



HIDE YOUR GOAT

PART 7

"Exercise Your Goat"

from Steve Gilliland, CSP, CPAE

Most of us know by now that we should be exercising on a regular basis. Do you really know why exercise is so important? Not only does working out help shed a few pounds, but it can help you sleep better, reduce stress, and improve intellectual clarity. Physical activity allows us to feel different about ourselves.

The same can be said of mental exercise. Exercising our goat promotes a healthy immune system necessary for overcoming what sometimes gets in our way and inevitably holds us back. It will tone our minds and allow us to focus our thinking on what will take us to the next level. One thing that holds us back from realizing our full potential is our own mind. Internal brain chatter replays over and over in the subconscious mind. Most of us go through life not even aware of this internal processing, which directly affects our external actions and decisions, which results in our external conditions.

In *The Road Less Traveled*, M. Scott Peck includes a telling story about his personal ineptitude in fixing things. Anytime he attempted to make minor repairs or put something together, the result was always confusion, failure, and frustration. Then one day he saw a neighbor repairing a lawn mower.

"Boy, I sure admire you," Peck told the man. "I've never been able to fix anything like that."

"That's because you don't take the time," the neighbor answered.

After reflecting on that statement, Peck decided to test its validity. The next time he faced a mechanical challenge, he took his time and focused on the problem. Much to his surprise, at age thirty-seven, he succeeded. After that, he knew he was not cursed, genetically defective, or otherwise incapacitated or impotent. If he wanted to go to the next level of that area of his life, he could do it if he was willing.



"You will become as small as your controlling desire, as great as your dominant aspiration." -- James Allen

Many of us are simply okay with where we are without realizing what holds us back. Like plankton, we go wherever the sea current carries us. Take into account your priorities and set your own agenda for your life. Living without priorities exposes your goat to extraneous distractions that can hold you back. Removing distractions is no small matter in our culture, but it is critical because, as W. Clement Stone says, you can "keep your mind off the things you don't want by keeping it on the things you do want."

Unfortunately, many of us list our priorities based on where we run out of steam. When that happens, other people are planning our lives. To avoid this, focus on your strengths, the things that make best use of your skills and God-given talents. You might also focus on what brings you the highest reward. Do what you enjoy most and do best. The Pareto principle (also known as the 80-20 rule, the law of the vital few, and the principle of factor scarcity) states that, for many events, roughly 80% of the effects come from 20% of the causes. It is beneficial to apply the Pareto principle to your priorities by placing 80 percent of your effort on the top 20 percent of your activities. Give your attention to the areas that bear fruit. It takes discipline to practice your priorities. Don't do the easy things first or the hard things first or urgent things first. Do first things first, the activities that give you the highest return. In that way, you keep the distractions to a minimum.

Many of us, unfortunately, feel like boats at the mercy of the winds and waves. We have no ballast when the winds rage and the waves churn. We say things like, "He made me so mad," "Her comment really embarrassed me," "The weather depresses me." "My job bores me." We are content to blame others for our circumstances. The fully human person, as Shakespeare puts it in *Julius Caesar*, knows "the fault, dear Brutus, is not with our stars, but with ourselves..."

Your car is going to get dented, someone will hit your mailbox, the plumbing will go awry, and the dishwasher will stop running. A wild succession of small vexing personal inconveniences will come in waves, and that's just how it goes. Life in the real world has a way of shattering the everyday perfection we desire. Bolster your immune system to accept these circumstances and, more significantly, help you to grow from them. Sometimes we don't realize the lessons we are being taught because we are focused on the wrong thing. In the midst of heartbreak, anxiety, and despair, we are being recreated. We are finding qualities of being that we never knew existed. Remember, these conditions will either make us bitter or better, stronger or weaker. Don't forget them when the problems are solved. The next time you are overwhelmed with misfortunes, you won't have to ask why. Know that you're approaching a time of discovery.

The power to change what holds you back can sometimes require persistent workouts, which involve exercises you need to do regularly. Here are six exercises to help you hide your goat.

Love unconditionally

Think of love as an action, not a feeling. A feeling is something we get from someone, and when we stop getting it, we often change our behavior. If we have to do something, or be a certain way, in order to receive love, that love is conditional. Instead, if you start thinking of love as the behavior itself, the reward becomes the feeling you get when you act a certain way, not when someone else acts a certain way. You can continue acting this way all the time, regardless of how other people behave -- it becomes an act of generosity. As Stephanie Dowrick says, "Love is not love except when it is generous." Feelings cannot last, but you can renew them continuously with new actions.

Maintain a sense of youthful enthusiasm

If you want to feel old at any age, all you need to do is convince yourself that your best days are in the past. Manifest this mindset and you will quickly lose your optimism and enthusiasm. This is an effective strategy for turning your life into an endurance contest. Now, let's turn that around. To maintain a sense of youthful enthusiasm, and an optimistic view of your life and future, what should you do? Create legitimate reasons to believe that these are the good old days and that your best years are just ahead. With the right focus and attitude, your life will continue to be full of amazing possibilities.

Have hope in hopeless situations

Why do some people remain so upbeat even though they experience things that you and I may never experience in our lifetimes? They never give up hope. At a moment when everything appears hopeless, you have two options: 1) Hold a pity party and get angry; 2) Remember that hope produces endurance and perseverance. When you know that there is a detailed plan and purpose for your life, you are going to endure the difficulties, and you are going to have hope in hopeless situations. Hope is a decision and a statement of faith. Faith believes in things when common sense tells you not to.

