



Achieve Your Goals Podcast #74 - Creating Your Guiding Philosophies

Nick: Welcome to the Achieve Your Goals podcast with Hal Elrod. I'm your host, Nick Palkowski, and you're listening to the show that is guaranteed to help you take your life to the next level faster than you ever thought possible. In each episode, you will learn from someone who has achieved extraordinary goals that most haven't. He's the author of the number one best selling book, *The Miracle Morning*, a hall of fame and business achiever, an international key note speaker, ultramarathon runner, and the founder of VIPSUCCESSCOACHING.COM, Mr. Hal Elrod. Hal, thank you so much for joining me on this episode of the podcast.

Hal: Nick, it feels like it's been a while, man. I've been interviewing people and I'm missing you. Interviewing people and missing you simultaneously.

Nick: Yeah. It has been a while since we actually recorded a podcast together, so this will be a good one. It's a good time to catch up and I love our topic for today.

Hal: Yeah. Yeah. So, the topic today is, it came up by, like most topics, it kind of organically grew, if you will. And the topic today is about creating a guiding philosophy for your life. Creating a guiding philosophy for your life. Now, another way of saying that is just simply identifying your guiding principles, right? What principles do you live your life by? And this is something that came up when I was being interviewed on a podcast recently and at the end, he asked me something along those lines of, "What are your three greatest keys to success in your life?" And I wasn't prepared. I'm like, "What?" you know like, "Great." I started stalling. "Great question. I'm really glad you asked me that one and the answer I've got I think hopefully will help a lot of people." Right? Like I was like stalling, trying to think of what the hell am I going to say right now? So, I'm just going to tell you what I came up with and these are the three on the spot and I think that definitely they are three of my guiding principles. I don't know that they're the three main

ones but before I share it, let me share with you why is this important? Well, here's the reality. You either live your life based on emotion, right, meaning you do what you feel like doing. And I've always said that those who do what they feel like doing don't usually do very much because human nature, for whatever reason, is usually to take the path of least resistance, right? It's to do whatever is easy.

So, if you just let your feelings dictate your actions then, odds are, more often than not, most people, that's not going to be a recipe for success, letting feelings dictate actions. So, I'd like you to think about this and you might even write this down. While average people let their feelings dictate their actions, and by the way you can put emotions in place of feelings or you could put feelings/emotions, average people let their feelings/emotions dictate their actions but highly successful people let their commitments dictate their actions. Their commitments dictate their actions. It doesn't matter how they feel. This is what I said I was going to do, so this is what I'm going to do. I don't feel like doing it but I'm going to do it. In fact, I was literally doing an interview on another podcast, Nick. Our friend, Tara Magowski was interviewing me like ten minutes before you and I got on the line here and she... I just lost my train of thought. Where was I going with that?

Nick: You're talking about Tara.

Hal: Tara, podcast, interviewing me. Letting your feelings dictate. Oh, yeah. I told her. I said, "Tara, it's interesting. You know, most people are surprised when they hear me say this but I consider myself a lazy person and the reason that I consider myself a lazy person is because I feel lazy all the time, meaning I don't feel like doing the things that I need to do, probably at least half the time, right? Sometimes I'm motivated, I'm ready to go but probably half the time, and it's been this way my entire life, I don't feel like doing the things that I need to do to achieve my goals." What happens is, in the past, that is what dictated my actions, was my feelings. I didn't feel like doing it so, guess what? I didn't do it, right? When I was at Cutco sales rep for many years, if I didn't feel like making my phone calls, well, I didn't make my phone calls, right?

Nick: Right.

Hal: And it took a long time. It took me really understanding this and really developing kind of this into my character if you will, into my way of thinking, my mind set, shifting my mind set to be around this idea but I still feel like I'm a lazy person because I don't feel like doing things but here's the deal. I do the things that I don't feel like doing, right? And I guess, in definition, that probably means I'm

not a lazy person because I don't. But, for me, that's my feeling, like my identity is like I feel lazy a lot, so I see myself as a lazy person. And yet I have gotten very clear that I don't let my feelings of laziness dictate how I live my life. I let my commitments dictate how I live my life. The time that I wake up in the morning isn't the time I feel like waking up in the morning. It's the time that I committed to waking up in the morning. What I do during the day isn't based just on what I feel like doing during the day, it's based on what I committed to do. And I guess part of that is, if I don't feel like doing something that I know I need to do, well, then I'll use a lot of strategies to get myself to feel like doing it, right? So, Tony Robbins, a lot of his work, if not all of his work, really revolves around managing your own state, the ability to manage your state, get yourself to focus on, think about, or feel whatever you need to focus on, think about, or feel at any given moment to perform at your best. So, I use a lot of that.

