

# Late Bloomer Chronicles

## What are you missing out on by not following your goals?

Based on Chad Betz's Presentation at The Milford Bank



Answering this question can be difficult. You may have work and personal goals. Think about those goals. Are they your goals, or are you following someone else's goals? Have you ever thought about your goals at all? Have you ever thought about how you define success? If not, then you are definitely following someone else's goals.

We can work hard and have plans, but if we do not know our own definition of success or work on someone else's goals while ignoring our own, we will find ourselves getting frustrated, tired and bitter.

There are so many influences on our lives with people pushing their own agendas; it is easy to confuse their goals with our own. These influencers include:

- ◆ Our parents starting when we are kids, and continuing into adulthood
- ◆ Our friends and the people with whom we associate
- ◆ Our spouses or partners and children
- ◆ Our bosses and coworkers

Those influences can cloud the lines between following your goals and following goals projected on you by those influencers.

***What does success mean to you? Are you actively pursuing that success, or are you floating on the current hoping you get where you want to go?***

I was told about an accountant who owned a very successful practice. He became an accountant because his parents told him that if he got a degree in accounting, he would never have trouble getting a job. That turned out to be true, but it also turned out that he grew to hate going to work. He was following someone else's' goals. From the perspective of the people around him, he was successful, but he was not happy.

We are all vulnerable to these influences. I worked in place where there was a greater propensity for discussion than for action. This atmosphere caused people to put in a lot of extra hours to produce average results. I have a greater propensity for action, so I was able to get my work done in a reasonable time, but I felt pressure to work longer even though I did not need to. I was influenced by my boss and coworkers, which negatively impacted my ability to achieve my goals.

A major concept we discuss in my book, "Late Bloomer, It's not too late to succeed!" is defining what success means to each of us, then determine what goals we need to get to achieve those goals. Overcoming the influencers and understanding our definition of success is our first step.

Once we have an idea of what our goals are, we are at the beginning of our journey. We still need to navigate through the mediocrity trap. We can be our own worst enemies sabotaging our success. We let our doubts overwhelm us. We can get stuck in the “I can’t”, letting our negative thoughts drive our actions. The self-talk takes over, saying: “I’m too old, or I’m too fat, or I’m too this or I’m too that.”

Pop culture reinforces the mediocrity trap as do the people around us. We see commercials and watch shows on television that show characters failing and giving up, who we compare to ourselves. This paints a picture of failure and mediocrity that we start to project on our experience. Surprisingly, the people who care about us can be the most destructive. They love us, and they don’t want us to get hurt, so they caution us, unintentionally discouraging us from achieving our goals. As discussed earlier, they also have their ideas of success that can push us away from our goals.

## **Have you ever thought about how you define success? If not, then you are definitely following someone else’s goals.**

We have all gone through this in one way or another, so in the book, I give real life examples that we can use to navigate the mediocrity trap.

The good news is that when we understand our definition of success and know what our goals are, we all have the tools we need to achieve our goals. In *Late Bloomer* we describe the following four tools that we all have right now.

### **Tool 1: Your Mind**

No matter what stage you are in your life, you need to feed your mind. Feeding your mind is especially important as you get older. One of the main age stereotypes is that older people are behind the times. Staying current is a great defense against that stereotype. Written material is one of the more convenient sources of information. You need to read.

It doesn’t really matter what you read. Fiction can give you examples of life experiences as well as nonfiction. Learning from the experiences of others is a fast track to knowledge and understanding. Books are a fantastic medium for gaining those experiences.



Taking classes is also important. There are free classes everywhere, on the internet, through your local chamber of commerce and a variety of other organizations. There are also classes for a fee, like college courses, continuing education courses, and seminars.

Another source is one of my favorites, a coach. I have a few coaches that help me with different parts of my life. A coach is an expert that can guide you through specific areas of your life. I have an executive coach that helps me with my career. I have a fitness coach that is helping me get into better shape. I have a sensei that helps me grow in my martial arts. These people give me specific feedback on particular areas of my life. Information from coaches is custom input that I can’t get from a book or a class. The input they give is very valuable and can give you a head start on life changes. Invest the time to feed your mind.

