

# THE TWO-MINUTE CHALLENGE

HOW TO  
REACH GOALS  
AND

FINISH  
WHAT YOU  
START

CHARLES ABBOTT

# The Two-Minute Challenge

How to Reach Goals and Finish  
What You Start

Charles Abbott

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# Contents

<b>The Two-Minute Challenge .....</b>	<b>1</b>
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## PART ONE Dreams, Goals, & Self-Actualization

<b>1. Where to Start .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2. About-face! .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>3. Without Sure and Certain Hope.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>4. Finding the Westward Passage .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>5. Will Over Environment.....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>6. Following Yourself.....</b>	<b>55</b>

## PART TWO How to Avoid Common Mental Pitfalls

<b>7. Of Giants and Men .....</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>8. Infinitely Interconnected .....</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>9. The Benefit of Positive Attitude.....</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>10. Reductionism .....</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>11. Fighting Yourself .....</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>12. Excuses Create Failures.....</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>13. Possibilities.....</b>	<b>117</b>

**PART THREE**  
**How to Finish What You Start**

<b>14. The One Attribute.....</b>	<b>127</b>
<b>15. We Fail to Move in the Abstract .....</b>	<b>138</b>
<b>16. Goals, Habits, and Contexts.....</b>	<b>144</b>
<b>17. Building Successful Habits .....</b>	<b>154</b>
<b>18. Are We There Yet? .....</b>	<b>165</b>
<b>19. No Joke, It Works.....</b>	<b>173</b>

**PART FOUR**  
**The Journey for Self-Actualization**

<b>20. What You Can Learn from Economics and Finance.....</b>	<b>183</b>
<b>21. What is Your Destination? .....</b>	<b>192</b>
<b>22. Closing Thoughts .....</b>	<b>202</b>
<b>Supplemental .....</b>	<b>208</b>







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## THE TWO-MINUTE CHALLENGE

Dear reader,

Today is December 31 and I am writing to you about a real life application of the concepts held within this book. This is the real "proof in the pudding" exercise that you can do to feel the life changing effect of building goal-reaching habits. Not only will this simple application clarify the principles I'll share, but it will also improve your health, self-image, and motivational drive.

I call it the Two-Minute Challenge. This is going to be both the easiest challenge of your life and, perhaps, the hardest challenge of your life. It is going to test your resolve to change things, but best of all, the Two-Minute Challenge will show real results.

The primary goal of the challenge is to build a daily habit, a routine, an impulse that you cannot forget nor are willing to leave out of your schedule. It should be the first thing you do every day before checking your e-mail, reading the newspaper, or drinking that first cup of coffee. The great thing about this challenge is that it will only take two minutes of your time at most, so you can make no excuse for skipping it.

Pick a simple exercise that requires no setup time. I recommend push-ups or sit-ups. Some of you may prefer jump-roping, hula hooping, jumping jacks or some other aerobic

exercise. Whatever it is, keep it simple and choose something that will affect your physical body in a way that is most pleasing to you. I'm going to give you my personal example: push-ups.

In May of 2009, I started my first Two-Minute Challenge. The target was to do as many push-ups as I could within two minutes or less without a single break. That meant I could not lie down on the floor between push-ups, or try to prop myself up for a quick ten second break. Being rather young and in decent physical shape, I was confident that twenty push-ups on my first day would be a breeze. Boy was I wrong!

Day one saw me do sixteen and a half push-ups and leave me terribly out of breath within just one minute from starting. Not only was that a slow set of push-ups, but they were pitiful to look at no doubt. Regardless of the final result that day, I had accomplished my target of doing "as many push-ups within two minutes or less without a single break." I marked an X on my calendar and moved on.

The next day I did the same thing and completed a whopping seventeen pushups. The following day I managed eighteen push-ups, and the day after that I managed nineteen whole push-ups. Unfortunately, the weekend came and so did a bit too much eating and drinking. The morning after a long night out, I didn't want to get up and do push-ups, but I also had resolved not to give up so soon on my simple personal challenge. With a hangover sapping my strength, I rolled out of bed to make my best effort and managed only sixteen ever so pitiful push-ups. Although at first glance it would seem a "failure" that day, it was actually a real success because I did "as many push-ups within two minutes or less." So, I marked another X on the calendar and went back to sleep the day away.

