

Winning Ways

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A publication of
Winning Ways

**Winning Ways is:
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President and Founder

Joan launched Winning Ways, Inc. in 2001 after owning her own business since 1987. Joan works with clients on sales, strategic business planning and leadership. She believes that combining a great attitude with the right skills and developed goals will create the success you have only dreamed about! Her expertise is in helping you find the solution to your business challenges.

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Ultimate GPS – Goals, Performance and Success for Teens!

By Betsy T. Hudson, VP of Business and Educational Development of Winning Ways, Inc.

Teens today are coached and instructed on many aspects of life- sports, religion, test taking, how to complete college applications. Yet, what guidance do they receive in the true life skills of how to set clear goals and action plans, how to make good decisions, or how to effectively communicate?

It has been widely publicized for years that only about 3% of the population utilizes the practice of writing down goals, even though a goal is 90% more likely to be accomplished when written down. In addition, having clear goals leads to better decision making- since each decision takes you either closer to, or farther from, the goal. Even with the popularity of “The Secret” which emphasizes having a vision of what you want in life, many adults still cannot articulate what they hope to achieve not just professionally, but also in the areas of family, spirituality, physical health or social life. Why are we not making plans for our lives, as we would for our vacation?

The answer could be simply that these are not skills that we are taught, at least not in the same way we are taught to throw a ball, play the flute, or even set up an excel spread sheet. Teens today, especially, are inundated with activity, a flurry of stimulation that can often lead to a sense of non-direction, a “What’s all this about?” feeling.

“GPS for Teens” is a program designed to involve teens in developing the practical life skills that many of us wish we had learned at that age. The curriculum evolved from a 26 year old process that is used with executives and leaders, and was revised over a 5 year research period to be appropriate and effective with children ages 13-19. Pilot studies report 40% grade point increases and 70% increase in college attendance, as well as more positive attitudes toward personal responsibility and

leadership. This program is being used across the country with a wide variety of audiences, from at-risk kids and those already in the judicial system, to honor students bound for college.

How does it work? The core of the program is goal setting, based on dreams and desires in all aspects of life: Career/financial, family, ethics and beliefs, physical, mental, and social. Each week, students delve into one area, and assess where they are, what is important to them, and what they would like to achieve in the future- basically mapping out a plan for life. Then they use a comprehensive goal planning approach that involves specifying the goal, identifying rewards and consequences, anticipating obstacles, and laying out action steps that will lead to completion. At the same time, they are immersed in daily study on concepts that build great skills in communication, decision making, demonstrating empathy, problem solving, attitude development, and conflict management. Another strong component is time management, which is frequently cited by our adult clients as a major challenge, and is really a habit of scheduling the “action steps” of a goal into the daily calendar, and making decisions based on priority of goals.

What habits and skills are most important for a youth to learn to direct their future? Think about what has made you successful in your life, and the skills and habits that have led you to where you are today. Next, think about the teenagers in your life: your own, your neighbor, your grandchild or godchild, your best friend’s child or a co-worker’s. Does that teenager have the readiness to approach life? Let’s make sure our teens are venturing out into the world equipped with their GPS- not just the one that will get them to Oakwood Avenue, but the one that will get them through life, the ultimate GPS for life and success!



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