

IMPORTANCE OF GOAL SETTING

Your guide to creating and achieving your goals

TOPICS COVERED

What is Goal Setting?

How to set Goals?

How to Achieve Goals?

SETTING GOALS AND HOW TO ACHIEVE THEM

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What is Goal Setting?

Experts define goal setting as the act of selecting a target or objective you wish to achieve. Fair enough. Goal setting has numerous benefits. Clearer focus, greater clarity in decision-making, more effective use of time, increased motivation and peace of mind and a greater chance of reaching our intended targets, to name a few. As famous motivational speaker and author Tony Robbins said, "Setting goals is the first step in turning the invisible into the visible."

What is Goal Setting?

"Even Steve Jobs was a famous goal setter!"

As a society we are bombarded by so many ads that if we don't take the time to identify a life vision and set clear goals, we can easily be swayed. For example, we may find ourselves persuaded by an ad to pursue a new language or to apply for a job, both of which may be great, but not particularly meaningful to us or serve our highest purpose. Author and positive psychologist, Norman Vincent Peale rightly pointed out, "All successful people have a goal. No one can get anywhere unless he knows where he wants to go and what he wants to be or do."

While the importance of goal setting is nothing new, people still fail to set goals properly and often come up short. One of the reasons for this is that while there are a lot of things we all may want to achieve, it's important to narrow it down and focus on top goals. These are the ones that are most meaningful to you and that you have a clear and strong reason for wanting to achieve them.

Mark Manson, author of *The Subtle Art of not Giving a F*ck*, suggests reframing the way we look at goal setting by identifying the pain we're willing to accept. He points out that while we all may want to lose weight or write a best selling book, we may not be willing to wake up early to go to the gym every morning or have the discipline to write when we don't feel inspired. There is some pain we can live with and some we can not. A key component of goal setting is being honest with ourselves to determine what pain we're willing to accept.

Moreover, don't forget that goals can change and need not have any limits. As famous author C.S. Lewis rightly said, "You are never too old to set a new goal or to dream a new dream." Moreover, to achieve goals, we also have to have faith and believe that we can achieve them. It is worth adopting the tenets of a growth mindset in order to do so. A growth mindset is based on the idea that your skills can be cultivated through learning and hard work. It assumes that people can change and grow through experience and practice. A growth mentality sees failure as a stepping stone to success and not as a negative.





In one study American Psychologist Carol Dweck conducted with children, she offered four-year-olds a choice. They could either redo an easy jigsaw puzzle or try a harder one. Those with a fixed mindset chose the easier puzzles that would validate their current ability. They wanted to make sure they succeeded to seem smart. The children with a growth mindset tried to stretch themselves because their definition of success was about becoming smarter. In her book, Dweck writes, “After thirty years, my research has shown that the view you adopt for yourself profoundly affects the way you lead your life. It can determine whether you become the person you want to be and whether you accomplish the things you value.”

Ways to cultivate a growth mindset

Embrace failure: Learn to reframe the concept of “failure” as a positive rather than a negative. Everyone has setbacks, it’s a normal part of life. The key is to learn from each setback and improve your decision making and subsequent actions going forward. Successful people typically have many “failures” on their way to success. Steven Spielberg was rejected from film school three times before getting his big break. Albert Einstein didn’t speak until he was four-years old and failed his entrance exam to the Swiss Federal Polytechnic school. Even Oprah Winfrey was fired from her first job for being deemed unfit for television.

Cultivate continuous learning: People with a growth mindset actively seek learning opportunities which results in greater career and life success. They are curious about everything. Research shows that, while less successful people read mostly for entertainment, those at the top are avid readers of self-improvement books.

Seek out challenges and go beyond your limits: Challenges are opportunities that propel you forward towards your goals and help you grow. According to C.S. Lewis, “Hardships often prepare ordinary people for an extraordinary destiny.” There is huge power in being able to overcome obstacles. By pushing yourself beyond what you think you can do, you gain confidence. When you push yourself, you will often surprise yourself and surpass even your own expectations. However, even if you don’t, a growth mindset will help you look for the lesson in the perceived “failure” and constructively consider it as progress towards success.

