middleground and far ground is valuable and you should train
yourself to think and plan at all three ranges. Here, borrowing
words from the military, I shall call this kinds of thinking
tactical, operational and strategic.

This chapter aims to help you think strategically about your
life and work. That presupposes an attempt on your part to
look ahead, well beyond your present time commitments, to see
if you can discern the shape of things to come. What is the
geoearth you can make out on the horizon? You may want to
select some features or areas (often by rejecting others) to
which you will guide yourself. They can be called your strategic
goals. Together they constitute your desired future.

LIFE PLANNING IN PERSPECTIVE

The present enthusiasm for life planning — setting strategic
goals for one's life — has its origins in America. It has become
widespread in Britain and elsewhere through books on time
management. You should be rather cautious about accepting
the concept of life planning as a mental package.

The word goal comes from the world of sport. Originally it
meant the terminal point of a race, such as a winning-post.
Now it covers both the area into which players in football and
similar games attempt to drive the ball to win points and also
the resulting score. In its more figurative or more general
sense, a goal is the end towards which effort or ambition is
directed.

People who love sport, such as the Americans and British,
readily import analogies from sport into daily life. For example,
"That isn't cricket," used to be a term of general disapproval in
Britain. (Now that the relish for competitive struggle and the
value placed on winning the game have invaded cricket, as all
other sports, the metaphor has somewhat lost its force!)

Culturally Americans place even more value on winning than the British. They are more inclined to see life as a competi-
tive struggle, a game with winners and losers. The great thing
is to be among the winners. As President Kennedy's father
rummied into him "Coming second is coming nowhere."

In such a culture the first questions to ask oneself in virtu-
ally any situation are: "What is the game I am in? Where is
the goal? How are the winners distinguished from the losers?"
Goals in life tend to be competitive ones, such as to become
President or to make a million dollars within ten years. Many
strive to be President but only one secures the prize. Dollars
are scarce and sought by all. If one person has a million some-
one else will presumably have to make do with less. There are
winners and losers in the market-place as in politics.

Goal-setting has proved remarkably successful. For
example, when President Kennedy said that America would
put a man on the moon within ten years it was like setting a
goal for the nation. It was a competitive one, too, for the Rus-
sians could theoretically have beaten the Americans to it. That
goal was achieved admittedly at the cost of a vast amount of
human time, and even vaster amounts of money. Was it all
worth it? Could those resources have been spent more fruit-
fully on other terrestrial projects?

Actually, the Russians did not try to put a man on the moon
before the Americans. Yet they were achieving other goals in
space exploration; they were competing in the game. Space
now has a military use and is a factor in the Great Game of
superpower relations. Sport and war are cousins.

The equivalent word for goal in the language of military
theory and practice is objective. Literally it is the objective point
towards which the advance of troops is directed. In its more
general sense of being any point aimed at, the word objective
has become one of several meaning an end towards which effort
is directed.

The phrase strategic goal combines both the metaphors of
war and sport. For strategy derives from the Greek words for a
'leader of an army'. Strategy is the kind of thinking and plan-
ning appropriately done by a general. It is the art of devising
plans and employing strategems towards achieving the gen-
eral's ultimate objective of securing the enemy's surrender.

The sporting and military analogies (which we are hardly
conscious of as being analogies, so common and so disguised
are they in everyday speech) have much to be said in their
favour. Goals are at least clear. By setting goals or objectives,
vague aspirations are reduced into tangible and attainable
forms. But the metaphors have more force in certain areas of
life than in others. They apply especially to business enterprise
in all its forms (see the following chapter). But they don't apply