I mean, if I'm feeling lazy, I'll get up and I'll start doing jumping jacks or whatever. My energy is low, I'll move my body. I'll do whatever I need to do. So, the point is this idea of creating, identifying what are the principles that are going to guide your life. And it might be one, it might be ten. I'm going to focus on three. That's going to be kind of the focus is, everybody on the podcast listening, you're going to have an assignment to create your guiding principles. That's your assignment. If all you do is listen to a podcast and then get off the phone and you don't change anything, well, then nothing changes, right? If you don't change your behavior, nothing changes for you. So, you've actually got to do a little work after this podcast and write out a list of as many guiding principles as you can think of and I'll coach you through that, by the way. I'm going to give you a bunch of them. I'll give you a buffet to choose from and I'll share with you which ones kind of work for me, which ones I used in the past. It's interesting, once you live by a guiding principle for long enough, it becomes part of who you are. And you almost don't even need to think about it. You can almost take it out of your guiding principles that you focus on everyday, that you read everyday because it's just become a part of who you are as a person, right? So, Nick, any questions on any of this or anything to share before I dive in?

Nick: No. One, I think that's an excellent assignment and I'd love to hear what some people's guiding principles are and they could go leave a comment in the show notes page, that would be awesome. But then also, I just think that, yeah, having that foundation to kind of build out of is so important and it helps making decisions actually easier, once you know what some of these principles are for you.

Hal: Absolutely because yeah, you don't have to guess. Most people, they go off what they feel, right? What do I feel like doing? Well, you don't go off that. You go off, "What are my guiding principles?" My guiding principles are mantras, so they're in the back of my head. Whenever I'm faced with the moment of decision, my guiding principles, that I've read everyday in my affirmations for years, they direct my thoughts and then they direct behavior and that's kind of the power is that, when you create your guiding philosophy or your guiding principles and you read them everyday, you review them everyday, you live in alignment with them, you share them with other people, well, it has a dramatic and profound effect on your behavior which affects your results and so on and so forth.

So, by the way, the first guiding principle that you can write down is what I just shared earlier, that's an example of a guiding principle which is rather than let my feelings dictate my actions, I let my commitments dictate my actions. And you can even put, instead of the word commitments, you can put the word goals, right? I let my goals dictate my action. I let my goals/commitments dictate my actions. So, that's an example of a guiding principles. My first guiding principle that I've shared every now, I mean what am I? 35. So for I think 16 years ago is when I learned this from a mentor. My division manager back at Cutco, Brad Britton. Brad Britton, he taught us. I think he just said this in a speech that he was giving once and it stuck with me and it never left and, to this day, if I had to say there was one guiding principle, like a single guiding principle that has led me to my success in life, of whatever you consider that to be, it's this. Do what's right, not what's easy. That's it. Do what's right, not what's easy.

And another variation of that is do the right thing, not the easy thing. So, when the alarm clock goes off in the morning and I'm tempted to go back to bed, I view that as the easy thing and I view the right thing as getting out of bed and doing what I said I was going to do, right? You could even combine it with the other guiding principle that I talked about of doing what your commitments are versus your feelings, letting your commitments dictate your actions. So, doing what's right is letting your commitments dictate your actions. Doing what's easy is just giving in to your feelings and letting your feelings dictate your actions. So, that principle really kind of can combine with a lot of the principles because doing what's right by... Now you have to define what that is. For me, what's right is whatever moves me closer to my highest goals, dreams and ambitions or my highest vision for myself, right? So, if it moves me toward becoming the best version of myself, that's the right thing. If it detracts from that, then it's the easy thing, right? So, that, for me, is how I define it.

