

# PERSUASION GPS

Get to  
Where  
You Want  
to Go  
*Faster*



Lynne Franklin

THIN LEAF PRESS | LOS ANGELES

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*To my parents—Lois, Tom, and Lyle—who gave me the  
funds to create this book and the encouragement from  
another plane to finish it.*

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# G = GOALS

## CHAPTER 3

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# Create Goals to Motivate Your Brain

*Magic things happen in your brain—and  
in your world—when you set goals well.*

It was the call you hate to get.

John was the new CEO of a public company that made industrial valves. I'd written the first draft of his annual shareholders' letter. We were scheduled to meet on Monday morning to discuss it. As I was getting ready to leave for this, his assistant Rachel called.

"We need to push your 10:00 meeting to 3:00 this afternoon," she said. "John was supposed to fly back last night, but the weather was so bad that they cancelled his flight, so he's coming in this morning."

"No problem," I replied. "That time works for me."

"John went to Cape Cod," Rachel explained. "He was planning to relax on his sailboat. But it was windy and rainy all weekend, so he was stuck inside the whole time."

She paused, then added, “I’ve never heard him in such a foul mood. He said he wants to *torch* your shareholders’ letter copy.”

*That’s* a meeting I really want to go to! And now I have six hours to obsess about how awful it was going to be.

My default approach would have been to have a low-grade sense of dread in the back of my head all day. I would have tried to soothe myself by saying, “I’ve handled clients in a bad mood before, so I certainly can deal with John.” Then I would have proceeded to go into the meeting and wing it.

Chances are good it would have gone something like this:

“Hi John. I was sorry to hear the lousy weather kept you inside all weekend.”

“That’s not the only thing that’s lousy. This shareholders’ letter is the worst thing I’ve ever read! It’s nothing like what I told you I wanted to say. What you wrote is terrible and I’m not going to pay you anything for this.”

If you remember the first chapter, you’ve probably identified that I was in amygdala hijack—shutting down everything except fight, flight, freeze, or fawn. (I likely would have gone into “freeze.”) On top of being defensive, I’d be worried about getting paid! I would likely spend all of my energy tap dancing around what to say next. That means I probably wouldn’t hear everything John has to say, which would further infuriate him. This drastically reduced the chances that anything would turn out well for *either* of us.

As you may recall from the second chapter, the picture of this unpleasant future would now be coursing from my conscious to my subconscious brain, through the reticular activating system (RAS). That means my subconscious mind is looking for ways to make this rotten situation a reality!

How do we break this death spiral?

I believe the answer is setting goals and finding ways to reach them.

## GOALS, WISHES, EXPECTATIONS, AND RESOLUTIONS

Remember our definition of a *goal* as “a result you can attain but will require intentional action and often cooperation with others to get there”? Often we confuse this with three other ideas that are unhelpful substitutes.

The first is a *wish*: “a desire or hope that something could happen.” Or even worse: “to want something that cannot or probably will not happen.”

I could have spent a few hours *wishing* that John would be in a better mood by the time we met. (Considering that he’d have spent time in airports and a plane before then, it’s hard to imagine that experience would lift his spirits.) Or I could wish that his plane would go down—and he’d come away from this harrowing experience with a new perspective and greater appreciation for my work.

You get where this is going. In this instance, a wish would focus on someone other than me, who suddenly—and magically—changes. It’s basically me crossing my fingers. *That* rarely works.

Next, we have *expectations*: “a strong belief that something will happen or be the case in the future.” This appears to be a wish on steroids. I could *expect* John to see the value of my ideas for his shareholders’ letter once we’re together, but that doesn’t mean he *will*. (How many times have we come out of a meeting with unmet expectations?)

Then there are *resolutions*: “a firm decision to do or not to do something.” This is more active than a wish. However, research on New Year’s resolutions shows that we’re generally lame when it comes to these:<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> HQ Hire, “22 Goal-Setting Statistics You Should Know in 2025 (Facts and Studies).” Viewed at <https://hqhires.com/goal-setting-statistics/> on April 18, 2025.

- 44% of Americans (12–18% of people worldwide) set New Year’s resolutions
- 23% of all New Year’s resolutions will be given up within a week, followed by 36% at two weeks, 50% at three months, and 54% at six months
- Only 9% of people will set and achieve their resolutions

I could *resolve* that I wouldn’t let John be nasty to me just because he’d had a bad weekend (when *his* expectations of sailing weren’t met). But research indicates that’s not enough.

