He listens to us in whatever we ask, we also know [with settled and absolute knowledge] that we have [granted us as our present possessions] the requests made of Him.

1 John 5:14-15

Amplified Bible

A petition is a form of prayer. In our governmental affairs, a formal petition is made to a higher power to obtain their support, such as petitioning a governor for a pardon using the standing law to support the granting of the request. As God is the supreme higher power, we should approach him with at least the same preparedness that we would an earthly authority.

This is how writing down your goals can best work for you. Formally make a "prayer of petition" for God's intervention in your life. Ask Him to work through you to bring your vision to pass within the confines of what Scripture promises He WILL DO and WILL PROVIDE for His children. Your petition acts as a willful invitation to your Heavenly Father and His angels to come to your aid and to watch over His Word to perform it on your behalf.

I want to make a clear distinction between what is being related through *The Articles of Transformation* as compared to certain New Age or self-help teachings. We do not ascribe to the non-biblical theory that we receive a response to our written goals from “the universe” or “the law of attraction”. In truth, we receive cooperation to see our visions realized from the living God who created the universe! There is a very great gulf of separation in partnering with a personal God who loves you than with an unknowable force.

The distinct difference between the Articles and most self-help teachings is that self-help puts you at the center of your life, your vision, goals, decisions, and even disciplines. The Articles put God at the center of your life: His vision, will, and disciplines for your success.

DEVELOP THE HABIT OF GOAL SETTING

A Harvard study revealed that in one graduating class, only 3% of the graduates developed the habit of writing down goals. Near the end of their careers, an amazing thing had happened. The 3% who made goals and wrote them down were not only more successful, but had assets greater than the remaining 97% of the graduating class combined! Today, you join an elite group: those who know the secret to a successful future.

Continue to make a List of Your Goals on the following pages.

- Daily
- Weekly
- Quarterly
- Yearly
- Five year
- Ten year
- Life-long

Highlight the EASILY ACHIEVABLE GOALS to help you develop a winning and hopeful attitude. Begin with a simple grocery list or a “fix-it” list. List goals that can be realistically accomplished this week.

Question: “How do you eat an elephant?” Answer: “ONE bite at a time.” That’s how you go about goal setting. Start small and expand as you conquer a few short-term goals.

Do not get caught up in so much detail and such long-term thinking that you suffer paralysis from over-analysis. The more items you check off your list, the more successful you will feel... the more confident you will become. Success begets success!

Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but desire fulfilled is a tree of life.

Proverbs 13:12

New American Standard Bible

At this time, complete the following pages, a Personal Discovery Exercise, before proceeding to the next chapter of *Be Amazing*. Learn how from *The Ancient Olive Tree*.

Personal Discovery Exercise Three

Make a love list... wish list... want to achieve list... I will be list.
List physical items you wish to acquire, career goals, spiritual and personal transformation you desire.

The ultimate exercise includes two factors: your wants and desires for the future, and beginning to understand what God’s plan is for your future. It’s a process to discover both. You will have a much better understanding after you have completed the next section.

TEN-YEAR GOALS:

Spiritual goals:

Material goals:

Career goals:

Personal transformation goals:

Other goals:

Once you have written down your goals, dwell on them and then order them in order of importance in your permanent journal. Most people who have never done this exercise (95% of you) will take a while to look at them and adjust them. Very often it takes as long as a year to clarify your true God given goals.

TENDING YOUR OLIVE TREE

By now you should have listed your ten year goals (in this book). Return to those pages and evaluate each item. Determine what is really most important to you. Remove goals that belong to other people or were motivated by others. Discard goals that do not represent your deeply held heart's desires or those that are incompatible with your Christian faith. Meditate on the course you have chosen. Refine your lists to reflect clarity of vision.

Setting Goals is a habit you should exercise throughout your entire life. Don't wait until year's end to set goals for the year. Begin today. You do not need to make "New Year's Resolutions" if you are already resolved in your life's direction.