Now, I've posted this on Facebook before, do the right thing, not the easy thing and I had this one person that was a detractor and said, earlier in the discussion, he said, "Why can't the right thing and the easy thing be the same thing?" And it's an interesting question. I was like, "Oh, I never thought of that before." And then I thought about it. I thought, well they can, they can be but it doesn't take any effort if that's the case, right? If it's the right thing and the easy, then you're probably going to do it by default but, more often than not, and Nick, you can correct me if you disagree, I would say more often than not, the easiest thing for you to do is rarely the thing that moves you closer to your goals. Would you agree with that?

Nick: Oh, I absolutely agree with that. Yeah.

Hal: I mean, occasionally you're like, "You know, I really want to get up early and work." That's fine, right? It's always easier to do nothing. I don't care who you are, it's easier to do nothing than just do something, by definition. So, it doesn't mean that the right thing is like terrible. So, to really speak to that person's question about, "Well, you know, can the right thing and the easy thing be the same?" Well, yeah. It doesn't mean the right thing is horrible or terrible. Sometimes it feels that way but it might be actually enjoyable, right? But it's still the right thing versus the easy thing. The easy thing is always to do nothing. When I was a sales person, making 20 calls versus not making 20 calls. Even if I was motivated and I wanted to make the 20 calls, it's always easier to do nothing. It's always easier, right? Human nature, path of least resistant, you do nothing. So, do what's right, not what's easy. And Nick, by the way, I want you brainstorming as we go through this because I didn't prep you for this. But I would like you to share some of your guiding principles at the end of the podcast. So, there you go. You have a little bit of warning.

Nick: Okay.

Hal: All right. So, I know you're going to be tuning out a little bit on the other end, so be ready. Here's the challenges. I want you to jot down some guiding principles, and be ready for me to ask you questions along the way. So there you go.

Nick: It sounds good. A little multi-tasking here. Awesome.

Hal: There you go, right? All right. So, that's one of your guiding principles is never multi-tasking. All right. So, here is the three that I gave the other day when I was being interviewed, when I was on the spot. Number one, become a better version of you. That's the first guiding principle. And I should have the word

everyday in there, right? Every single day, become a better version of yourself or a better version of you. Now, that originated from a fellow speaker and New York Times bestselling author Matthew Kelly. I saw him speak once at an event and then I read his book, *The Rhythm of Life*, and he defines your purpose in life to become the best version of yourself. Everything you do, every choice you make, should be to become the best version of yourself. And it's almost like do the right thing versus the easy thing, in a way. It's almost like a different way of saying that because he basically said that if you're deciding between should I do this or this, you always ask yourself which of these will help me become the best version of myself. And then you make the answer that's in alignment of becoming the best version of yourself, which, again, I think that's doing the right thing versus the easy thing.

Now I will tell everybody listening, if you have kids or if you have access to kids like a friend with a kid or a nephew or a little sister or brother, Matthew Kelly wrote a great book called *Why Am I Here?* It's a children's book. It's an illustrated children's book. I highly recommend that I read it to my daughter probably at least once a week. That's our reading material and it kind of teaches kids about becoming the best version of themselves and relates it to the choices that they make everyday between playing a video game with violence and not playing it. Or eating junk food or yada, yada, yada. So, really, really cool. Being nice to kids at school, etc. So, kind of a cool book. *Why Am I Here* by Matthew Kelly and then his other book, *The Rhythm of Life*. In fact, now you know what, Nick, remind me. Write this down.

Nick: Okay.

Hal: Matthew Kelly is kind of a friend of mine. It say kind of because we don't talk all the time but we've met a handful of times and we've spoke and he endorsed the *Miracle Morning* book so we know each other. I should have him on the podcast. That would be cool.

Nick: That would be awesome.

Hal: So, it's on you to remind me. So, now you have to remind me to do that, you have to write down your guiding principles and you have to be ready to respond if I talk to you here in the next 10 or 15 minutes or after the podcast.

Nick: Sounds great.

Hal: So, number one guiding principle, become a better version of yourself and essentially, by the way, that's what the Miracle Morning is, right? The Miracle Morning, in essence, is about waking up everyday and dedicating time into becoming the best version of yourself. Becoming a better version of who you were than when you went to bed the night before, that's what the Miracle Morning is all about.

