

Introduction

Everyone has the capacity to be determined. In fact you probably show some degree of it every week. It could come through in your efforts to get the best price when shopping, or keeping going when you're tired at work, in what some might see as stubbornness, or even in your determined search for an answer to help you on your way.

The value of your determination is defined with respect to your achievement of your goals. Because of this it contributes to your enjoyment of life. If the way your determination is applied fails to deliver the life you deserve, take heart. There are ways to learn how to use your determination to help create the life **you truly desire**.

So how does it work and how can you leverage it to achieve greater **success**?

What is determination?

Most people would describe it as being a personality trait, something fixed for each of us. Something that's just a part of us and that we can't change.

Well...the whole point of this article is to encourage you to:

- ➔ Believe that it is an attribute.
- ➔ Give you hope that you have the capability to change your stars.

Determination is a tool that you can learn, develop and use as you wish. It exists to help you to achieve the success you deserve.

Determination is a tool that you can call upon when you are **frustrated** in achieving a goal. When anyone is frustrated in moving toward their goal, there are really only two options:

1. To keep taking action until the goal is achieved.
2. To re-define the goal so that the new goal can be achieved with **apparently** less cost.

In the extreme re-defining the goal includes a re-definition of no goal at all. The original goal is abandoned. No further action is taken as the goal no longer exists. The cost is not in taking no further action, it is in the abandonment of the goal!

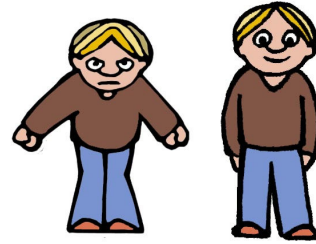
Intriguingly, determination can only exist where there are goals. It is only apparent when someone's route to their goal is, in their minds, frustrated.

Determination is most often associated with option 1, as in: "Abi has the determination to keep going, regardless of the obstacles to her goal."

The purpose of the article is to help you develop your ability in this area – pursuing your goals. There are more subtle aspects of the topic that, for the moment, we will put to one side [contact us at info@effectivevision.co.uk if you'd like more on the subtleties, you may be waiting a while for us to write about them if you don't let us know].

You are hard-wired to be able to apply determination in the pursuit of your goals

Thankfully human beings are **goal-oriented**...all our behaviour is driven by our own goals. Intrinsically it makes sense, then, that we all have the capacity to be determined. The three behaviours are fundamentally, even eternally, linked: goal-orientation, **frustration**, **determination**



Once you accept that you already have been, and will be, determined, it is just a question of how you learn, and choose to apply your determination to actively **achieve your dreams**, your vision.

How can you learn about using determination to gain more value?

Usually the easiest way is to find someone whom you feel uses your target skill well, and to learn how they do it.

Sounds simple, the challenge with an attribute like determination is that, unlike a visible skill such as cooking, it is hard to observe what is going on. You could watch many determined people for many hours without discerning what the difference is between you and them.

That's where modelling comes in. For our little taster on determination we spent some hours using a variety of techniques [six to eight] to get under the skin of how one 'determined' person uses and develops their determination to further their success. Then we took all the data and pulled out the core elements that make the difference in value.

Once you have these insights it's a matter of understanding where your current approach can be tuned to offer more value. Depending on the gaps this may include:

- ➔ Performance coaching [1 or 2 sessions].
- ➔ Practice
- ➔ A change in the way you live life.
- ➔ Adopting a different approach when frustration occurs.

For many people the perception of the effort involved in such personal development outweighs the imagined benefit. This is what enables those who are using their determination to make an even greater difference in their relative performance.

The choice is yours...have you sufficient determination to at least give it a shot?! Yes? Great...!

Your basic elements of determination

The person with whom we worked on this taster ['Abi'] has faced some major challenges over

the last few years. To get through these challenges, and move towards her goals in life, she has demonstrated a clear use of her determination. Here are the core elements:

Goals

When you develop clear, achievable goals you will have the first essential element of determination – tangible goals of explicit value to you, on which you can focus your energies.

If your goal is relatively unimportant why would you persist in achieving it when challenges occur?

Abi sets and formally reviews her main goals annually. She has between five and seven key goals that she wants to achieve within 1-5 years. Each main goal has a number of sub-goals – milestones – achieving these indicates to her whether she is on track for the main goals.

Abi's main goals are fundamental to enjoying the life and success she wants. She is passionate about achieving them, not just interested. Passion is her internal motivation – her reward is in the achievement of her goals.