Now that you have set your personal goals (spirit, soul and body), begin to evaluate how the goals of those around you affect you and how yours affect them. If the goals of others negatively change your focus or drive you away from your Godly goals, you must address the conflict - no matter how painful. This can include family relationships, employers, friends and more. Obligations are upon us all. Seek God's help to find peaceful resolutions with conflicting life visions.

At times you will need to alter your method or your time-line for achieving your desired goals because of unrealistic time allowances or unexpected emergencies. Whatever comes your way, get back on track by reviewing your written goals often and remapping the steps to achieve them. Don't Stop! If you falter, start again immediately with greater resolve. The reward is worth the journey!

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne. Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won't become weary and give up.

Hebrews 12: 1-3

New Living Translation

Revisit the pages of your Personal Discovery Journal often to stay on track and evaluate your progress. You will shortly discover the difference between a whim (fantasy) and a heartfelt vision (goal). Remove from your short-lived list items. Use your journal pages to flesh out the goals that you wish to ignite.

PRIVACY SETTING ALERT

Today it seems as if our culture is besieged with “over-share”. From talk shows to awards shows and social media, there is little that is held as private. Your goals are PRIVATE. Be judicious in where and with whom you share them; sharing them broadly may bring unwelcome results.

Many people confuse mentoring and accountability with their Facebook “friends” list. Celebrate your victories, no matter how small, broadly if you wish. But, reserve sharing your crosses with your confessor, mentor, pastor, counselor, or mental health professional. Whoever you choose to confide in should be worthy of your confidence and your dreams. Be selective.

BE RESOLUTE

No matter what you encounter in your journey, remain true to your vision despite apparent setbacks. Look once more to the wisdom of **The Olive Tree**.

TRANSFORMATIONAL ENEMIES

The despised enemy of the olive tree is the olive fly. It breeds, not in the tree's wood, which is resistant to decay, but in the flesh of the fruit.

Just when you start to see fruitfulness in your life, certain “enemies” come and try and steal your yield. Perhaps the old enemy of self-doubt starts eating away at you. Distracting, discouraging thoughts cross your mind saying you won't be able to sustain momentum... you don't have what it takes... you're not good enough. See your enemy for who he is.

A thief comes only to steal and to kill and to destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance.

John 10:10

HCSB

Be discriminating about sharing your goals; reserve them for yourself. Your Personal Discovery Journal is just that: PERSONAL. Prematurely sharing your dreams and personal reflections with even those closest to you may bring unexpected reactions.

Certainly your thought-life needs to be reigned-in when it gets off track with God's promises for your success. God gives instructions and tools for accomplishing that. Bringing down the enemies within is entirely within your control.

We use our powerful God-tools for smashing warped philosophies, tearing down barriers erected against the truth of God, fitting every loose thought and emotion and impulse into the structure of life shaped by Christ. Our tools are ready at hand for clearing the ground of every obstruction and building lives of obedience into maturity.

2 Corinthians 10:5

The Message

Enemies from without are far more trying to deal with than ones self-born. Who are these enemies? Most often, your enemies come from your close circle: family and friends. As you become increasingly productive and make noticeable changes in your direction, your inner circle might perceive that they have something to lose.

We often expect our families and friends will have our backs and cheer us onward only to find they are threatened, even angry, if we express that we are somehow unhappy with our present state. Many of those who have shared your old life found it a comforting place for them. They may take it personally or even be fearful about how your change of direction will affect your relationship with them. They may fear being left behind or fear your expectations of them will change as you pursue your vision. Unfortunately, insecurity, fear of loss, fear of the unknown, even just the word change can bring negative reactions to the new olives on your branches. Although “attacks on your fruit” may not be deliberate or done out of any contempt for you, you may find your worst enemies (critics) are the ones you love the most. As the Billy Joel song says, they “love you just the way you are”. They are used to you being a certain way... doing certain things... that make you compatible with their plans, their goals, their dreams.