Here are the two factors that prevent wishes, expectations, and resolutions from becoming goals that motivate us.

***They’re Not Realistic or Attainable:*** “Hopes,” “beliefs” and “decisions” often are based on magical thinking:

- The entrepreneur who *wants* to double the size of his business this year
- The leader who *believes* the team should follow her without question
- The CEO who *decides* to take the company into a totally new market

Daydreaming is a wonderful way to expand beyond the usual options that come up when we’re considering something. But when there’s no relation to what’s truly *possible*, goals that are too big become a *disincentive*. We get discouraged and quit. And, along the way, we may blame others, or shame them, or find ways to justify ourselves. That makes it even harder to get the cooperation we need from people to reach good goals when we set these.

***They’re Vague:*** That’s what happened in the three bullet points above. What does “double the size of the business” mean to the



entrepreneur? What happens to the business when no one ever questions the leader? How will the CEO know when the company has successfully entered the new market?

This also makes it hard to track our progress. Unless we have a clear definition—which is part of what makes a good goal—we won’t know when we’ve achieved something.

Now that we know what *doesn’t* work, here’s an easy system to avoid those pitfalls.

## STEP #1: CREATE YOUR *COMMUNICATION GOAL*

I’ll admit a bias upfront. My mission statement is *to use communication to help people solve their problems and get what they want*. That’s the lens through which I view creating goals.

This means I begin by developing an overarching *communication goal*: that’s the result I want from whatever I’m saying or doing.

Setting a communication goal allows you to do two valuable things before you speak with or write to anyone. First, it gets you out of the “negative brain” trap by having you focus on a positive outcome. Second, it moves your focus beyond yourself, which makes whatever you’re doing more likely to appeal to others and get their buy-in. (How many times have you heard people blather on about something that has everything to do with *them* and nothing to do with *you*? Don’t be that person!)

A useful place to start is knowing the five basic functions of business communication:

- a. *Inform*—to share information
- b. *Request*—ask for something
- c. *Record*—tell people about a meeting or event that has already happened
- d. *Instruct*—tell people how to do something
- e. *Persuade*—get people to do something

With a clear “what,” you can move into the “why.” You do this by answering two simple but powerful questions:

1. What’s my point?
2. Why does it matter?

Write your communication goal based on your answers. Here’s what I came up with for the meeting I was dreading with John:

*Persuade John to give me the feedback I need to  
create a letter that*

- 1) gives shareholders the information they need, and*
- 2) showcases John as a strong new president.*

## STEP #2: BRAINSTORM YOUR ACTION GOALS

Too often people skip Step #1 and jump right into the “how.” However, having your communication goal makes the second step easier.

You’ll be glad to know this will only take about five minutes. And it will be very effective—because *how* you do it will be based on how *your* brain works.

### ***Freewriting***

Use this approach if you’re more of a right-brained and creative sort.

Grab a blank sheet of paper (lined or unlined—your choice) and a pen. Set a timer for five minutes. Think about what you want to see happen, then write without stopping. All you want to do is get the ideas out of your head. Use these principles of brainstorming:

1. Don’t censor yourself: write everything that occurs to you, no matter how far-fetched it appears.

2. Don't pay attention to grammar, spelling, punctuation, word choice, sentences—anything but your goals.
3. When the timer goes off, stop writing.

## ***Mind Mapping***

If you're more of an analytical, logical thinker, this is a better choice.

Again, you need a blank sheet of paper and a pen, and a timer set for five minutes. Not surprisingly, the approach is a little more structured:

1. Pick a phrase that represents the main issue (mine would have been "Productive Meeting with John"). Write it in the center of the page. Then draw a circle around it.
2. Brainstorm without considering if something is a "good" or a "bad" idea. Write a short phrase that represents each (one of mine would have been "we improve the letter"). Then circle it and draw a line back to the main issue in the middle of the page.
3. When the timer sounds, stop.

Most of the time, you'll be amazed by the number of ideas you can generate so quickly using either approach!

## ***Why This Works***

In both approaches, thinking about *ideas* and *words* stimulates your *left brain*. The physical activity of *writing* (words in freewriting, plus the circles and lines in mind mapping) excites your *right brain*. This means your entire brain is involved in problem solving!