Luckily, the next few days saw me regain my position, one push-up at a time, until I finally reached nineteen again. It was slow progress—and it might have been very disheartening if my goal was to accomplish twenty push-ups per day, or

twenty-five, or thirty, let alone more. However, my goal was not to reach a certain number of push-ups per daily repetition, and that is what kept me from feeling de-motivated by numbers. Instead, I kept my eye on the real goal: building the habit of doing push-ups at the same time every day.

That habit, although small and hardly noteworthy in those first few weeks, has been one of the most transforming changes that I've undertaken in my life. Within just five months, I went from being unable to meet my initial expectation of doing twenty push-ups to doing over seventy push-ups in less than two minutes without any break. Not only am I losing fat and building muscle, but psychologically I am also healthier than ever before. My self-esteem and confidence grew as the days passed by, and others even began to notice a change in my appearance and attitude.

It was then that I realized there was something underlying my challenge that was more important than just this physical change. There was something unique in the formula that I was applying that could change much more than a little muscle. So I applied the same principles, with the extra insight gained from my first challenge, to other dreams of accomplishment.

I challenged myself by adding sit-ups and crunches to my daily workout, which over time, also brought real physical change. Then I added a simple habit of studying Japanese, which increased my vocabulary and prepared me for real conversation in a foreign language. I even set out to write this book and finished it simply by following the Two-Minute Challenge model.

Today, looking back at my Two-Minute Challenge, it seems difficult to recall just how hard it was to do those first sixteen push-ups. "Drop and give me fifty?" Today that is easy, and the best thing is getting this far didn't require boot camp, training videos, or a personal instructor. I may even drop and do seventy push-ups, and that is nearly twice the amount needed to pass the US Army's physical fitness test!

*The point is* that you, too, can make big changes without a massive exertion of energy. If you want to lose weight, build muscle, learn a language, write a book, change your outlook, or just reach your full potential, then you need to start with the Two-Minute Challenge. The Two-Minute Challenge will cost you nothing, and it will be the perfect accompanying “worksheet” to this guidebook that you hold in your hands. Those two minutes will be a paltry sum in exchange for the great sense of control, achievement, and positive change that you will experience.

**This is your challenge.** Pick a simple, single, and strenuous workout like push-ups or sit-ups and do it every day after first waking up. Do it before eating breakfast, catching up on the latest news, or starting your other daily routines. Do it without fear of failure or concern for reaching a specific number of repetitions or calories burned. Do it when you feel sick, when you feel sluggish, and even do it when you are running late for work. Do it knowing that spending just two minutes of your day on this challenge has no negative effect on your total productivity in the day itself.

Push yourself to do better each day, but realize that you may experience many ups and downs in your daily performance. If you often fall short of the previous day’s repetitions, don’t fret. The overall trend will be positive because each investment, no matter how small, will add up over time. Positive trends, even if almost unnoticeable, will produce positive results that you will see—guaranteed.

As you start your Two-Minute Challenge, use this book as a source of inspiration and as a key to unlocking the secrets contained in this small and effective challenge. You’ll learn the importance of mind over motivation and the reasons for small productive habits. Furthermore, along the way, you’ll gain insights into the personal success secrets of the rich and famous, and some of the most influential people past and present.

So, what are you waiting for?

Focus on the next two minutes by starting your Two-Minute Challenge—they may be the most important investment in yourself that you ever make.

Sincerely,  
*Charles Abbott*



# **PART ONE**

**DREAMS, GOALS, &  
SELF-ACTUALIZATION**



# 1



## WHERE TO START

The environment you fashion out of your thoughts, your beliefs, your ideals, your philosophy is the only climate you will ever live in. The key is in not spending time, but in investing it.