So, number two, the second guiding principle, give up being perfect for being authentic. Give up being perfect for being authentic. And, if you're a listener to the podcast, you've probably heard me say this before but this is a real guiding principle in a lot different ways. I think that we often let this desire, this illusion of trying to be perfect or do something perfect, it stops us from even taking the first step because, in our mind, we don't have a clear picture of what is going to look like to do something perfectly, to execute perfectly, to show up perfect, right? So, that often prevents us from even taking the first step. So, you've got to give up being perfect for being authentic and authentic means that you start wherever you are, right? Authentically who you are and where you are, that's how you show up.

Now, this has other applications, right? If you're ever giving a public speech, this is when I first created this principle, was when I was giving a public speech and I thought, you know what, I was so nervous of being perfect and I actually gave the speech and I messed up in the middle and I forgot what I was talking about and then I was authentic and I just say, "Guys, I totally forgot what I was talking about." And at first, I got this feeling of embarrassment. I was embarrassed and then I went, "Wait a minute. You guys, can you help me, like where was I?" And then I made a joke. "You know guys I have brain damage. I need you to pay attention here. Come on." And they all laughed and then they started yelling out, trying to help me remember where I was at. Nick, like you did 10 minutes ago.

Nick: I think we just had this situation.

Hal: Yeah. Yeah. So, I have to apply this everyday, every podcast, every speech, every interview, every conversation with my wife, right? I give up being perfect for being authentic. But anyway, a long story short, somebody yelled out and they reminded where I was, I go, "Oh, yes. Thank you." And everybody applauded and they're like, "Yeah. Good job." And it felt like this team atmosphere. And, in that moment, I realized, wow, when you're authentic, people feel connected to you, right? We have this thing that we feel like showing vulnerability is a weakness and vulnerability and authenticity are very much the same thing, or at least they're very closely related. And Robin Sharma has a great quote. He says, "When you're

vulnerable with people, they fall in love with you.” When you're vulnerable with people, they fall in love with you. And so I think the same thing goes when you're authentic. People feel connected to you. So, give up being perfect for being authentic. And then number three, and I didn't realized this until I just looked at my notes. We already covered it. Let your commitments dictate your actions.

Nick: Nice.

Hal: Right? Let your commitments dictate your actions. Yeah. I literally haven't looked at these notes since I did this interview a few weeks ago. All right. Become a better version of you, give up being perfect for being authentic, and let your commitments dictate your actions. So, that's an example of three guiding principles that you can live your life by. Now, you can have more than that, you could have less. I want to share. Nick, any thoughts, comments, questions, and then A, if you're ready to share yours, you can. If you're still working on them I've got some more stuff to share.

Nick: Well, actually I was really pretty much ready to share them right away because I actually have a little Post-It note that really, I guess I wouldn't consider them guiding principles, maybe more like intentions but that's really kind of what they are. So, I just have a Post-It note with three of them right there that I see everyday.

Hal: Beautiful. Let's hear them.

Nick: I guess my first one is getting better day by day in every way. So, it's mostly about that constant improvement, looking to grow, finding little different ways to actually learn, improve and grow.

Hal: Beautiful. I love it. Next.

Nick: Make an impact. That's one that's been really important for me, especially through like my [inaudible 00:19:53] days back a few years ago. That was actually our state theme. I was a part of it because I want to just be able to reach out and help influence other people.

Hal: So, real quick. I want to back up one. So, better everyday in every way. So, we already know how you do that, the Miracle Morning. Number two, make an impact. Let's talk actionable, right? I mean, I know you're the podcasting guru. You

help experts get their message out there, build a platform through your podcasting at your podcastguru.com. You like the plug?

Nick: Thanks for that.

Hal: But yes, so for you, I guess define either what that means to make an impact or any specific examples of how you do it everyday.

