

How To Set Goals

You have to decide what you want first of all. The problem with so many people is that they do not know what they really want. Setting your goals requires you to make a decision about what you want in life, and determine when you want to have achieved that thing. In other words you must put a deadline to what you currently want. Get clear about what you want. Have a good plan of attack. Ask yourself:

- What do I know about this?
- What information do I have?
- What information do I need? Where can I get it?
- What skills do I need to master?
- What other resources should I use?
- Is this the best way to do it, or is there some other way?

Start small, but keep walking. Goals don't necessarily have to be big ones. When you set your goal too high, you might find it too overwhelming and time consuming and just give up, or make another one, just as big. It's akin to quitting cold turkey – there are setbacks.

Set goals in small increments, complete with time, dates, amount, some details. If you tell yourself, "I'm going to be an opera singer" and then sit around and wait for it to suddenly happen, you could be waiting all your life. Start with singing lessons for a month, and then a year and expose yourself to opera music. You can then progress to more singing lessons year after year. By breaking down your goals in smaller, workable units, you are more likely to make them come true. Remember, even the great ones had to start somewhere.

Be positive when stating your goals. Instead of saying, "I am not going to miss my exercise routine today," say "I'm really busy, so I'll probably just make time for 20 minutes on the treadmill." Stating your goal positively will help you view it as a good thing to do, and not as a byproduct of what you had to avoid.

Spread out your goals. So maybe we do have certain general goals that apply to all areas of our lives like, "I want to be successful" or "I want to be rich" but those would seem as far away as the Niagara Falls viewed from Hawaii. Instead, try making tiny goals for different aspects of your life, one or two for each, even more if you like. These areas are: family and home, career, social, physical, mental and spiritual. If you say, "I want to be a successful dad," then try to make goals towards the development of your family life while still keeping an eye out for ways to improve your career and other areas of your life. Don't underestimate yourself. It's tempting to sometimes just slack off, or let yourself off too easy. If you want to write the definitive American novel, then don't try to churn out just a page or two a day when you know you are more than capable of writing five pages, even ten. The fear of failure is sometimes to blame for setting our goals too low. How often have we said, "I don't really want to volunteer for that project 'cause I might screw it up. And then my colleagues will make fun of me."

Remember that some fears are unfounded. How do you know you'll actually ruin it? And how do you know for sure your coworkers will laugh at your effort? If you try to reason with your fears, more often than not, you'll realize that there really is no reason for you to be reluctant and that in fact, you can do it.

Write it down. Putting your goal down on paper is more than just memorizing it. You are actually confirming your willingness to make it come true. A written list of goals is an effective reminder of what you need to do and once you're done, a good review of your accomplishment. A simple list on a piece of notebook paper is fine, or using a computer program to really jazz it up works just as well. You may want to hang it up somewhere, as a constant reminder to work toward your goals: inside your closet, the back of your medicine cabinet door, or on your bulletin board near your desk.

Affirm it. Affirmation is really more than writing down, "I am going to buy my \$750,000 home by Christmas" twenty times. It's actually being conscious not only of your thought processes, but also of your acts during the day. If you're trying to save money and then you pass by a shop window where a great pair of shoes seems to have your name on it, think, "If I buy those shoes, would I be making my goal of saving easier? Will I be able to meet my deadline if I splurge just this once? A few months from now if I don't meet my deadline because I didn't save enough, would I feel good about it?"

Stop procrastinating. So you've heard this before. Big deal. Well, it is. Time wastage is one of the greatest crimes in history. If Henry Ford put off studying and tinkering with machines for another time, someone else would have improved on automobiles and he wouldn't have gone down in history as a pioneer. If you're used to procrastination, being bullheaded about a goal can seem scary at first. Try to set a schedule and then reward yourself each time you meet it.

Start inculcating the habit of liking something. The most difficult thing is to LIKE something useful. For example we may like that particular model, star, lazing around with friends, to impress the opposite sex etc...but do they give us any long term returns? They just **look jazzy for a small period of time and again life is as usual, that which has no achievement.** Our mind generally rejects any conscious attempt to focus on any worthwhile goal. Some really lucky souls subconsciously liked these worthwhile goals and made it big. Many of us focus subconsciously on these petty things such as entertainment, celebrities etc...and when time comes for focusing on big ones we back out because we have an already loaded negative image of that goal. It is simply a misinterpreted relativity. No reason to feel worthless before a big goal just because we have been **LIKING** petty goals. You need to think big, when you are setting goals, think great thoughts. You must also crystallize your thinking, make it clear to you first, then write it down.

Plan ahead, so you can get ahead.