

The following was written by Mike Troiano and posted on June 11, 2014 at

<https://byrslf.co/decide-what-you-want-a29dfc8d099b>

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Throughout my career I've been blessed with great advice from great men. One piece of advice stands out among the rest, though, in terms of its impact on my life and worldview. I like to share it once in a while, so others get the benefit of it.

[Bill Texido](#) was an ex-Navy SEAL, a man who built a great business and a great family in San Francisco. I met with Bill at a time in my career when my patience for New York was winding down. I'd paid my dues, worked on some great brands at some great agencies, and just felt like it was time for me to take a gut check and figure out how to get to the next level.

I was out in SF on business, and "Mr. Tex" invited me to stop by his office atop the Embarcadero for a chat. "How's it goin' Trap," he said, using the nickname my best friends from college (among them his son) called me.

"Going great, Mr. T. Been thinking a lot about how to get to the next level."

"What's that mean, exactly," he said, sitting across a neat but nondescript desk, fit and tan in a crisply-pressed shirt and tie. "Well," I said, pudgy and gray in jeans and a rugby jersey, "I've been thinking it might be time to shake things up a little, move on from McCann-Erickson into something that advances me toward my real goal, which is running my own shop. I've put some feelers out in New York, to play a bigger role at a smaller agency. I'm also thinking about

applying to HBS, and on my trip out here I made some contacts at agencies in San Francisco, thinking that might be another route.”

“Hmm-mm,” he said.

“So I guess my plan,” I continued confidently, “is to put some feelers out there in those three directions, and just kind of see what works. Once I know more about the opportunities that are really out there, I’ll decide which looks the best, and move in that direction.”

“Well that’s good thinkin’ Trap,” he said in characteristic monotone. “Too bad the world doesn’t work that way.”

He continued, making a chopping gesture in the air for emphasis... “Every one of those things you just casually tossed off there is hard to do. And I can promise you, there are lots of people just as smart as you are — many of ’em better looking — who are focused 100% on just one of those things. What makes you think you’re going to beat them with 33% effort?”

“Well... I ... er...”

“Exactly. Decide what you want to do, Trap. Make a plan. Then go do it.”

It was great advice, just when I needed it. I hope it serves you as well as it’s served me.