



# Ever wanted to go sailing?

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When things are going wrong in our lives it's really easy to view our circumstances as the result of external factors beyond our control - and fall into a victim mentality. This attitude, however legitimate, robs us of our personal power.

I believe that it is our human capacity to think and act (or react) positively in the face of negative results and outcomes that gives us our true creative and problem-solving power.

For example, when I was little, I assumed sailing boats could only travel in the direction that the wind blew (indeed, in the days of boats with fixed sails and no keel, that was pretty much true). But human creativity and ingenuity is a powerful force, and boats with certain-shaped sails and a keel can (to a significant extent) sail wherever they want. Here's how it works.

Imagine looking at a compass with the needle pointing north and the wind coming directly from the North to the South. There is an area of only 22 degrees either side of the wind direction that a skilled yachtsman cannot sail towards (if he tries, the modern sail stops working and the wind pushes the boat backwards - it is called "sailing too close to the wind").

Anyway, the key point is that our imaginative yachtsman can go in any other direction on his compass other than the 44 degrees between "North, North-West" and "North, North-East". So, by a process of elimination, we know that our intrepid yachtsman has the power to head in the direction of any one of the other 316 degrees on the compass rose, 180 of which are "with" the wind (to some extent) and 136 are "against" the wind.

To this day, I find this phenomenon of

being able to sail into the wind quite amazing. Apparently, the forces that make it possible are similar to those that give rise to wings allowing an aeroplane to defy gravity and take off from the ground.

Anyway, the point of this article is to illustrate the power of our creative minds to bring about the results we seek. If our yachtsman's "goal" is due North of him, what can he do? Easy, he "tacks". Tacking is the process of moving a sailing boat towards a target in the "no sail zone" via a zig-zagging motion. Our yachtsman heads North West for a while, then turns and heads North East for a while and keeps alternating between the two ("tacking") until he reaches his goal.

As in real life, the external circumstances our sailor faces will be constantly changing, as the wind changes speed and direction and the tides ebb and flow. By setting a goal, formulating a plan, following a strategy, reviewing progress and making regular adjustments, the yachtsman can get from where he is to where he wants to be - whatever the external challenges.

So what's my advice? Set business and financial goals based on your personal values and lifestyle goals. Make financial plans and develop strategies to harness your resources, then keep your plans and strategies under review and adjust them as your goals and circumstances inevitably change. If you'd like to explore how you can apply my advice at a practical level, just get in touch.

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