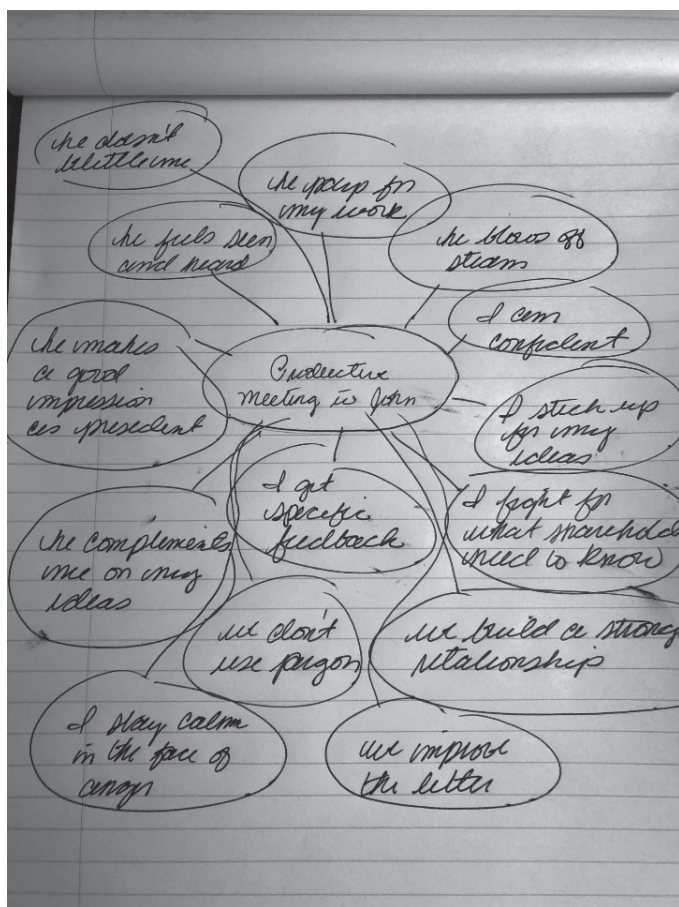
Avoid any predilection for doing this on your computer or using mind mapping software programs. In this instance, the low-tech approach of writing by hand better serves you. As a species, we've been writing by hand for longer than we've been typing. We need

the feel of holding a pen and the arm movement across a page (or holding a stylus and skittering it across a tablet) to engage our right brains. Sitting at the computer gives you minimal arm motion, just your fingers, really. This isn't enough to engage your right brain, so typing out words leads to a disproportionate influence from your left brain.

There's also something very freeing and childlike about 1) writing without using grammar and punctuation, or 2) making big scrawls without worrying how they look as you do them!

The five-minute limit really works. It's enough time to get the most important points out of your head. I've found much of what I come up with after that is repetitious or doesn't add a lot. My time is better spent organizing the good stuff I've already come up with.

For my meeting with John, I used mind mapping. Here is a reconstruction of what I wrote.



### STEP #3: PICK YOUR THREE GOALS

I call it the *Rule of Three Ideas*. Your short-term memory can only hold three ideas (and three subpoints for each) before it gets full.

You've just come up with a long list of all the goals you can have to deal with a person or situation. To say, "I'm going to do each of these!" is to set yourself up for failure. First, you won't remember all of them. Second, your efforts will become too scattered. In an attempt to do too much, chances are you'll make a bit of progress on a lot of things and not complete anything.

Use this step to help you focus.

**For Both:** Go back and read what you wrote. It's normal that not everything is useful. Plenty of times you might have been writing things just to keep your hand going. That was great, because it likely spurred other ideas.

**For Freewriting:** Look over everything you've written.

1. When you see an idea that stands out, call it out: circle it (with a different color pen), highlight it, or choose your own approach that makes it easy to find.
2. Review everything you've flagged, and pick the three most important goals.

**For Mind Mapping:** Now you have your best thoughts on one easy-to-read sheet. You also have a few clinkers, which you wrote so you could keep your mind and hand in motion.

1. Put a big red "X" through the ones that are off-target, unimportant, or just silly. (One from my mind map that got tossed was "he compliments me on my ideas.")
2. Look at each remaining phrase. Think about how important or relevant it is. Then place a number above it that represents this, starting at "1" for the most important.
3. Now you easily prioritized your top three goals.