Hopefully you find yourself in close relationships with mature Christians who want you to find your greatest fulfillment in life and whole-heartedly support your decisions. That would be heaven! But even in well-meaning, loving relationships - even among mature Christians - you might find some resistance to your dreams. We're still living in earthen vessels. None of us are perfect. That's why we need a Savior. And some folks will need Him even more when confronted by your growth and success.

Rather than focusing on visions of their own, family members and close friends may try to meddle with your dreams or cause you to second-guess them. Because they are close, they may feel they have a license to criticize or make a joke of your goals. These "attacks" may not come as full frontal assaults on your "fruit" (accomplishments). Rather, insecurity will cause others to undermine you in small ways. Taken individually, these attacks may seem trivial. However, allowed to remain unchecked, they can undo your success over time.

Nip the insecurity in the bud by understanding the fears of those closest to you. Pray for them. Address issues individually as they arise. Don't wait for your relational challenges to fester or self-remedy. Confront each situation in a spirit of love and reconciliation while remaining true to your vision.

Be aware that some attacks on your fruit will be directly tied to your productivity. As the trappings of success starts coming your way become observant. Those once tied to you at the hip may display jealousy, envy, hostility or anger. Don't be dismayed!

If relationships fall away because you are true to the vision God has given you, chances are they were never meant to be. Although some may draw away from the new, improved you, you must not let their character issues sabotage your quest to become your highest self. Your fruitfulness grows through faithfulness to the vision. That kind of steadfastness will draw attention for sure.

Soon you'll be inspiring many others to seek their own transformation breakthroughs. Even relationships that were challenged initially may be repaired over time. They may desire to join your transformational journey and run the race beside you. Be a trail blazer with no regrets! In the end, it's between you and God. No matter what criticism comes your way, press forward! Be true to your God-given vision or you'll be destined to become a part of another's vision for life.

What then shall we say to [all] this? If God is for us, who [can be] against us? [Who can be our foe, if God is on our side?]

Romans 8:31

Amplified Bible

A WORK IN PROGRESS REQUIRES PROGRESS

The olive tree is most susceptible to the olive fly when deprived of water. When poorly nourished, the crop will become erratic, bearing a heavy crop one year and putting forth not even a blossom the next.

Your "fruit" has an identical susceptibility to that of the olive tree: the fruit is susceptible when it's deprived of water and nourishment. Just

as water is the most basic necessity for the survival of your physical life, the Life spring of living water from Christ is essential to sustain your spiritual growth and protect your abundance.

...Whoever drinks of the water that I give him will never thirst again; but the water that I give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.

John 4:14

World English Bible

Eternal life in God's kingdom is the highest goal of humanity. Yet, in your devotion to God, you cannot make the mistake of being so heavenly minded that you're no earthly good. When you begin to work on the "here and now" person you are, you - like me - will easily recognize that you are not yet fit to rule and reign in God's domain. You are a work in progress. Your lifetime is a time of preparation in kingdom living.

That means you never "arrive". Your transformation is on-going. The work you do proves your faith you possess in God's plan for you.

Dear brothers, what's the use of saying that you have faith and are Christians if you aren't proving it by helping others? Will that kind of faith save anyone? If you have a friend who is in need of food and clothing, and you say to him, "Well, good-bye and God bless you; stay warm and eat hearty," and then don't give him clothes or food, what good does that do?

So you see, it isn't enough just to have faith. You must also do good to prove that you have it. Faith that doesn't show itself by good works is no faith at all—it is dead and useless. But someone may well argue, "You say the way to God is

by faith alone, plus nothing; well, I say that good works are important too, for without good works you can't prove whether you have faith or not; but anyone can see that I have faith by the way I act."

Are there still some among you who hold that "only believing" is enough? Believing in one God? Well, remember that the demons believe this too—so strongly that they tremble in terror! Fool! When will you ever learn that "believing" is useless without doing what God wants you to? Faith that does not result in good deeds is not real faith.

James 2:14-20

Living Bible

We are saved by grace alone unto good works. Your priority, then, should be to conform to the image of Christ - do the work to develop His character - that His love and light might be seen by all who come in contact with you.

For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light – for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord.

