

By Jeff “Chief” Urbaniak
COLUMNIST (www.AdviceChief.com)

Have you ever started down that path to obtaining a new goal but quit after a few weeks? Or just a few days? It's a familiar drill we put ourselves through.

For instance, we set a goal: to improve our fitness level. Then we enthusiastically set up or follow a training program and buy new athletic shoes.

Now comes the hard part--regular workouts. We've decided to do cardiovascular endurance training three times a week and weight training twice a week--one day for the upper body and one day for the lower body.

Next, we create our calendar of our activities. The first day, we do some running. Check. The second day, we lift weights. Check. The third day... well, we had to work late that day, so when we got home, it was too dark to go for a jog safely. The fourth day...we had a dinner appointment right after work. No weight training. The fifth day...we realize we missed two days and convince ourselves to start over again on Monday.

Monday comes and one of our co-workers is being promoted and transferred to another state, so of course we can't miss her going-away party. Soon enough it's the end of the month and we realize we only checked off two days of our training schedule.

So what happened? Apparently, our commitment to improving our fitness wasn't as important as we thought. And it doesn't have to be a fitness-related goal, it could be any kind of a goal--a better diet, losing weight, saving money, painting a picture, learning a new skill, participating in a new hobby--anything that requires a continuing effort over an extended period of time.

We always have great intentions, but something takes precedence over our time and commitment, and we end up losing focus. Chances are, we

were more interested than committed to reaching our goals--that we weren't passionate enough to follow through to the end of the journey.

A great example of someone with the passion to complete the journey was Julie Moss. She set a goal in 1982 to complete her first Ironman Triathlon event (a marathon consisting of a 2.5-mile swim, 100-mile bike ride, and a 26.2-mile run to the finish line).

I remember watching the event as it was broadcast for the first time on NBC-TV. My eyes were glued to the TV as the coverage focused on the women's leader, Julie Moss, as she struggled to stay on her feet upon nearing the finish line. She would fall down, crawl, get up, start to run, fall down, crawl, get up, walk, wobble to the left and right, fall down, crawl, get up, fall down, get up, fall down, crawl, etc.

It became dark and the camera stayed on her. Her passion was admirable. Everyone was rooting for her to finish and win the race. She was just yards from the finish line as she crawled desperately, only for the camera to catch a glimpse of Kathleen McCartney casually jog past Moss to cross the finish line for the victory. It caught everyone by surprise because we all were so focused on Julie Moss.

Nonetheless, Julie Moss continued to crawl toward the finish line to complete the Triathlon. When asked about her disappointment in losing the race at the very end, she proclaimed that her goal wasn't to win the race--it was to finish it. She said she had dreamed of crossing the finish line and waving to the crowd. As she crawled across the finish line, she raised her arm to wave.

Julie Moss was not just committed, she was passionately committed. So what do people who choose passionate commitment do?

In most cases, they aren't as battle-fatigued as Julie Moss, but they often

make great sacrifices to reach their goals. Here are a few of the attributes of people who have passionate commitment:

1) They do what they say they'll do because they have made the commitment to do it. You can count on them every time. When they tell you they will do something, you can consider it done.

2) Like Julie Moss, they believe so strongly they can achieve a goal that they can envision themselves crossing the finish line. They can vividly see success.

3) They write and verbalize their commitments. This doesn't mean sitting around talking about what they plan to do. They put their goals into words and then get busy.

4) They're realistic. They don't over-promise and under-deliver. Whatever they say, it is reasonable and believable.

5) They invest in achieving their goals. They may invest the classroom time necessary to earn a college degree or professional certificate, energy on the sports field practicing their maneuver, or hours at the computer pounding out a novel or column. When they commit, they invest.

6) They don't beat themselves up for falling short. They use that experience to learn and continue the process.

7) They plan their lives around what it takes to achieve a goal. They are focused, and they make their success a top priority.

8) They're so committed they don't understand the term "fail." They think it means "one step closer to success."

Do you have any of these attributes? Of course you do. We all have dreams and goals. We all want to move ahead, higher, or farther down life's road.

The difference between those who achieve their goals and those who set them aside is the choice of commitment, passion, and action.

~ The End ~