

The Ingredients of Accidental Success

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This presentation explores the elements of successful innovation.

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What is Success?

Success is achieving your goals:

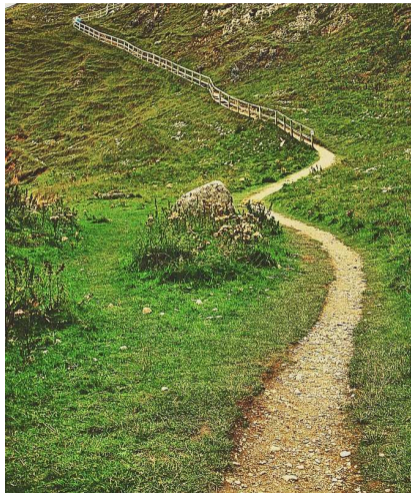
- Personal, family, spiritual
- Financial, career
- Fame



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/trialsanderrors/>

Achieving Your Goals

1. Find the path
2. Follow it as fast as you can



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/retroweb/>

Following a Path Set by Others

- The path is crowded
- You are competing with others
- 99% of people follow an existing path

Frequent Goals

I want to:

- Get married
- Have children
- See the world
- Own a house
- Be an accountant
- Be an author
- Win a sports competition



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Goals that Require Innovation

- There are no established paths for innovative goals
- You must make your own path
- You are the 1%

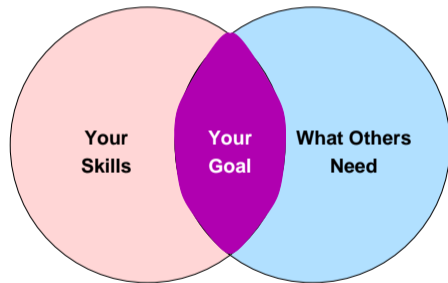


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Finding Your Goal

Build your own path to your goal:

- What are your strengths?
- What needs doing?
- What is the overlap?



Innovative Goal Examples

I want to:

- Create art
- Cure disease
- Correct societal dysfunction
- Create a new product or service
- Create new software



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My Path to Success

- Found relational databases fascinating
- Involved in open source since 1991
- Started with PostgreSQL in 1996
- Saw potential, needed help



PostgreSQL Core Team, 2000

Focus on Team Member Success

Successful team members achieve team goals:

- I am only one person
- Build an environment that provides meaningful experiences
- Provide tools to help people be productive
- Look for opportunities to share responsibility
- Helps people invest in your goal



First PostgreSQL Conference, 2006

Empower Your Team for Innovation

Build your team:

- Surround yourself with people who share your goal
- Empower them to adjust the path
- There is no growth without uncertainty
- You are doing something new — be prepared to fail and adjust



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The Goal Is Overwhelming

- Goal is unstated and far in the future
- Most people are volunteers
- Focusing on the goal is demoralizing



Grand Canyon

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/goodkent/>

Focus on the Path

- Enjoy the path, the journey
- Appreciate minor progress
- Occasionally adjust to make sure you are advancing toward your goal
- Ultimate success feels accidental



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Conclusion



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