



NAPOLEON HILL

Principle 1: Definite Major Purpose

The Value of Goals

His success has come from setting them, reaching them and setting them again.

Bill Lee is a handsome, personable, energetic man of 48 who set his goal to be worth a million dollars by age 40. He achieved his goal at 39. Today he is rich by most people's standards. And he has good things to say about money.

The thing that's beautiful about wealth is that it offers you so many more options in life," he says. "If you're generous, you can be more so. If you have strong social values, you can support projects that help other people and your community."

He believes that almost anyone can stop being a "slave" and can gain financial independence by learning to set goals. As a management consultant and teacher extraordinaire, he emphasizes this point in seminars and conferences all over the country, as well as in his national newsletter for the builders supply industry, *People and Profit*\$.

Lee, a Georgia native, graduated from Emory University in Atlanta with a degree in psychology. He got a taste for teaching entrepreneurship on his first job out of college, working for Atlanta Newspapers, Inc.

His office taught young carriers the principles of free enterprise and trained them to keep their buying, selling and collecting records accurately and to deliver the best possible service to the customers of the Atlanta Journal.

Looking for Success:

Also during that time he was introduced by a friend to a dynamic seminar speaker who stressed the power of setting goals for success in life.

"I couldn't sleep all night after attending that seminar," Lee says. His mind was opened to the possibilities of increasing his own productivity and income, and soon he had moved to another company, one where he could work on commission.

Bill Lee had had a truck-driving acquaintance with his father's hardware and building supply company as he was growing up, but the new company he joined, GAF Corp., was his real career introduction to the building supply industry.

The GAF job began for Lee a long term relationship with the people who own, manage and work in that industry. And he found a special love-with the Smaller, independent supply houses which continues today.

Lee recalls that GAF didn't offer their salespeople training at that time, other than to show them the products and prices, so he read everything he could find-Napoleon Hill and others-that would help him succeed in his new selling position.

He moved from Mobile, Ala., to Baltimore, doubling his income as he moved, and then back South again to become sales manager of the company's Savannah (Ga.) district.

One of his best customers was a young company called Builder Marts, based in Greenville, S.C. He and GAF had given them superb service, and the president asked if he'd be interested in buying into the newly-formed company.

Lee jumped at the chance and calls Clarence Bauknight, Builder Marts founder, an extraordinary influence on his career.

"He was brilliant at goal setting," Lee says, (and he let every one of us know what the carrot looked like. Working with him was like getting a Ph.D. in finance."

Bauknight used the team approach and understood the power of the reward system. When the company did well, everybody did. The pay of all his corporate officers was based on the same numbers.

Builder Marts in those early days added value to their products by providing seminars to teach their customers how to be better business people and to teach small independent building supply dealers how to compete with the national chains.

Teaching Others

The company began growing rapidly, and by 1986, when Lee left to pursue his own private consulting goals, sales had reached \$650 million.

Since leaving Builder Marts to form his own company, Lee Resources, Inc., Bill Lee has concentrated on teaching other people to do the things he's learned will work through the years.

His company teaches sales and management seminars, offers management consulting and develops highly creative training and educational materials.

Lee says he was influenced by Napoleon Hill's searching out "keys" and "clues" to success through his interviews with successful men.

"It motivated me to start looking for that kind of thing in my own work," he says. Now he shares what he has learned with his clients.

One of his favorite experiences is getting 30 people in a room and talking with them about taking care of their customers. He thinks the pendulum has swung as far as it can in the wrong direction when it comes to serving customers, and now it's coming back.

He believes customer satisfaction is highly measurable. During his 18 years with Builder Marts, five of which were spent in the computer division, he fell under the spell of measuring progress of all kinds.

Some people talk of "intangibles." Lee believes almost everything positive can and ought to be counted and rewarded. In his seminars he teaches managers that it's possible to quantify the "right" employee behavior -- the kind you want to see more often in your place of business -- such as:

- A salesperson calling a customer by name
- Suggestions for complementary products -- "We have your paint. Do you need brushes, rollers, drop cloths, or a ladder?" -- that decrease the number of one-item tickets
- Walking, not pointing, a customer to a product he or she can't locate in the store
- Sensitivity to a customer's feelings about smoking and other personal habits

It's hard for employees to exhibit "right" behavior, though, if managers don't let them know what they expect from them. Too many employees, he says, don't know what to do to get a feather in their caps.

He tells managers to "Tell your people what you expect. Then Inspect what you Expect-and celebrate together when things go right ... When you meet your goals, give out bonuses or throw a party."

(Rewarding "right" behavior is another area where Lee follows Napoleon Hill's precepts. Another method he suggests to managers is using a "token" system for rewarding effective employees. They can earn a half day or more off, or a cash bonus, by collecting enough of them.)

Lee's firm gives managers who attend its seminars an unusual opportunity to hear what their customers think of the service they get in their stores. After the seminar, Lee will contract with a third party firm to interview a company's customers and ask them to rate the service they received on their last visit and tell why they rated it.

Lee says follow-up by the managers themselves is essential when they attend seminars.

"In the seminar itself, a leader can take students from ignorance to knowledge. But they've got to take it from knowledge to practice and from practice to habit."

Lee's interest in the conceptual part of selling and the validity of setting goals, meeting them and then setting new ones hasn't dimmed through the years. And his belief that you can make a million-or two or three-if you set that as your goal is as strong as ever.

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