Nick: Yeah. Well, and actually, honestly, that's a big way, is just because I've kind of built my business around helping leaders create future leaders and that's where I think I can make the biggest impact, is helping people get their message out into the world. But then, in terms of like little, everyday things, it's being able to go and like help mentor some high school students or talk to some people who are going through tough times in college and trying to figure out what to do with their life after college. I know I've had several conversations, actually, this last couple of months with students, because I used to do a lot of work in the college environment, but people just kind of wondering how do I use my degree and actually get a job or things like that. So, just being able to mentor and help guide people along.

Hal: Got it. I love it. I love it. And what's your third guiding principle?

Nick: The third one is take bold action.

Hal: Well done.

Nick: Yeah. That one is important for me just because I don't want to be sitting back in the sidelines. I want to really be in the game and be willing to maybe take that extra step that I wouldn't have normally do, get out of my comfort zone a little bit to grow, to better myself, and then that's where I think you make the big impact is by taking that bold to action. So, they all kind of tie together a little bit.

Hal: Yeah. I love that. That reminds me of one of my kind of I guess a quote if you will, is make bold actions towards your dreams each day, refuse to stop and nothing can stop you. And I wrote that as an affirmation and then I shared it as a quote but I think it's so important. I've got actually similarly on my board right in front of me. It says be more courageous in big giant letters and exclamation points. Be more courageous because we all play smaller than we're capable of. We often aren't bold and, if we're not conscious about being bold, that's going to really limit

our performance, limit our results, limit our quality of life. And so I love that. I love the three fantastic guiding principles. Thank you for sharing those.

Nick: Yeah. You're welcome.

Hal: So, I just want to wrap up with a couple of things. Number one is the three guiding principles... Oh, that's so cool. We are across the street from a park, Nick, and it's neat. I see my family. I see my wife, my son, and my daughter are walking to the park across the grass. It's a sweet sight. I wish I had a little video capture for everybody. Anyway, all right. So, where was I? So, here's my three guiding principles that I have taught during my key note message for the last 15 years are these and I figured I'd share these because these, like if I had to pick the three that are all encompassing for me, like really narrowed down my three, these are those three. And they are organized in alphabetical order. There's an A, there's a B, and there's a C. And I know we have covered these like early, early, early podcast so I'll just touch on them.

The A is accept life. I'm sorry, accept all things you can't change. Based on the idea that every negative emotion that we ever feel that hinders us, that hurts us, every negative emotion is self created by our non-acceptance of reality. So, wishing and wanting that we could change things that we can't change is what causes this emotional pain. And, to the degree that we wish we could change it, when it's unchangeable because maybe it already happened in the past or it's out of our control, that's the degree that we create emotional pain. So, the first thing is accept all things you can't change and that gives you what I call emotional freedom.

Then, B is for be grateful for everything. We talk about gratitude on podcast. Be the most grateful person you know. And remember, there's a big difference between what I call intellectual gratitude and heartfelt, soulful gratitude. Intellectual gratitude is the gratitude where if you ask anybody, are you grateful for things in your life like family and food and shelter, and they would be like, "Yeah, of course I am." Right? But it really comes from their head. It's like they just think it rather than feel it. I'm talking about everyday, take time during your Miracle Morning to feel grateful at your core, at your soul. I've got something in my affirmation that reminds me everyday to pause and feel deep gratitude for all the things I have in my life.

So B, be grateful for everything, and the C is create progress everyday towards well, for years, it was create progress towards your goals and dreams. Everyday towards your goals and dreams. Create progress everyday towards your goals and

dreams. I've shifted that recently, since the Miracle Morning has come about to create progress everyday towards becoming a level 10 person. So, the first that I thought for years, before I figured out the Miracle Morning was about doing. And we talked just recently, rather than focus on doing more, focus on becoming more. I've shifted that seat from creating progress towards your goals and dreams, which is about the doing to creating progress towards becoming a level 10 person. In other words, becoming the person you need to be to achieve your goals and dreams. So, it's a slight distinction but also a profound distinction.

