



## What are the odds you will finish well?

I read a book in 1999 that posed this question and I have never forgotten how it impacted me. As a matter of fact, I went on to develop a leadership coaching model that I use in my practice today when I am working with executives.

What caught my attention is that the author that posed the question went onto say that in his 20+ years of tracking leaders his conclusion was that MOST leaders do not finish well.

What an audacious claim to make. "Who is this guy and what does he know anyway?" I said to myself as I was working through the chapters. But he had me hooked with his findings and I have been on a journey since then to live an intentional life so that I do finish well and my legacy is one that inspires others to live a life full of purpose and impact.

To answer the question, "What are the odds you will finish well?", there are several steps that you have to work through to get to the answer. First, what does finishing well look like for you and what informed your definition? Second, do you think you are on a good and clear path to live your life this year that will keep you headed in the "finishing well" direction? Third, what changes do you need to make (elimination or inclusion) to get you back on the right path to finish well?

As a Christian leader, my starting place for my seeking answers always begins in the Christian Scriptures. By my own choice, I have decided that these precious words inform me of how God thinks and how I can find my best life that he has designed for me. Below, I have listed some of my favorite passages that create a sense of direction and purpose that is unique to my life.

There are many options to helping a person create their worldview and many of my clients do not share the same approach to life as I do. But I still encourage them to work through their answers to these 3 questions so that I can coach them towards their full potential.

In the glossary of the book my wife and I wrote, *Real Coaching Success*, I wrote the following definition for Finishing Well that would apply to everyone regardless of their faith background.

**Finishing Well:** *is a short phrase that represents the desired finish a client wants to achieve and experience throughout their lifetime. This phrase can be used to help a client think about how they want to finish their week, month, year, career—and their life. (p.)*

My personal definition has been altered to the following: *Finishing well means that I have lived the life God designed for me and I am able to hear "well done they good and faithful servant" when I come face to face with my creator and savior.*

With this definition in mind, I now can regularly take inventory of my life and see what needs to be eliminated or included to ensure that I am consistently trending in the right direction for finishing well.

Many times when I am exercising self leadership and examining my life, I find that I have lost focus, gotten off track, made poor choices, been interrupted, become lazy, etc. This is why my two favorite letters in the alphabet are "re." Re-focus, Re-turn, Re-commit, Re-launch, Re-engage, Re-pent, Re-consider, etc.

This is such an important concept to my success that I have embedded finishing well and "re" in my company's logo.



Notice that arrow in pointing up and to the right representing my desire to finish well and to not plateau. Rather, the ongoing life goal is to keep moving towards my full God given potential. One of my mentors uses the phrase "keep moving towards the line" when we spend time together. The circle represents then action I need to take when I have lost my way, lost clarity, lost desire and I have to "re" and get going back in the right direction.

According to Bobby Clinton, most leaders do not finish well. But what he didn't say was that it was not possible. He cautions leaders, especially those in the 4th quarter of their life, to be diligent against dropping out, giving up and settling for a life of pleasure over purpose (my words). He calls this the plateau of leadership and it occurs when a leader stops learning, stops growing, and stops pursuing their unique God given purpose and callings.



Over the next month, consider working on our answers to the following questions:

- Do you plan to finish well? If so, what is your plan?
- Would it be in your best interest to get some definition around what it looks like for you to finish your life well?
- To keep you moving up and to the right, or towards the line, what do you need to begin to include in your life and what do you need to begin to exclude?
- What "re" word would serve as a good theme for you to focus on in this chapter of your life?

See you at the finish line!

**Nathan Baxter (up and to the right)**

**Scriptures I use to remind me that Finishing Well is an option:**

*Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. Psalm 139:18. (God has work for me to do)*

*For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Ephesians 2:10*  
*Before I formed you in the womb, before you were born I set you apart to be a prophet to the nations. Jeremiah 1:4.*

*For I know the plans I have for you. Jeremiah 29:11*

*And say to Archippus, Be sure to carry out the work the Lord gave you. Colossians 4:17*

*Be sure to do what you should, for then you will enjoy the personal satisfaction of having done your work well. Galatians 6:4*