Ask for feedback: People who want to grow personally and professionally often ask for feedback and actually value it. This is because growth-oriented individuals are interested in developing and challenging themselves and are less focused on protecting their ego. They aren’t afraid to be criticised or judged. Once you adopt a growth-mindset and understand that you are responsible for your own growth, you will have the confidence to ask for feedback because you’ll see it as an opportunity to learn.



How to Actually Set Goals

"You don't need more time, you just need to decide."

While people generally understand the benefits of goal setting, there is less of a grasp of how to set them. One thing that comes into play here is goal competition. These are your different goals competing against each other for your time and energy. Some research on goal setting suggests working on one goal at a time to ensure progress. What often looks like a problem of goal setting is in fact a problem of goal selection.

We may decide that we want to launch a business, start a blog and learn Spanish all at the same time. While they may all be worthy goals for some people, they can lead to overwhelm and the likelihood of achieving all at the same time is unlikely. In the words of marketing and entrepreneur guru, Seth Godin, "You don't need more time, you just need to decide."

Here are a variety of resources on getting your priorities in order:

- [Warren Buffet's 2 List Strategy](#)
- [The Ivy Lee Method](#)
- [The Eisenhower Box](#)
- [The 20 Slot Rule](#)

Look at these strategies on prioritising and choose one that resonates with you. Next, make sure your goals are specific. The more planned out they are, the more likely you are to achieve them. This doesn't only mean the end goal, which you should be specific about as well, this also means the day-by-day or weekly progress you will need to make in order to achieve them.

For example, if you want to lose weight. Try something like, I will lose 15 lbs in 6 months, by going to the gym every Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday morning at 9am, doing weights and sit ups, cutting out sugar completely and limiting my alcohol intake to one evening per week.



Write down your goals

Once your goals are clear and set, write them down. Psychology professor Dr. Gail Matthews, at the Dominican University in California, led a study on goal-setting with nearly 270 participants. The results were clear. People were 42 percent more likely to achieve their goals if they wrote them down.

The act of writing down your dreams and goals will bring forth a new level of awareness, which will lead to more creative ideas and increased productivity to your subconscious mind. The act of writing down will also open your subconscious mind to “see” opportunities that couldn’t be observed from merely thinking about your goals. Writing down your goals will also help you to get clear on exactly what you want to achieve and help motivate you to complete the tasks necessary for your success. In addition, it will force you to strategise, to ask questions about your current progress, and to brainstorm a plan for success. The likelihood that you’ll transform your desires into reality goes up even further if you share your written goals with a friend or coach who believes in your ability to succeed.

It is no surprise that the business community has caught on to this helpful approach. Some entrepreneurial successes swear by writing their goals down daily. Grant Cardone, best-selling author of *The 10X Rule* and self-made millionaire takes this much further and writes his goals down once in the morning, and once again at night. He explains, “I want to wake up to it. I want to go to sleep to it and I want to dream with it...I want to write my goals down before I go to sleep at night because they are important to me, they are valuable to me and I get to wake up to them again tomorrow.”

To increase the likelihood of achieving your goals write them down and go one step further and write them down daily. Finally, especially at the beginning it is important to just show up. For example, at the beginning of reaching a new weight loss goal, instead of saying you have to go to the gym for one hour five days a week, try telling yourself that you just have to show up at the gym five days a week, what you do afterwards doesn’t matter. More often than not, once you actually show up, you are likely to move forward with the work. The initial resistance is the hardest part to get through.



How to Achieve Your Goals

"Whatever your goal may be, make things simple for yourself."

You've narrowed down and clearly articulated your top goals. Now you're ready to work towards achieving them. However, there are all kinds of hidden forces that make our goals easier or harder to achieve. You need to align your environment with your goals and ambitions if you want to make progress and meaningful achievements. For example, if you stock your pantry with junk food, when you are hungry or bored and looking for something to eat, you will likely reach for the junk food. Likewise if you're trying to get through a book, you're much more likely to pick it up if you put it on your bedside table than if you have it kept away somewhere on a bookshelf where it can easily be forgotten.

