



We aim for perfection

PLANNING YOUR SHOOTING YEAR

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Whether you shoot your shotgun for fun, hunt, or are an active competitor, without a plan and path you will remain at the skill level you are now, indefinitely.

I have had the grand honor of coaching various sports, including the shotgun sports for nearly 40 years. There are many things common to sports enthusiasts including the typical shotgunner. The one that stands out in my mind is the FAILURE TO PLAN.

I can count on one hand the number of students who have come to one of our training sessions with a written idea of what he or she wanted to accomplish. Now, I ask you, "Would you build a house without a written plan?" You would not even think of it? Then, why would you ever even consider trying to improve your shooting without one?

If, as you read this missive, you tell yourself that you are going to make a plan, I will ask you WHEN you are going to begin? How about starting right now? Further, if that plan is not in writing it is nothing more than a daydream.

Most of us do not know how or where to begin. Well, for you those days are over. Right now, right here, together, you and I are going to embark on YOUR plan to increase your skills and, more importantly, your pleasure, with your shotgun.

Start with a specific, definable goal. Saying that you want to kill more birds or break more targets is NOT a goal. Why? You cannot measure your progress unless you have that goal clearly described with a starting point AND an end.

Here is an example of an identified goal: my goal for this year is to perform at a AA level at competitions on a consistent basis. To accomplish my goal I shall schedule a session with a professional shooting coach twice each month for the next three months. I am signing up at the local gym TODAY so that I am physically fit for the shooting and/or hunting season. I will get a physical trainer to give me a workout agenda based on my age and my body size and weight.

I will schedule on a calendar exactly how many days each week that I will train with my shotgun, precisely what I am going to work on for each training session, and I will keep a shooting diary for every shot that I take when I am training.

I will record in my diary (yes, you are going to keep a diary) every shot that I take, the weather conditions, what ammunition I am using, the chokes I have in my gun, which lenses I am wearing,

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I will record in my diary (yes, you are going to keep a diary) every shot that I take, the weather conditions, what ammunition I am using, the chokes I have in my gun, which lenses I am wearing, and any other information that may be helpful to me as I improve. I will send copies of my training results to my coach whenever I train alone. When I train with friends I will tell them what I am working on and ask them to record results for me.

I will make it a priority to NEVER allow myself a negative thought. Shooting is going to be fun for me. I will not get angry when I make a mistake and a target gets away from me. I will tell myself that I am on a lifetime learning curve that leads me upward. I will NOT compare my performance to anyone else. I will always believe that progress, not perfection, is the fastest way to improve.

I will enter on my planning calendar any competitive events I plan to participate in. I will include two events that challenge my skills. I do this so that I am stretching myself beyond my comfort level because I believe and accept that improvement will come as I push myself beyond my current capabilities.

I will share my goals and experiences ONLY with folks who will appreciate my advancement. I will avoid ALL negative talk by other shooters. I will choose to remember ONLY positive incidents as I grow and gain confidence in my shotgun shooting.

I will always stay process oriented, not outcome oriented. I will review my annual goal every week, chart its progress and be happy about my evolution.

I will be free to change my methods, actions, and even my goal(s) when I find ways to make my learning easier, faster, or more fun.

That is enough for now. WE do not want you to become the victim of information overload. That can be fatal to a shotgun shooting career. NO, I am not kidding.

If you subscribe only to the above items you will be so busy growing that you will not have any time left for worrying about the skeet target that got away last month.

What will happen to you, and it will be very exciting (shucks, I am excited for you just writing this), is that as you set in motion the course of action above, your mind will automatically record your outcomes to BE LIKE YOU. They will become your beliefs, terminology, ideas, routes, and finally, successes.

Please serve yourself well by making five or six copies of you positive affirmation (goal). One copy goes on your bathroom mirror; one copy on the nightstand next to your bed; one copy in your car; one copy to a very trusted friend; and the last one on the refrigerator. The idea is to positively reinforce your pathway to achievement several times per day.

Until next time.....

THE FOX

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