Give

One of my favorite stories is about a woman who took her children to a restaurant and asked her six-year-old son to say grace. As they bowed their heads, the boy said, "God is good. God is great. Thank you for the food, and I would even thank you more if Mom gets us ice cream for dessert. And Liberty and justice for all! Amen!"

Along with the laughter from the other customers nearby, the mother heard a woman remark, "That's what's wrong with this country. Kids today don't even know how to pray. Asking God for ice cream! Unbelievable!" Hearing this, the boy burst into tears. "Did I do it wrong?" he asked. "Is God mad at me?" As his mother held him and assured him that he had done a terrific job and God was certainly not mad at him, an elderly gentleman approached the table. "I happen to know that God thought that was a great prayer," he said with a wink. "Really?" the boy asked. "Cross my heart," the man replied.

Then, in a theatrical whisper, he added (indicating the woman whose remark had started this whole thing), "Too bad she never asks God for ice cream. A little ice cream is good for the soul sometimes." Naturally, the mother bought her kids ice cream at the end of the meal. Her son stared at his for a moment and then did something she will remember the rest of my life. He picked up his sundae and, without a word, walked over and placed it in front of the woman. With a big smile, he told her, "Ice cream is good for the soul sometimes, and my soul is good already." Sometimes we all need some ice cream.

Forgive

Mahatma Gandhi said, "The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong." Start by forgiving yourself, which can be much harder than forgiving someone else. Some of us are afraid to forgive ourselves because we fear losing a sense of self that has been built on the back of anger, resentment, and vulnerability. In this case, ask yourself if being angry, easily hurt, and an over-reactive person is the identity you want to show the world. Is the security of this thinking worth the effort and harm it is causing you? It's better having a small amount of insecurity as you find your way again than continuing a lifetime bogged down in anger.

Understand the importance of forgiveness. Living in a state of being unable to forgive requires a lot of energy. You are constantly chewed up by fear of your vulnerability, burning with anger with the source of pain, and living with the constancy of sadness, hurt, and blame. This energy deserves to be put to better use so that your creativity and abilities are fed, not your negativity. Forgiveness also allows you to live in the present

instead of the past, which means that you can move into the future with a renewed sense of purpose focused on change, improvement, and building on experience rather than being held back by past hurts.

Stay in the game

Nothing in the world, including talent, genius, and education, can take the place of persistence. When the funds are low, and the debts are high, don't quit. When things go wrong, and I can promise you they will, don't quit. Perseverance is a day-by-day decision not to give up. When we feel lost, overwhelmed, betrayed, or exhausted, we need to know we have a choice for how we respond.

At the lowest point in my life, I will always remember my best friend saying to me, "The only way to make a comeback is to go on living." The first half of my life didn't go exactly as planned, and I took some vicious hits. Divorce, not enough time for my kids, guilt, and loneliness were a few of the pains I endured. Like many people, I started my life with good intentions, but got blindsided along the way. I started to wonder if this was really as good as it got, and then I realized, just like my favorite sport of football, there was a second half. I had the power to change and overcome what may have been holding me back.

Regardless of where you are, don't settle for life on its own terms. Look forward to new horizons and possess your possessions. If you were a farmer, you could say that a field was your possession. To possess that field, you would have to work the land, plow it, weed it, fertilize it, and plant it. If you had the gift of a singing voice, you could claim singing as your possession. To possess that gift, you would have to practice, seek out an instructor, and train your voice to sing correctly. Learn all you can, be all you can, train all you can, and do all you can. If you want to control it, own it, and have power over it, then possess it. Exercise your goat and overcome whatever is holding you back.

#



Up Next...

The Book

*The wait will soon be over, and the much anticipated release of Steve Gilliland's new book, **HIDE YOUR GOAT**, is just around the corner. Stay tuned for details of how you can purchase a signed copy at a special pre-release price of **\$9.98** (\$19.95 retail). This will be a limited time offer available only through Steve Gilliland, Inc.!*

"Thank you for speaking at our 71st Annual Conference. When I heard you speak at the National SHRM Conference several years ago, I knew then that I wanted our audience to have the pleasure to hear your message. We are honored that you accepted our invitation. As I saw attendees leaving your presentation and heading straight to the bookstore to purchase your book, I knew then they too had been impacted by your message. While in the elevator that evening headed to my room, I was again reminded of you as I overheard many of our attendees speak about your terrific session. Thank you for sharing your vision and message."

-- B. Diane McClendon, Executive Director
The HRSouthwest Conference™

Steve's April 2013 Schedule

APRIL 2013

3	Morristown, NJ
5	Austin, TX
7	Lake Buena Vista, FL
9	Scottsdale, AZ
10	French Lick, IN
11	Pierre, SD
13	Orlando, FL
15	Lexington, KY
16	Fort Pierre, SD
17	St. Charles, MO
18	Charlotte, NC
20	White Sulphur Springs, WV
23	Virginia Beach, VA
24	Columbus, OH (Morning)
24	Grapevine, TX (Evening)
26	Charleston, SC



How to Bring STEVE GILLILAND to Your Organization:

Call Toll-Free: **866-445-5452**

Email: **amanda@stevegilliland.com**

Web Inquiry: **[http://www.stevegilliland.com/
to_book_steve_gilliland.htm](http://www.stevegilliland.com/to_book_steve_gilliland.htm)**



Need a little more "Goat"?
Click [here](#) to catch up on previous installments.



STEVE GILLILAND INC.



[Forward this email](#)



Try it FREE today.

This email was sent to customerservice@stevegilliland.com by customerservice@stevegilliland.com | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Steve Gilliland, Inc. | P. O. Box 1600 | Mocksville | NC | 27028