Here are some tricks to Increase the Likelihood of Achieving your Goals:

Make things Simple for Yourself. Whatever your goal may be, make things simple for yourself. If you're trying to start a running practice, try sleeping in your running t-shirt and putting your running shoes beside your bed at night. When you wake up, you simply have to go. Or if you're trying to lose weight, get rid of any junk food or food that you tend to overeat stocked in your house.

Motivation. Read or listen to something daily that motivates you towards reaching your goals and ultimately becoming the person you want to be. Whether it's an excerpt from a biography of someone you've admired who's achieved your goal, or a podcast about that specific topic. Continue to learn and listen to inspiring material.

Visualisation. All top performers, across professions, understand the importance of picturing themselves succeeding in their minds before they actually do in reality. This is because visualisation is extremely effective when harnessed and used correctly.





Visualise for Success

Consider these three examples:

Boxing legend Muhammad Ali often stressed the importance of seeing himself victorious long before the actual fight. Ali used to mentally rehearse every fight he had in his mind many times before stepping into the ring. He would see himself at the end of a fight with the referee declaring him the winner and the champion. He would imagine hearing the crowd chanting his name and celebrating his victory. He paid a lot of attention to detail with his visualisation. He would tell his opponent when he was going to win the fight, predicting which round he would be declared the winner. As a result of his visualisation practice, he was extremely well prepared when he stepped into the ring both physically and mentally.

As a struggling young actor, Jim Carrey used to picture himself being the greatest actor in the world. At one point, he took a blank check and wrote out \$10 million dollars to himself for acting services rendered and dated it for Thanksgiving 1995. He carried that check in his wallet at all times and looked at it every morning, visualising receiving \$10 million dollars. Five years after he wrote the check to himself and right before Thanksgiving 1995, he found out that he was going to make \$10 million dollars from the movie "Dumb and Dumber."

Michael Jordan was another wildly successful person who consistently used the power of visualisation and visualised his name on the team list whenever he felt like giving up. It reminded him of when he was younger, and how he envisioned having his name appear on the team list before being drafted into the NBA.

These top performers, and many others, have mastered the technique of positive visualisation and publicly credit it as a success tactic. Start every day by visualising and feeling yourself achieving the goal you are trying to achieve. The more vivid you can be, the better it will work for you.

Start thinking of your personal goals in life. Ideally, spend about 10 to 15 minutes picturing yourself achieving each one. Get as detailed as possible and feel it actually happening. Picture how you will feel and what you will do once you reach your goal. How will this change the course of your life? Again, the more detailed, the better. If 10 to 15 minutes feels hard, remember, progress over perfection. Simply start the habit of putting together a positive vision into your everyday life. Even if it's only for one minute per day, visualise yourself succeeding, achieving every goal and completing every task. You will no doubt feel the benefits and likely be encouraged to spend more time on visualisation.



Closing Thoughts

Let these tactics motivate you and propel you forward towards your goal. The bottom line is this: Goals are not easy to achieve. By identifying the right goals for the right reasons, narrowing them down and prioritising them accordingly, writing them down and then setting yourself up for success by using techniques like visualisation, you are much more likely to achieve them and live the life of your dreams.

We hope you found this guide on goal setting helpful and inspiring. If you're looking for more ideas on how to set and achieve goals and success, we've compiled a list of more articles below.

- [How to be Successful](#)
- [The 15 Minute Routine Anthony Trollope Used to Write 40+ Books](#)
- [The Goldilocks Rule: How to Stay Motivated in Life and in Business](#)
- [What Successful People do Differently](#)



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The types of areas we cover are: career coaching, life coaching, business coaching, startup coaching, mindfulness coaching, personal training, functional medicine, nutrition coaching, health coaching and much more.

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