Stephen R. Covey

What you are reading is a handbook to self-improvement, a guide to achieving self-actualization. This book will give you the only tools you need to set real goals, and to turn those goals from thought into consistent constructive action. If you embrace the simple methods and apply the effective strategies found within these pages, you will quickly see and feel a difference in your daily life. Before moving forward, you need to know this isn't a get-a-six-pack-of-abs-quick book, a marketing ploy for some particular product or system, or any other hot-air exposé that you might find elsewhere. You won't learn how to get a chiseled physique in thirty days, nor will you

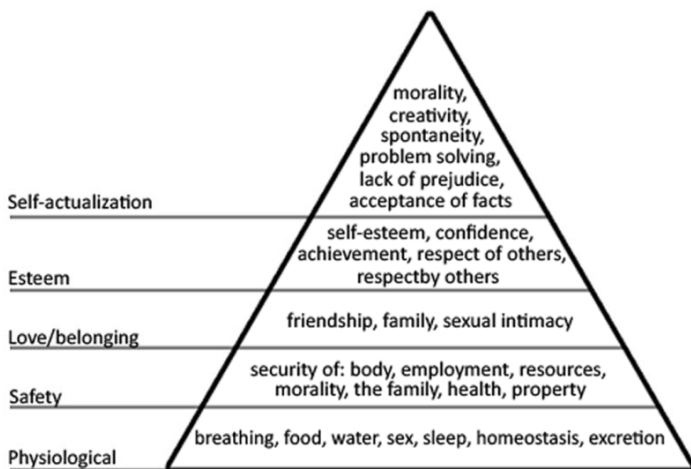
find a secret method for learning a new language faster than before. Instead, this book will teach you how to put your mind over motivation, how to turn thoughts into action, and the way to become more productive through small incremental changes. The best thing is that all you need to get going is an open mind, a desire for reaching your goals, and a clear conceptual understanding of self-actualization.

When Abraham Maslow produced his 1943 paper titled “A Theory of Human Motivation,” he provided an interesting perspective on how human beings achieve and how they pursue different goals based on their hierarchy of needs. Maslow wanted to know more about the driving forces in human nature and what groundwork might lead to living an exemplary life. So naturally, he studied people that by his standards were “exemplary.” Among these people were famous figures from history such as Jane Addams, one of the first women to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, abolitionist and statesman Frederick Douglass, and former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt.

After completing his study, Maslow wrote about how human motivation was directed differently by varying subconscious needs. In his report, he depicted five different levels of basic needs. A modern representation of Maslow's hierarchy of basic needs is a pyramid with the most primitive needs at the bottom and the more life defining needs at the top.

In his model, the base needs have to be fulfilled at some minimum amount first before the higher needs can be met or even understood. After the first three levels of the hierarchy (physiological, safety, and belonging) come perhaps the two most important levels to our lives today: esteem and self-actualization. Maslow broke these top two levels into a broader aspect by categorizing achievement, competence, confidence, independence, freedom, mastery, respect by and for others, and self-esteem into the former, while the latter contained creativity, morality, problem solving, spontaneity, and success. Success in Maslow's fifth stage can be defined as the ability to realize

one's own maximum potential, and it is the single strongest driving force or motive behind a person's efforts and feelings in life.



This hierarchy sparked a sincere interest in my own development or rather my own self-actualization. What I learned through studying other theories on improvement, success, motivation, autonomy, and goals brought a new light to my understanding of why conscious efforts toward self-actualization are so important to living a happy life. And why, for many living in industrialized economies, the pursuit of self-actualization is not only an important part of a happy life, but a necessary conscious component. Most of us strive for some objectives of self-actualization; however, we often fail to realize consciously how important they are. Yet, what is even more discouraging is how often we fail to achieve those goals that we *do realize* are important.

Take the 1988 study by Norcross and Vangarelli concerning those famous goals set every January first that we know as New Year's resolutions. In it, they discovered that every January, half of North American adults make New Year's

resolutions. These resolutions range from working more to traveling more, learning a new language to making new friends, writing in a daily journal or simply watching less television. The most common resolutions that they found among working adults was the desire to lose weight, quit smoking, and reduce alcohol consumption.

New Year's resolutions are easy to get excited about, and generally, people do love to share these goals with each other. Fueling the excitement are the underlying hopes of changing the present state of things in order to achieve a feeling of self-control, autonomy, and personal growth. Additionally, the goals set at the beginning of the year benefit from that near universally celebrated clean slate for making change. Both the shared excitement and the feeling of starting off on new footing, give noteworthy emotional boosts and make these resolutions more important.