## Tool 2: Your Body

We all have one body. We can't trade it in for this year's model. We need to take care of it. Again, this is very important as we get older. Another of the age stereotype is a lack of energy. It's hard to say you are a high energy individual if you get winded walking up the stairs. Having energy does not mean that you need to be an Olympic athlete to succeed. I am not thin, but I am working on getting thinner. Taking care of your body in this context is all about diet and exercise. One can succeed if they are out of shape, but it makes it harder. Also, bad choices can sabotage our achievement. If I had gotten nervous about a presentation and overindulged in comfort food and a few drinks before it, I would not be able to put my best foot forward. We need to be cognizant of our level of fitness and diet.



## Tool 3: Your Brand

The first of the concepts that may be new to you is your brand. When we talk about brands, we tend to think about a company or a product. When we buy paper towels, we want the strong paper towels that cost less, not a soggy expensive paper towel. You want your brand to reflect who you really are. You don't want people to see you as a soggy paper towel. You want to show the value you offer to others.

We need to think about that when it comes to our personal brands. Let me tell you a story that just happened to me in the last week. At my company, we have these giant snack drawers. When I have a particularly stressful day, I am known to partake in the contents of the drawers. Now we have a consultant that is helping us with some process improvements. He sees me at the snack drawer, and asks if I am sure I want to grab a snack? When I said that yes, I am pretty sure I want a snack, he says that he had read about my book online, and grabbing a snack does not fit the book's fitness theme.

Now, that might have been rude, but it detailed what people think but may not say. Part of my brand when it comes to the book is paying attention to my diet, and having Oreo cookies does not support that brand. If I am going to talk the talk, I need to walk the walk. We need to live our brands.

***No matter what stage of life you are in or what mistakes you have made, you can succeed.***

## Tool 4: Your Team

The last tool is your team. The team can be the hardest tool to employ because we need to choose the team consciously. The people who care about us can be some of the worst teammates. Those people can be biased and may actually discourage you from your goals because they are afraid you will get hurt.

We have to keep in mind that like any other team, we need certain players.

## **The ideal team will have:**

**Sponsors** – These are the people who pull you up. They can be bosses or other leaders that want to help you grow.

**Coaches/Mentors** – I differentiate between them by whether they are paid. Coaches are paid, and mentors are not. We talked about coaches earlier. Mentors are people who you have a personal relationship with that gives you advise. I have several mentors. You probably have them too; you may not think of them in such a formal way. If you don't have a mentor a coach is a quicker way to get the feedback you need, but work to get mentors too. We discussed coaches earlier. Mentors and coaches are your advisors. They give you information customized to your needs.

**Peers** – These are the people around you, your coworkers, friends, etc. These are the people with whom you surround yourself. Remember that it is hard to fly with the eagles when you are surrounded by turkeys.

**Subordinates** – These are not just people who work for you. These are people that you are helping to grow. You are their sponsor or mentor, and in return, they do things for you. I often use my kids an example. They do things for me that free me up to do more important things, and in return, I give them guidance and support.

Notice I called this your team. Not your service providers. Except for the coach, these are not people you pay. They have no compulsion to help you. You need to build relationships with these people, and you need to have a sincere attitude of giving. You will give much more than you receive, but you will find as you help others, other people will be more willing to help you.

***“Great discoveries and improvements invariably involve the cooperation of any minds. I may be given credit for having blazed the trail, but when I look at the subsequent developments I feel the credit is due to others rather than to myself.” Alexander Graham Bell***

We all have these tools at our disposal. There are factors that can affect the first two that we have no control over. The good news is that we can compensate for any weaknesses in the first two with more emphasis on the second two.

If there is one idea that I want you to retain, it is: No matter what stage of life you are in or what mistakes you have made, you can succeed. With that in mind, I want to end with the question from the beginning of the presentation.

**What are you missing out on by not following your goals?**

**Now, what are you going to do to change it?**

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