The milestones act as goals in their own right on which she focuses in the shorter term. It is important for Abi that she keeps the **context** for the milestones in mind. She may choose to re-define them in order to overcome a frustration and still keep moving toward the relevant main goal.

She does not note down every milestone. When asked it is clear that she has in mind the milestones she is currently aiming to achieve. She knows, too, how they will take her closer to the relevant main goal.



Abi's actions are **driven** by her main goals and their milestones. Her actions are **defined** by the challenges she encounters in her journey to attain her goals.

Evidence

Abi uses both external and internal forms of feedback. External feedback comes in the form of the results of her actions. This is a useful and regular form of feedback. Her determination usually doesn't kick-in purely as a result of external feedback. The stronger feedback is **internal**.

When things are not going as expected or desired Abi gets an internal feeling like a crawling spider. This indicates to her that there is something not working in the situation. It is a sign that she is at a determining point in the attainment of her milestone/goal.

Supporting beliefs and strengths

"You have to have self-belief, and in spite of any frustrations, believe that it will come good".

Abi said she sees the frustrations as either cul-de-sacs that become clear at some point, or steeper parts of a journey on the way to your goal. Interestingly, both these images are less daunting metaphorically than seeing issues as barriers or dead-ends.

Her strengths are in her:

- ➔ Openness to new ideas, feedback and change.
- ➔ Adaptability.
- ➔ Patience.
- ➔ Love of learning.

These give her the opportunity to find solutions to any frustrations. Without them her determination would only have her existing patterns of behaviour for support. They provide a capability to achieve essential for determination to be successfully applied.

She sees and feels this capability to do things as an inner fire fuelled by learning. Yes, the fire has moments where it is roaring, and others where it is smouldering, both keep her going. She learns everyday, through reading, talking and other stimuli; keeping the fire ticking over and at times helping it roar.

Having the capability to resolve issues, in itself, is valuable. So is having the confidence it fuels that she can find a solution and achieve her goals.

For Abi, it is a positive reinforcing cycle. Her determination achieves movement towards her goals. The movement boosts her confidence. Confidence reinforces her self-belief and underpins more learning...to achieve more and boost her confidence etc.

Can you imagine how powerful this can be for you? Greater determination, greater success. Who wouldn't want it?

The illuminating secrets from 'Abi'

The basic model makes logical sense. We learnt from Abi that there are a few tweaks that turbo charge her use of determination.

Five further insights:

- ➔ In charge of her destiny
- ➔ Appropriate feedback
- ➔ Interpreting and using feedback
- ➔ Dissociation
- ➔ Celebrate success – the achievement of your goal

In charge of her destiny

Abi firmly believes that if she is to achieve her goals then it is down to her to take action **toward** reaching them. She is not content to just expect success to come to her, she believes in taking as much control as she can of her own destiny.

Appropriate feedback

To take learning from the effects of her actions Abi needs appropriate and timely feedback.

When she has that 'crawling spider' feeling she checks the feedback itself before deciding on a course of action.



As with any situation the efficacy of your action is affected by:

- ➔ The feedback on which you focus.
- ➔ Your choice of action at that time.

There is a saying: “If what you’re doing is **not** getting what you want, do something different.” At Effective Vision we suggest first of all **checking the relevancy and appropriateness of your feedback**, otherwise you may keep changing your actions whilst adhering to what in reality is probably inappropriate feedback. For more insights into gaining valuable, appropriate feedback just **contact us** at info@effectivevision.co.uk.

Interpreting and using feedback

Part of Abi’s thinking and beliefs are that there is a way to resolve any issue. She has a set of questions she asks herself when faced with frustration:

- ➔ “What’s (not) happening?”
- ➔ “Why (not)?”
- ➔ “What can be done?” [stimulates a search for options]
- ➔ “What might be the result of these possible actions?” [these are considered one action at a time].
- ➔ “What am I going to do to take action?”

The first two are about the feedback and learning. The next two are about solutions. The last is about implementing action.

Interestingly, for many people, their determination is undermined by:

- ➔ Not having these, or similar, questions and acting out of habit – perhaps re-defining a goal before exploring other options.
- ➔ Not having the second question, limiting their learning.
- ➔ Not having the creative capability to develop sufficient options.
- ➔ Having insufficient options whether through creative thought or direct observation.
- ➔ Not having the self-belief to follow through on options.

The questions you ask yourself are a critical part of being determined. It is well worth taking the time to explore the questions you ask yourself when met with frustration. Once you understand what they are you can choose to change them, if needs be.