In fact, a 2002 study confirmed that New Year's resolutions are considered more powerful than other personal goals, because they garner more commitment than other efforts, and they represent the things that are most important to the people making them. However, something unfortunate is discovered when you look past the resolution.

Despite the personal significance of the resolutions, studies have discovered that most people that admit to making a commitment to change actually fail to make the change. The study discovered that 40% claimed they had failed their goal within one month or less. Of those that made it past one month, a staggering 81% claimed failure overall. Less than 20% claimed either success, continued efforts, or were unwilling to admit to their own failure when their progress was not measurable.

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*81% of people fail at New Year's Resolutions!*

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Often those that fail don't want to make their shortcomings known, even anonymously, simply for fear of a negative appearance and a lowered self-esteem. They fail at their resolution and feel the negative effects of not meeting a goal, yet you can see these same people make the same resolutions year after year, why?

Maslow suggested that the strongest underlying motive of every person is a move toward self-actualization. The desire to prove a sense of autonomous control over oneself is at the center of these resolutions. This feeling of autonomy can come from the perception of personal growth and a personal understanding of the things that motivate. Although the typical person will fail multiple times at their resolutions, the same resolution is repeated because they report a heightened level of experience and understanding from their initial failures and they believe these experiences will help them in the next year. So within their failure they find some source of positive reinforcement and use it as the groundwork for the next attempt.

Unfortunately, an early 2000 study of personal choice produced a theory that just the consideration of making a good personal choice in life is sometimes enough to create a positive boost in the sense of accomplishment. In other words, the consideration alone could possibly fill the most basic desire for self-actualization so that a person may never take the much-needed action to actually see it through to fruition. People then repeatedly make the same resolutions because the thought of making a change is an easy emotional and subconscious boost to their own feelings of self-actualization. This is a disaster in the works because it only leads to a sense of false achievement, and over time, a greater distance from the goals they originally sought.

The question worth posing then is why do we fail to reach our goals, especially those resolutions that are most in line with what we truly want to accomplish?

This is a question many psychologists and researchers have been analyzing for quite some time. Among them is a self-proclaimed compulsive eater of Little Debbie snacks, Dr. Mark Muraven from the University of Albany, and a Florida State University professor and avid writer, Dr. Roy Baumeister. Together, in their research, they coined the term “ego depletion” which is of great importance to the discussion here.

In their analysis, they determined that the three primary reasons why people fail to reach their goals are:

1. People lack specific attainable goals.
2. Then they fail to monitor their progress toward the goal.
3. Finally, they do not have enough self-regulatory strength to continue pursuing their goals in the face of obstacles and distractions.

Muraven and Baumeister's primary point is that self-regulatory strength is a finite resource and easily depleted when people try to force their focus on new goals and objectives. Their theory is that as willpower is stretched to provide self-control over personal actions and habits, it inevitably depletes. At some point, ego depletion can cause energy levels to become so low that the mental activity required for self-control becomes impaired.

Imagine, for example, an alcoholic that restrains himself from drinking in an attempt to sober up, but when his willpower is drained, he falls into a cycle of greater binge drinking than before. Using one's self-control on one task or goal can adversely affect one's self-control later, and can lead to a greater lack of confidence and frustration with future attempts at self-improvement.

Together, Muraven and Baumeister concluded that failure of self-control is not only central to the many problems that plague modern Western civilization, but that self-control is a root of personal shortfalls. It seems their results have not fallen

far from time-tested conventional wisdom; honestly, these concepts have been highlighted as a central underlying theme for centuries in the concepts of virtue taught in various schools of thought.

This conclusion can hardly be a surprise to most of us. In fact, this only helps to name the enemy within us: our own “ego depletion.” So is there any way we can increase our self-control, subvert its necessity, or otherwise overcome this tendency to fail? Is there hope for all of us at creating a true autonomous self that can find success and happiness and reach that fifth level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs?