Instead of spending the next few hours fretting—and probably not getting any other work done—these were the three goals I selected for a productive meeting with John:

1. Let him blow off steam: *so he's not dumping negative energy from somewhere else into our meeting*

2. Advocate for shareholders: *because we must share what they need to know, and doing this would show John is a good leader*
3. Get actionable feedback: *because comments like “I don’t like the flow” are impossible to address*

I wrote these on a clean sheet of paper—beneath my communication goal. This was my plan. I’d place the sheet on the passenger seat as I drove to the meeting, looking at it while waiting at each stoplight. Arriving in the parking lot, I’d sit in the car, close my eyes, then say the three goals out loud to myself before entering the building.

Heading out the door of my office, I looked at a shelf above my desk. Sitting on it was a polished brass blowtorch. A friend had purchased it for me years ago, because I was fond of saying, “The only way my desk will *ever* be clear is if I use a blowtorch on it!” (There have been times of great disarray when I have taken it down, pointed it at my desk, and made blowtorch combustion sounds.)

I decided to take a risk. When John walked through the conference room door, his expression was every bit as stormy as the weather had been for him that weekend. The sheaf of marked up shareholders’ letter pages was slightly crumpled and clutched in his left hand.

“Hi John,” I said, rising. “Rachel told me that you felt like ‘torching this letter.’ As your consultant, it’s my job to help you get what you want. Here you go. Torch away!” I held the blowtorch out to him.

John glowered at the blowtorch. For a few seconds, I wasn’t sure which way this was going. Then a slow smile spread across his face. John put down the papers and took the blowtorch.

He told me how he had bought an old wooden-bottomed sailboat. John spent the summer renovating it. This included using a blowtorch to remove barnacles and old varnish on the hull, so he

could sand, re-stain, and varnish it. Then he showed me the proper way to light and hold the torch.

John relaxed. After saying, “This is a really nice blowtorch!” he was ready to move on to the text.

Here’s the funny thing. John’s changes were relatively minor. I left the meeting with a clear direction on his revisions. This allowed me to incorporate his comments while showing shareholders he understood their needs and was addressing these. John left the meeting having relived a pleasant memory with an attentive audience and feeling better about me as someone who listened to him (meeting a goal that hadn’t made my top three: creating a stronger relationship). All because I had taken a few minutes to write my goals—and was able to notice that blowtorch on the shelf to meet the *first* one!

## STEP #4: HAVE A PLAN AND TRACK YOUR PROGRESS

With a clear communication goal, backed by three action goals, you’re ready to create the plan to make it all happen. People with written goals increase their chances of achieving them by 42%. Those with a concrete plan are 10-times more likely to be successful.<sup>8</sup> This also includes being prepared if things go sideways.

*Allow for Breakdowns:* Yes: crap happens. Remember those unattainable and unrealistic goals from earlier in this chapter? The entrepreneur doesn’t double the size of his business because the company becomes embroiled in a lawsuit. The leader’s best employees don’t like following her without question—and leave. The CEO’s competitors in the new market cut their prices so the company’s plans to expand here never get out of the red.

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<sup>8</sup> Op. cit. HQ Hire.



Spend time thinking about the scenarios that could prevent you from getting what you want. Figure out what you'll do if they happen. Then if they do, you'll be ready to act quickly—rather than losing time to “poor me”s and giving up.

***Celebrate Your Progress.*** Too often we wait until the end (if we celebrate at all). As you reach milestones, reward yourself. Share your successes with people who are important to you. Recognize those working at your side with a little gift (find out in advance what they like!). These things help retrain our brains to adopt new behavior—plus they add some fun to a longer term effort.

## CHANGING THE AWFUL TRUTH

Left to its own devices, your brain will keep doing what it thinks has worked before—or at least not failed miserably—because this feels safe. But I want *more* for you (and you do, too).

Skip the wishes, expectations, and resolutions. Set goals that are specific, and have an action plan that you track. Identify anything that may sidetrack your progress and know what you'll do if that happens.

And find regular ways to celebrate the changes!

Use your brain to make this the year you join 9% of people who reach their goals. And imagine how doing this every year will improve your life! Consider the four steps in this chapter *your* magical blowtorch!

