

Making It Rain

Barry Clasper

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Introduction

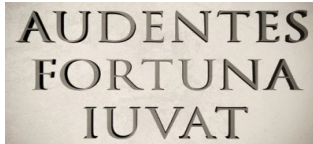
The term “rainmaker” generally conjures up the image of a master salesperson who can venture out and generate business seemingly out of nothing. They find lots of opportunities, build a large stable of faithful customers, and seem favored with incredible luck. Those inclined to be cynical tend to consider such success largely to be luck. But while it may be hard to deny luck plays some part, being consistently lucky over a long period seems unlikely. But we can all point to people we know who seem to consistently get good breaks. Opportunity is always coming their way. Why are they so “lucky”?

What is Luck?

There is a well known aphorism attributed to the Roman senator Seneca: “Luck is the intersection of preparation and opportunity.” In other words, it is one thing to be presented with an opportunity, but you have to be able to take advantage of it.

Notice the word order in that saying: preparation comes before opportunity. You cannot seize an opportunity for which you are unprepared. How do you figure out what to be prepared for? How do you recognize an opportunity when it appears?

You have to set **goals**. Having an objective lets you figure out what you need to do to get there. Having an objective lets you recognize an opportunity as something that will help you get there. And knowing what opportunities you need to succeed helps you figure out what you can do to **create** some of them.



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In other words, luck is something you can make happen, at least to some degree. Of course, that takes work. And involves risks. Failure is a distinct possibility. But if you're willing to work and prepared to fail sometimes, you can be lucky too. There's another famous saying - “Fortune favors the bold.”

Setting Goals

If you're a caller – or an aspiring caller – what might your goals look like? Most of us start out by finding a role model. Someone we can watch and say “I want to be like them!” But usually that person took many years to get “like them.” If you set that as your only goal, your unwavering ultimate goal, the length of the road ahead may be pretty discouraging. Also far-future goals have a way of shifting or becoming unreachable for myriad reasons. As Joni Mitchell sang “It's life's illusions I recall, I really don't know life at all.” That can also be discouraging. So sure, have a dream – something in the far future you'd like to work toward – and start mapping out the necessary steps along that road. But recognize



that dream will inevitably need to be adjusted, probably many times, to accommodate evolving reality – those unexpected turns in the road.

So have a dream, map out some steps that would seem to lead to that dream and make them intermediate goals. Then start with the first step, make that your current goal, and map out steps to take you there. As you achieve each goal, pause and reevaluate: are you still on the path you want? can you now see a better path to get there?

Not everyone has a far-off dream destination, and that's just fine. Maybe you just want to explore

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possibilities. Maybe someone has asked you to take something on – an example of a goal being driven by an opportunity for which you're unprepared. Maybe you're just interested in mastering a new skill out of interest or curiosity. Maybe you want to help out at your club. Maybe you've been asked to help out at a tape group to learn a new level. There are as many possibilities as there are people.

The upshot of all this is: decide what you are trying to accomplish in the immediate term, and take the steps to get there.

Getting Prepared

How you prepare is of course totally dependent on what you are getting prepared to do – your goal. What skills do you need to achieve your goal? Where would you have to be? Who would you have to know? What resources would you have to have? What opportunities would have to present themselves to allow you to develop these required things?

How do you know about these things – skills, resources, people etc.? If you don't have a clear idea of how to start toward your goal, you need someone to help you – a mentor, a coach, an advisor. An obvious way to get a line on such a person is to attend a caller school. The coaches at a school can certainly point you in the right direction from wherever you are now. If that is not possible, there are some books and articles available that can help. You can find a collection of tutorial material for aspiring callers in the CALLERLAB KnowledgeBase at <https://knowledge.callerlab.org/callertraining/>

What might some of these goals and steps toward them look like? Some examples:

Goal	Steps
Learn to sight call	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acquire call knowledge (how calls work, flow, handedness, etc.)<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dance, do call analysis sheets, write choreography, watch videos, Taminations• Learn a resolution method<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Caller school, tutorials, books, write choreography• https://knowledge.callerlab.org/sight-and-module-resolution-systems-document/• Practice, practice, practice<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Computer programs (Callarama, CSDS, SD, Taminations)• Live dancers
Be a recording artist	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Go to a voice coach• Learn to do singing calls well<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Special caller school, work with mentor, emulate existing recording artists, practice lots• Connect with a record producer<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sing with the band at nationals• Send them a recording of you doing your best singer• Offer to self-produce
Learn to do party nights	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Go to Community Dance session before CALLERLAB Convention• Join Committee for Community Dance• Check out https://dances.callerlab.org• Check out https://knowledge.callerlab.org/tag/party-dances/
Build a support network	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attend CALLERLAB convention• Join a local caller/dancer association• Volunteer for committee jobs• Start a caller support group for local callers• Recruit speakers for caller group meetings

Making it Rain ... cont'd

When Opportunity Knocks

You've set goals and you've mapped out what you need to achieve to meet them. Given all that, when a relevant opportunity comes along, you should be able to hear it knocking loud and clear. You know what you've been preparing for. If you're trying to learn to sight call, you know that having a group of dancers willing to let you practice on them is a necessity. So if a group learning – say, Plus – were to ask you to help them with the things they struggle with, that would be a pretty obvious opportunity to advance your goal.

But if you just wait for an appropriate opportunity to come and find you, you could wait a long time. This is where you need to **make some rain**. Suppose part of your preparation step is to **create** the opportunity you need to make progress?



You need a group to practice sight calling on? Go out and recruit them. Offer to teach a group a new level, or to learn DBD.

You're trying to break into party nights (where the real money is)? Make sure your name is listed with the local callers/dancers' associations – they often get requests for special nights. Go to your local community center and offer to do regular party nights for them. Talk to a wedding planner – believe it or not, square dancing is often a hit at weddings.

You need a support group to help you learn and make you aware of opportunities? Start recruiting!

Tools and Resources

The following links point to a few areas in the CALLERLAB KnowledgeBase that illustrate some of the resources available to callers who are looking to improve their skills and abilities and generate opportunities.

CALLERLAB KnowledgeBase (<https://knowledge.callerlab.org>)

- **Winning Ways** (<https://knowledge.callerlab.org/tag/winning-ways/>)
 - First Friday Fun Fest (<https://knowledge.callerlab.org/first-friday-fun-fest-story/>)
 - Introduction to Social Media (<https://knowledge.callerlab.org/introduction-to-social-media/>)
 - Long Distance Calling (<https://knowledge.callerlab.org/long-distance-calling/>)
- **Resources** (<https://knowledge.callerlab.org/tag/resource/>)
 - Teaching Resource (<https://teaching.callerlab.org>)
 - Dance Resource (<https://dances.callerlab.org>)
 - Marketing Manual (<https://knowledge.callerlab.org/callerlab-square-dance-marketing-manual/>)
 - Taminations (<https://knowledge.callerlab.org/taminations/>)
 - Party Night Tag (<https://knowledge.callerlab.org/tag/party-dances/>)
- **Social Connections** (<https://knowledge.callerlab.org/social-connections/>)
- **Useful Links** (<https://knowledge.callerlab.org/useful-links/>)