Although those are big questions, the answer is a simple yes; however, we need to expand properly on the points that Muraven and Baumeister made in their research, and then find ways to overcome the hurdles present in goal pursuit. They provided three important factors leading to a person's failure to achieve goals, yet they left some important factors out in their list, which I will address in four particular points.

First, people fail to realize the power of real goals. Too many people don't know what their goals are or have lost sight of what their goals should be. Are you aware of where goals come from, what goals are most important to life satisfaction and self-actualization, and how goal pursuit fits in with your everyday life? All of these questions need to be answered, and they will be answered in the first part of this book.

The next difficulty during goal pursuit comes from the numerous mental fallacies that catch the unaware. Everyone, from the street sweeper to the President of the United States, is susceptible to several mental traps that stem from dangerous thought patterns. Do you know why every person in the world is important to your personal goals, how you should remodel your goals for action, and who is trying to actively prevent you from reaching those goals? I'll attempt to answer those questions, and more, in part two.

The third point is directly related to the difficulty in

maintaining self-control when you suffer from ego depletion. Muraven and Baumeister correctly asserted that self-regulatory strength is limited, but there is a way to control your actions without relying on self-regulatory strength. Part three will give a clear-cut guide to how any normal person can leverage the most effective hardwired tool in the human mind for automating goal pursuit without fear of ego depletion.

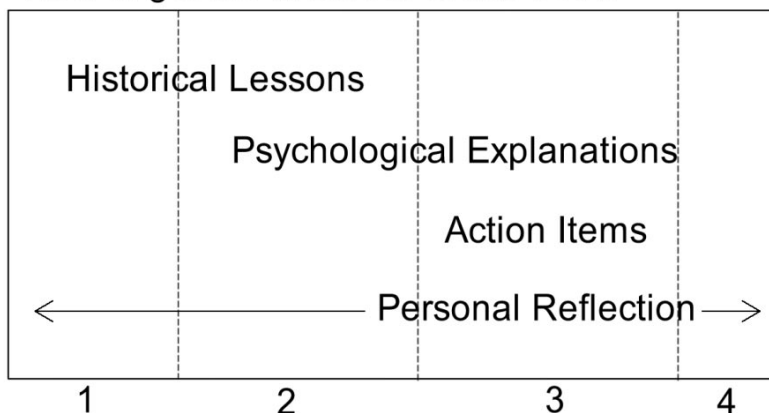
The fourth and final crucial point to successfully pursuing goals is a clarification of Muraven and Baumeister's second point about monitoring progress. Once you learn to leverage the hardwired tool of the human mind for automating goal pursuit, it is important to track progress, but it is even more important to gauge overall success and personal success. Part four of this book will cover several important keys to realizing happiness, maintaining a balanced strategy, and ensuring success does not become bittersweet.

In summary, the following four hurdles must be crossed when pursuing goals and self-actualization:

1. People fail to realize the power of real goals.
2. They continually jeopardize achievement by lack of mental awareness.
3. **Most importantly**, they fail to leverage their strongest hardwired tool for goal pursuit.
4. Lastly, people fail to monitor progress and they often cannot recognize real success.

Uncovering the specific psychological explanations for success and failure in goal pursuit is not particularly an easy task. There is a plethora of variables to deal with, exceptions to consider, and the hard to measure human element that all need to be covered. So covering all the facets of goals and self-actualization will require a few different angles. To make this guidebook easier to consume, you need to know exactly how it is constructed, you need to know what to expect.

## How to get the most out of this book



Each section of this book will rely on a convergence of history, psychology, and personal reflection to make the secrets of goal setting and goal achievement clear. History will be both a source of inspiration and an almanac of recipes for success made famous by those who applied them. Psychology will provide scientific theories and explanations for why certain habits occur and how they can be reproduced or avoided. While personal reflection, coupled with the suggested action items in section three, will allow you to turn formula into substance, concepts into action.

Together, much like Abraham Maslow did, we will look into the past and present lives of other exemplary people to see how they achieved success. Although much can be learned by studying principle lessons from the lives of others, it cannot be replaced by action. For committing these principles to heart, I'll suggest ways to challenge yourself based on what you have learned. Those challenges begin with the Two-Minute Challenge contained in the introduction, because it embodies many of the principles within and will actively give you an opportunity to witness their effects.

