Developing Your Action Plan

Most people think that in order to move toward goals, they have to plan in a forward direction. As crazy as this may sound, one of the best ways to move forward is to plan backwards from your goal like this:

**Plan Backwards**

YOU ARE HERE ← ? ← ? ← ? YOUR GOAL

When you work from the future back to the present, you are less likely to miss important steps along the way, you will be able to determine which steps have to be done first, and you will be able to break the big steps into smaller, more manageable ones.

When you have identified all the steps, you then do or implement them in a forward direction like this:

**Implement Forwards**

YOU ARE HERE → ! → ! → ! YOUR GOAL

Planning backwards is not as difficult to understand as it sounds! There are two questions that you can use to map out your action plan:

1. Can I do this today?
2. If not, what would I have to do first?

**ACTION PLANNING EXERCISE**

1. Look at where you are now and what your goal is. Take the goal that you identified and record it on your "Action Profile" sheet.
2. What are the major tasks or big steps that you must complete to reach your goal? Record the major tasks in the four corners of the sheet. If you have more than four major tasks, record the others on a separate sheet.
3. Then identify the smaller steps for each task by using these two questions:
4. Can I do this today? and If not, what would I have to do first?
5. Continue to ask the questions until you feel that you have identified all of the smaller steps. Record the steps for each major task in the circles.