So, those are the three guiding principles, accept all things you can't change, be grateful for everything, and create progress everyday towards becoming a level 10 person. And the last thing I want to share, Nick, and this really reinforce this episode today. I was in the car with my daughter Sophie yesterday. She's five years old. And I caught her in a fib. I caught her in a fib. She's actually going through a little phase of fibbing right now and we're trying to figure out why this is. But she basically said, "Dad, did you see that..." I forgot what it was. It some some sort of drawing thing at home. "Did you see those drawings at home that I showed you? Remember those?" I said, "Yeah." And they were like computer generated drawings. She goes, "Did you know that I drew those?" And I'm like, "Sophie, I don't know if you did draw those because I think those were done by a computer." I said, "Be honest. Are you telling the truth right now?" She said, "No. I'm sorry."

I said, "Sophie, how come you made that up? Why didn't you tell me the truth?" She said, "Dad, I just want to impress you. I'm just trying to impress you and I thought I'd impress you if you knew that I drew it." I said, "Sophie, first of all, you don't need to impress me." I said, "I love you and I'm impressed by just what an amazing person you are. You don't need to impress me." I said, "But if you want to impress me, can I tell you the three things that impress me?" She said, "Yeah." I said, "Number one, tell the truth. If you want to impress me, always, always, always tell the truth even if you are embarrassed about something or if you think you didn't do a good job or you think you did something that's going to get you in trouble, always tell the truth. That impresses me." I said, "Number two, be nice to everyone. If you're at school and the other kids are picking on another kid, you stand up for that kid. You be nice to everyone." And she goes, "I always am, Dad. You've told me that before. I'm always nice." I said, "Okay, I know you are." And I said, "And number three, always do your best. Everything that you do. If you're playing a game, do your best. If you're at school, do your best. If you're trying to listen to your teacher, be the best listener you can be." I said, "Those are the three things, Sophie, that matter the most, I think, right now for you is to always tell the truth, be nice to everyone, and always do your best."

So, I share those because I realized I actually went and told my wife, I said, "Sweetie, as of now, what do you think about these being the guiding principles that we reinforce with our kids? And, if we think of new ones or better ones or ones to add on to this or to replace this or whatever, we can do that. But what do you think about these three as a starting place?" And she said, "Yeah. I think that sounds great." So, guiding principles are important for you. They're also important for you to pay forward to people that know you, that look up to you and maybe if you have kids, it's your kids. Maybe it's just your friends. Maybe it's your significant other.

Here's the deal. If you're listening to this, you know someone that you could pay this forward to, right? Have them listen to the podcast episode and then work with them. Sit down and maybe, on your own, create your own guiding principles, then come together and discuss them. Then you know, make it fun. Put them on, write them out on a Microsoft Word document, make the font really big. Do different colors, different effects, put images on there that reinforce, whatever you want to do, right? But really make this something that you pay it forward, you share it with somebody else. For my daughter, Sophie, in fact, it's on my to-do list. I'm going to do it right when we hang up, Nick. I am going to write these out and I'm going to put them in different colors, like pink and blue and whatever, orange and I'm going to print them out, make them really nice, and put them on her bedroom wall and I'll make one for my son, Halston, too, and put them on his bedroom wall as well. So, pay it forward, create guiding principles for your life, and then pay it forward and share it with somebody else. Nick, any last thoughts or words before we wrap this one up?

Nick: No. I think that was phenomenal. I think that's a great action step, both for individuals but also for those people out there with kids. I think that's great that you're really setting that intention early.

Hal: Yeah, absolutely. Cool. Hey, everybody that tuned in, first of all Nick, we've got to do our podcast episodes more often. This is too long between Hal and Nick episodes. But anyway, everybody that tuned in, Achieve your Goals podcast listeners, thank you for tuning in. I really, really, really value your time and your attention. It means a lot to me and I hope you got value from today's episode and until next week, go out there, set those goals. I'm sure you've already got them set but make sure you review them everyday, recommit to them, clarify your actions and make it happen because you deserve nothing less. We'll talk to you next week.

Nick: Thank you so much for tuning in to this episode of podcast. So, now you're ready to go out there and create your very own guiding philosophies. We want to know what's some of those guiding philosophies were or what actually your biggest takeaway was from this episode. Simply go to HalElrod.com/074 and share your biggest takeaway and be sure to share one of your guiding philosophies. And you can also reach out to Hal by sending a Facebook message or a tweet, but just simply let us know. We really want to see it. I actually challenge and to go there and share one of them.

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