The chapters ahead will prepare you for reaching your potential and will give you the formula for achieving change in your life. It will require considerable effort on your part, but don't give up. On the other side, there is achievement, happiness, and personal success.

If you are tired of being a part of the 81% of people that fail to make their New Year's resolutions a reality, start here. If you are done promising yourself and others change, and then failing to deliver, read on. As you do so, keep in mind that everyone starts at the bottom of Maslow's hierarchy: your goal is to reach the top.

### Principle 1

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Start at the bottom, shoot for the top.

■ ■ ■

# 2



## **ABOUT-FACE!**

However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results.

Sir Winston Churchill

In the mid 1500s, a new tuber, the potato, was discovered in the New World by Spanish conquistadors. The conquistadors noticed that the Incas heavily relied on what they called chuñu as a reliable food source. This unique food was created by dehydrating a potato and then mashing it into a form that could be stored for up to ten years at room temperature without spoiling. Seeing its utility and resilience to climate, rainfall, and soil, the Spaniards decided to bring potatoes to Europe when space aboard their ships permitted.

By the 1600s, the potato was found in most of Eastern Europe, but it was not given a warm welcome. Most Spanish farmers grew potatoes in small patches only as cheap feed given to their livestock. Most other Europeans considered the tuber unfit for human consumption: they looked at the

misshapen dirty vegetable with distaste and suspicion. They often strayed from touching the potatoes since they were brought from a distant heathen civilization, and were even more averse when the potatoes' shape occasionally resembled nightshade and other plants associated with witches and devils. Only the animals and starving poor in Europe would eat the plant out of necessity.

A century later, in the 1700s, Prussia faced several food shortages and erratic fluctuations in the price of bread, a staple for the people. Frederick the Great of Prussia saw the potato as a potential solution to the disrupting force of famines and food shortages. He decided that the potato's resilient nature and ease of growing would be a great compliment to the nation's food supply and it would alleviate pressure on having large grain crops for bread. He confidently speculated that the potato would lower the price of bread and give his rule more stability.

Unfortunately, he faced the daunting challenge of removing the people's prejudice against the tuber. For over one hundred years, people had built up their mistrust and avoided eating the potato, and it wouldn't change easily overnight. So when he issued a royal order in 1774 for his subjects to grow potatoes as protection against famine, his subjects mostly complained and ignored it. One town even frankly replied to the king by saying, "The things have neither smell nor taste, not even the dogs will eat them, so what use are they to us?"

Defeated by the populace's enthusiastic denouncement of his order, King Frederick had to plan his next move carefully.

Being King of Prussia, he had several resources at his disposal for making a more forceful edict. It would have been easy to demand that potatoes be rationed in place of bread, thus, forcing it on the populace, but that wasn't a route Frederick wanted to take. Instead of removing their prejudice by another more forceful order, he decided to use a bit of reverse psychology so that the peasants might persuade themselves that potatoes were a good idea.

His new indirect approach began when he planted a great number of potato plants in a royal field. After planting the potatoes, he ordered (in a fashion that would make it known to the public) a heavy guard stationed at the field to protect his prize crops from thieves. Every dozen yards or so, a fully armed guard stood alert as instructed, day and night, rain and shine. To draw additional attention, he would occasionally allow the wealthy to visit the field and take some of the plants home to serve at their dinner table.

The nearby peasants became quite interested in their king's newly guarded treasure. They logically assumed that anything worth guarding was worth stealing, and naturally wanted to get their hands on it. So they acted on secret plans to sneak into the field and snatch the plants for their own gardens. Unbeknownst to them, the guards all had a more important and secret order direct from the king. They were told to let the peasants successfully "steal" the potato. Soon, the potato was a common addition to the average Prussian's diet (and German potato salad was born) all thanks to a genius play on the king's part.

Although orders may force change, and arguments may win courtroom battles and panel discussions, they are not always effective means for gathering support from those that do not already share your views. Frederick realized that an order through force might easily backfire, so he changed his strategy and successfully reached his goal. Would history have been different if he hadn't? Quite possibly. Just imagine what history books would be like if Pyrrhus of Epirus would have only changed his strategy.