## WHAT YOU KNOW

- Only goals have the power to help you create something better, because they are clear and require action. Don't confuse them with the other three terms:
  1. *Goal*: a result you can attain but will require intentional action and often cooperation with others to get there
  2. *Wish*: a desire or hope that something could happen (or to want something that cannot or probably will not happen)
  3. *Expectation*: a strong belief that something will happen or be the case in the future
  4. *Resolution*: a firm decision to do or not to do something
- Use this process to set then start achieving your goals:
  1. Step #1: create your communication goal by answering:
    - a. What's my point?
    - b. Why does it matter?
    - c. Then focus this by determining the type of communication you're doing:
    - d. Inform
    - e. Request
    - f. Record
    - g. Instruct
    - h. Persuade
  2. Step #2: brainstorm your goals, using freewriting (if you're right-brained) and mind mapping (if you're left-brained).
  3. Step #3: pick the three most important goals, because that's the bandwidth for your brain.
  4. Step #4: have a plan and track your progress, preparing for possible breakdowns in advance and celebrating progress along the way.

WHAT TO DO NOW

Immediate Gratification Goal-Setting Worksheet

Use this as a guide to setting goals for short-term and long-term situations. I suggest you start with something smaller—like a meeting, call, or memo—to figure out what works best for you.

1. What is the issue/situation and who are the people involved? (*Stop* in the Open Mindset Signal™.)

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2. Step #1: Create your *communication* goal by answering these questions: (*Explore*.in the Open Mindset Signal™.)

- a. What kind of business communication is this? (circle your answer)
- Inform
  - Request
  - Record
  - Instruct
  - Persuade

- b. What's my point?

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c. Why does it matter?

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d. Write your communication goal here.

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3. Step #2: On the next page (or a blank sheet of paper) use freewriting or mind mapping to brainstorm your goals for five minutes, (You may want to choose one the first time and try the other the next time to see which works best for you.) (*Explore*)

[illegible]

4. Step #3: Review all of the ideas from Step #2.

- a. Write the three most relevant and important action goals here: (*Explore*)

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- b. Rewrite your communication goal here, so you have it on the same page for easy reference. (*Go* in the Open Mindset Signal™.)

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- c. Review this goal sheet before you do the communication. (*Go*)

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- d. Afterward, record your experience: what you learned and how close you came to meeting your communication goal. (*Explore*)

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- e. How was this different from the last time you did something similar *without* setting communication and action goals beforehand? (*Explore*)

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- 5. Step #4: Have a plan and track your progress for reaching longer term goals. Prepare yourself and your team for success in these two ways: (*Explore*)

- a. In advance, list the possible breakdowns you'll face and strategies for either preventing or dealing with these.

Potential Breakdown	How I'll Prevent or Deal with This

b. What are your plans for celebrating progress and rewarding the people involved in this (including yourself): (*Explore*)



6. Each day, set goals for one or more business or personal situations and monitor your success rate. (*Go*)

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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After a boy threatened to kill her with a machete, Lynne Franklin started learning all she could about persuasion.

As a “neuroscience nerd,” she translates how the brain works into practical strategies that fast-track leaders to be seen, heard, and promoted. This includes her proprietary approaches to better connect with others:

1. PersuasionGPS™ system—a favorite of those who want to achieve big goals or break through barriers
2. MIND Reader Method™ personality profile to quickly identify what people value, fear, and how to best reach them
3. TEDx Talk on “How to Be a Mind Reader” that went viral with millions of views ([www.tinyurl.com/LynneTEDx](http://www.tinyurl.com/LynneTEDx))

Lynne creates a fun space for executives, rising stars, teams, and association members to improve their productivity, profits, and career prospects. Past president of the National Speakers Association Illinois Chapter, Lynne wrote the book *Getting Others To Do What You Want*.

Can your organization no longer afford miscommunication between leadership and employees, between departments, or within a team? Would 1:1 communication coaching help you reach your

next level of success? Seeking a lively keynote speaker for an event? Contact Lynne at 847-729-5716, [Lynne@LynneFranklin.com](mailto:Lynne@LynneFranklin.com), <http://bit.ly/4lRMQmT>, [www.lynnefranklin.com](http://www.lynnefranklin.com), or [www.linkedin.com/in/lynnefranklin](http://www.linkedin.com/in/lynnefranklin).

*“I don’t care what your company or audience for your association is. Lynne will give every person in the room ways to communicate better, ways to become more engaged, ways to connect. And keep your group so entertained it’s just amazing. Hire Lynne Franklin. You will not be making a mistake!”*

*—Rick Davis, President, Building Leaders Inc.*