



## The Principle of the Objective

What exactly is your objective? Fully 80% of all problems in personal and corporate life come from a lack of clarity with regard to objectives and goals.

### Learn from the Lessons of History

The concepts of military strategy have been studied and written about for more than 4,000 years, going back to the early works of General Sun-Tzu in China more than 2,000 years BC. **These principles of strategy** that have been developed and perfected over the centuries **have direct applications and implications for strategic thinking, both personally and corporately.**

### Decide In Advance What You Want

The most important military principle is the **Principle of the Objective**. This principle requires that you decide in advance **exactly what it is that you are trying to accomplish.** **What exactly is your objective?** Fully 80% of all problems in personal and corporate life come from a lack of clarity with regard to objectives and goals.

### Clarity Is Critical

**Clarity of objective precedes all other elements in strategic thinking.** Here are some questions that you can use over and over again to focus and clarify your objectives. The first question is, **"What am I trying to do?"** The second question is, **"How am I trying to do it?"** The third question is, **"What are my assumptions?"** And the fourth question is, **"What if my assumptions were wrong?"**

### Question Your Assumptions

**Having the courage to ask these questions, and to question your assumptions, both spoken and unspoken, is a key mark of the successful person.** Sometimes individuals

avoid questioning their assumptions for fear that they will have to change their minds or do something other than what they started out to do. However, **false assumptions lie at the root of almost every failure**. The only way that you can root out these wrong assumptions is by carefully analyzing them and discussing them, and then by demanding proof or evidence that these assumptions are still valid. Do you know your assumption is true or just believe it to be true? **Under what conditions could your assumptions not be true?**

### Project Forward In Your Mind

Another method for clarifying your objectives is for you to **project forward and look backward**. In other words, **imagine that you have already achieved the objective that you are working toward**. Project yourself forward in your mind and then look back to the present day, to the present moment. What do you see? **What changes could you make looking back from this imaginary perspective of hindsight?** What were some of the obstacles? What went wrong? What safety measures could have been implemented to prevent this? **This is a key peak performance thinking technique.**

### Determine Why You Want It

The final part of clarifying your objectives revolves around your **identifying the reasons why you want to achieve this objective in the first place**. **Why is it important? Is it still as important as when you started off? Is this objective more important than any other objective that you could be working on?** It is essential that you be clear about the answers to these questions.

### Action Exercise

Here are two things you can do immediately to **apply the "Principle of the Objective" to your personal and business life**:

**First**, take out a piece of paper and answer the question: **"What am I trying to do?"** What are your goals? What are your objectives? **Why are you doing what you are doing in the first place? Is this the very best use of your time and energy?**

**Second**, question your assumptions. **What things are you assuming are true about yourself, the people around you and the situation?** What if one of these assumptions turned out to be false? **What changes would you have to make if you found that your most cherished assumptions were not based on reality, or were contradicted by facts?**