Over two thousand years ago, Pyrrhus, king of the Greek nation of Epirus, heeded a call for help from the city of Tarentum in southern Italy. The Greek inhabitants of Tarentum were facing certain subjugation by the growing Roman presence in the north and asked Pyrrhus to become their protectorate. He agreed to come to their aid, but he didn't do so purely from a noble desire to protect, instead, he also decided

this opportunity fit well with his own goal of building an empire by conquering the fledgling Roman Republic and all of Italy.

So, in 280 BC, Pyrrhus arrived on the Italian peninsula with his first wave of 25,000 soldiers and set out to protect Tarentum until his reinforcement troops were assembled and prepared for the upcoming offensive. Shortly after landfall, he caught wind that a Roman army was already marching to attack him, and plundering the countryside along the way. After a bit of thought, he decided it was better to immediately meet them in the field of battle and stop them from gaining momentum. Yet, quite counter to his goal of conquest, he surprisingly sent out a messenger requesting the Roman general to allow them to arbitrate terms of peace between the Greek cities and Rome. When Pyrrhus received the reply that the Romans didn't want him to act as an arbitrator, nor did they feel threatened by his army, he angrily hastened his first wave of troops to battle.

The two armies met at the river Siris when the Romans were just starting to cross it. Pyrrhus, sensing his infantry were disorganized and believing a quick attack would throw his enemy into greater disarray, personally led his cavalry in a charge while leaving instructions for the generals to get the troops in battle formations. The cavalry charge was, for the most part, not as effective as Pyrrhus had hoped, and the day of battle feverishly continued with at least a half-dozen tipping points where either side could have sworn victory was at hand. However, by the end of the battle, Pyrrhus claimed victory as the Roman army deserted their camp and retreated. Yet, in that one battlefield victory he had suffered the loss of his most trustworthy officers and many among his ranks that he called friends.

After the battle, Pyrrhus again decided to sue for peace instead of continuing with his goal of military conquest, and sent his friend and talented orator, Kineas, to Rome on his

behalf. This move ultimately backfired as the Romans assumed Pyrrhus was not as strong as they feared, and the Roman senate responded with a pledge to defeat the Greek army so long as it marched on the Italian peninsula.

Pyrrhus, realizing that his time was running out, posthaste marched his troops to the enemy city of Asculum in hopes of capturing a more decisive victory. In his rush to outmaneuver the Roman army, he again found himself fighting along the unfriendly banks of a river, and much like the battle near the river Siris, he claimed a victory at the end of the day but at the cost of his most irreplaceable generals.\*

At this same time, a Sicilian envoy arrived begging Pyrrhus to bring his army south to protect them from the Carthaginians in return for their allegiance. Having just tasted the same bittersweet victory as before, Pyrrhus reasoned that this new opportunity would make a fair replacement for his original plans. He believed he could easily conquer Sicily and potentially use it as a launching pad to North Africa or other Mediterranean nations. So he promptly abandoned his goal of defeating the Romans, and turned his army south toward Sicily instead.

This new venture soon rewarded him with one military victory after another, driving the Carthaginians into a fast retreat. In no time, the island of Sicily was under his military control. Although elated and amidst the consolidation of his

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\* The modern term "Pyrrhic Victory" is directly derived from an account of these crippling casualties while defeating the Romans at the battles of Heraclea in 280 BC and Asculum in 279. After the latter battle, the Greek historian Plutarch reported:

"The armies separated; and, it is said, Pyrrhus replied to one that gave him joy of his victory that *one more such victory would utterly undo him*. For he had lost a great part of the forces he brought with him, and almost all his particular friends and principal commanders;"

political control of Sicily, his spirit was quickly dampened by bad news. Back in Tarentum, the small defensive force he left behind was under siege by the Romans and was certain defeat was just moments away.