Ephesians 5:8 -10

NRSV Catholic Edition

ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE

The following suggestions will help you get a firm footing on your transformational path. First things first: Here are some practical steps for nourishing your mind, sustaining your fruitfulness, and protecting your abundance.

Begin to recognize and separate yourself from negative input. Developing a positive attitude begins by distancing yourself from negative environments that challenge your ability to have a breakthrough or achieve your goals. The land of “NO” - where pessimism abounds, criticism runs rampant, and old failures are replayed before you- hinders you as surely as being deprived of air. Identify and eliminate your negative influences: social media forums/blogs/rants, literature filled with vulgarities and themes glorifying immorality, news coverage steeped in conflict, films that are not uplifting or that portray an anti-Biblical world-view, music with salacious or demeaning lyrics, pals who entice/influence you to partake of sinful activities, family members who drag you into the emotional turmoil they are unwilling to resolve, work associates spreading gossip, etc. You get the picture. If you wouldn't read it, say it, watch it, listen to it or act it out in front of Jesus, eliminate it. Negative begets negative.

The thieves of virtue won't bother you in areas where they know you are unshakable; but they'll test your resolve if you are not diligent. Keep your eyes on your goals and off your critics. Flee negativity! Center yourself in a healthy environment which consists of positive people, uplifting activities, and inspirational materials. Speak words of praise and gratitude. They are food for life and health to the body.

***Pleasant words are like a honeycomb: they drip
sweet food for life and bring health to the body.***

Proverbs 16:24

The Voice

If who you are is determined by what you think, and what you think results in what you do, there's no time like now to Plan and Plant for tomorrow's harvest. Accentuate the Positive! Eliminate the Negative. Success is up to YOU!

Roll your works upon the Lord [commit and trust them wholly to Him; He will cause your thoughts to become agreeable with His will, and] so shall your plans be established and succeed.

Proverbs 16:3

Amplified Bible

Before proceeding, view your ten-year goals. Write Personal Reflections on the space below. Concerning potential enemies, who might deter you from reaching your goals - God's plan for your life. Then move on to the **Olive Tree's Inventory of Assets and Liabilities, where your God given gifts will begin to help you know God's plan for your life.**

Record your vision and inscribe it on tablets, that the one who reads it may run. For the vision is yet for the appointed time; it hastens toward the goal, and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; for it will certainly come, it will not delay.

Habakkuk 2:2-3

Be Amazing! Learn how from... the Ancient Olive Tree

is the first lesson in *The Articles of Transformation* series.

Accompanying videos at: www.articlesoftransformation.com/beamazing.



Available on Amazon or directly from Visible Light Ministries

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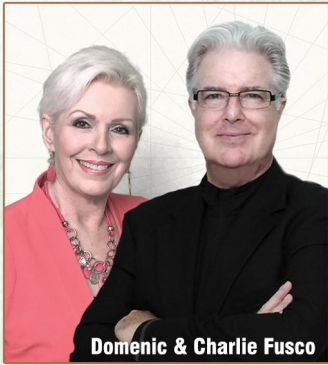
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As partners in marriage, business, and ministry, Domenic and Charlie Fusco have blended their artistry, media skills, and spiritual insights for five decades in support of myriad worldwide ministries and corporate enterprises. They are co-founders of Visible Light Ministries, Sanford, Florida, USA.

In addition to the Articles of Transformation, the Fuscus are co-authors of the inspirational website, www.greatnewsonline.com. Great News Online

offers uplifting commentary based on notable quotes for guiding its readers toward a path of thoughtful, productive living. It is Domenic and Charlie's hope to stir their online audience with aspirations that grow into what is most noble in character and human experience.

Most recently, the Fuscus have dedicated their expertise and passion to developing transformational materials and providing spiritual leadership for the upcoming generations. It is their desire and joy to share the gems of wisdom revealed The Articles of Transformation with a global audience in support of the Gospel of grace.

Become a shining light in the sea of social and spiritual mediocrity.

Dare to BE AMAZING to the glory of God!