Dissociation

When Abi is frustrated in getting to her goal she will first seek resolution ‘in’ the situation. If this is unfruitful she mentally steps out of the situation – she dissociates herself from it. In doing so she is able to view the situation from a more dispassionate, distanced perspective.

The dissociated perspective enables Abi to consider whether the issue she faces is a real issue in the scheme of things. If so, what learning can she bring to bear to resolve it, or move around it? Her objective is always to move closer to her major goals.

Dissociation provides emotional distance as much as a different perspective. Such lowering

the emotional level helps to reduce the energy expended through frustration. It provides for a calmer demeanour helping her to focus more of her energy on finding a solution. Your calm state can be particularly useful in a situation involving other people, who may not respond well to someone who is frustrated and emotional about it too.

Celebrating success

Whenever Abi achieves a milestone or goal she ensures that she celebrates that success. Celebration could be anything from recognising an inner glow, a smile or cheer, to making a conscious mark on her list of goals and milestones, or what most of us are conditioned to think of – food, drink, shopping, time-off, telling anyone whom we meet!

NB: It may be worth thinking about the state you are in when you succeed – you are fired up and thinking in a way that has enabled success. Some personal development gurus suggest you mentally pat yourself on the back and move straight onto your next task, celebrating later in the day. This allows you to ride the crest of the wave rather than stop in harbour and then have to find, and get back on, a wave after a rest in port.



Applying yourself to get your determination working for you

The key points are:

1. Set clear, explicit goals, aligned to your life purpose to give them meaning and relevance for you [for another perspective see article on “the relevance of learning” at www.effectivevision.co.uk].
2. Develop the ability to dissociate – to step back from the situation.
3. Develop a love of learning – this helps you increase your toolkit for dealing with frustrations once you have determined to address them.
4. Feed the learning daily – stoke your fire.
5. Develop your self-belief that you are a determined person. A person who can choose how and when to apply your determination. To do this you will choose to address and resolve any inner frustrations such as low self-belief as soon as possible, with whatever help you feel is effective.
6. Ask yourself questions to improve your awareness, interpretation and use of feedback.
7. Celebrate your successes.

Your preparation is the start of getting you in the right place. Firstly you’ll want to clearly define your goals, and the milestones to achieving them. Consider how you are going to feed your learning on a daily basis, as this will help you to overcome frustrations if they occur.

Given that the goals you’ve defined are important to you, you may consider some possible frustrations in advance. Imagine having resolved them, smile, and consider how you resolved them. You could choose to do this from a dissociated perspective to help build your skill of mentally stepping back from a situation.

The next step is getting on with the tasks to achieve your goals. If all goes well, **that’s it** – you’ll achieve them without recourse to your determination – well done! Your knowledge that you could be determined helps just by boosting your confidence – you know that you have choice.



If frustration does occur, you’re interpreting a combination of external indicators and an internal sense as being signs you need to take some other actions. Good – this means that you’re aware of feedback from the situation and have your goals in mind. Firstly just check whether you are associated, or dissociated. Doing the check will take you dissociated, and in a better place to review the situation.

Use useful questions to move forward, questions that still keep you working toward your goal. For example: What’s happened to make you feel frustrated? Why? Is the feedback relevant, valuable and appropriate? Are you sure that the element that is frustrating you is critical to achieving the milestone/goal? How can you effectively apply your energies and learning to move toward your goal? Who else can help you effectively achieve your goal, your dreams, your vision?



Use your increasing learning to come up with answers and ideas. This feeds the resolution of the frustration, and your confidence. Greater confidence helps you to keep going and move

beyond the initial moment of frustration, because **you know** that you can. When you find a resolution and put it into action, recognise the learning you have gained from the situation, and celebrate your success. Some people find added value in keeping a daily or weekly journal. You can too by noting your learning, the resolution, and general progress towards your goals, if you **choose to!**



Congratulations – you’re determined, and through good goal setting, learning and application you are achieving your goals!

Summary

Everyone displays determination at points through life. How well you make use of this attribute to achieve your dreams is a different issue.

With experience you’ll become more adept and adaptable at dealing with frustrations. Your goals can then become more challenging:

- ➔ You are more capable.
- ➔ The threshold at which you become frustrated is raised so your energy is still applied in the same balance.
- ➔ You are continually expanding your performance envelope.

Wow! What a wonderful place to be.

By studying how people successfully, and consciously, use their determination we can create much deeper understanding. Then it’s just a question of you choosing whether you wish to derive greater value from your use of determination, or not.

For help in becoming more determined now, contact us at info@effectivevision.co.uk.

All the best in attaining your goals,
David

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