Pyrrhus, feeling obliged to fix this spoiled situation, again changed his immediate goal of consolidating power in Sicily and headed back to fight the Romans in a rematch. Arriving at Tarentum, he learned that the enemy was encamped nearby and awaiting reinforcements. In another posthaste move to gain a presumed tactical advantage, Pyrrhus led his army through dense wooded country by torchlight during the dead of night. When daylight broke, Pyrrhus' army, although in range to attack, was scattered, disorganized, and thoroughly confused. The Roman general immediately saw his opportunity to route the Greeks and, without much trouble, did so by the end of the day. Thus, Pyrrhus' defeat on Italian soil was absolute, and the Romans staked their first reputable claim as an important political and military force to be reckoned with.

So what does a story about eating potatoes and managing an army of troops on foreign soil have to do with reaching your goals? Well, if you are in a position of power, perhaps they gave you a few pithy insights to planning military campaigns or working well with others. Chances are you are not in a position of power quite like Pyrrhus or Frederick, but their stories still have a very important underlying point to goal pursuit, which is uncovered in the following question. How many times have you set out to accomplish a goal and then later found yourself no further along than any other previous attempt?

If you have had little success pursuing your goals then you should look at the strategies you are employing. Are you often buying the newest exercise equipment or video workout in hopes of finding the motivation you desperately need to lose weight? Do you start a dozen different projects full of zeal only to find that a month later you are out of gusto? If you follow

the same pattern of committing to a goal and then applying the same strategy that has failed over and over again, then by Einstein's definition, you are insane.

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*Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.*

Albert Einstein

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To find change you need to rethink the problem and tweak your strategy based on previous results and any new knowledge you've picked up along the way.

So where is a good starting point for changing your strategy? Going back to Muraven and Baumeister's research, they determined that goal pursuit was hampered by one of three factors, and then to clarify I expanded those three factors to four specific points. I'm going to repeat them one more time because they lay the foundation for rest of the chapters and any goal-reaching strategy must deal with each of these points:

1. People fail to realize the power of real goals.
2. They continually jeopardize achievement by lack of mental awareness.
3. **Most importantly**, they fail to leverage their strongest hardwired tool for goal pursuit.
4. Lastly, monitoring progress is important, but should be secondary to recognizing success.

The first place to revisit is your goal. What makes the difference between your everyday goals and a life changing, world-conquering goal? How can you change your goals, or the way you pursue them, to see different results? Should your goals be easy to reach, should they change in response to failure, and are they really even necessary?

We'll answer those questions soon enough, but the first step in breaking the insanity of goal pursuit is to recognize that changing your strategy (not your goal) is important if previous results weren't what you expected. Changing your goal is embracing defeat when you do it solely in response to a single failure.

Like the King of Prussia, don't be afraid to try a new approach, a new strategy, when you initially experience setbacks. Likewise, don't be like Pyrrhus and keep rushing into battle with the same strategy when it has given undesirable results, and don't change goals because you see a lack of progress. Be willing to open your mind to a new approach when your old approach hasn't been so successful, even if the new approach sounds counter-intuitive (guard the potatoes that you want people to steal?). You might be surprised how much easier it is to reach some goals when you simply change your strategy.

Principle 2

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Don't change goals, change strategies.

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A site devoted to mind over motivation  
and the journey for self-actualization.



What does a Prussian king, pre-Roman warlord, Sir Isaac Newton, Christopher Columbus, a stand-up comedian, and a bunch of caterpillars have in common with you?

Goals.

However, not all goals are made equal, and some people reach their goals, while others never cross the starting line. Do you sometimes fall into that latter group?

So why do some people reach their goals while others don't? What motivates a person to achieve great things? How can you turn a dream into action, and why is it imperative that you start chasing your dreams today?

Enter the Two-Minute Challenge. This is going to be both the easiest challenge of your life and, perhaps, the hardest challenge of your life. If you want to lose weight, build muscle, learn a language, write a book, change your outlook, or just reach your full potential, then you need to start here. The Two-Minute Challenge will get you quickly moving toward your goals, all while blending a bit of history, psychology, and personal reflection together to shed light on the secrets to goal pursuit.

Join the journey for self-actualization, and learn what exemplary people do differently to help them reach their full potential. Don't procrastinate, open this book and start your Two-Minute Challenge today!