

Top 10 Tips on Goal Setting

1. Write it down

Give yourself permission to set the goals that you want to achieve. Give yourself permission to over-succeed, to learn the hard way, the fast way, or the slow way.

Goals are S M A R T E R. It is important that you write your goals such that they reflect all elements of the SMARTER acronym.

- Be specific. When you write your goal or goals down, be absolutely precise about exactly what you want. For example, what does it mean if you write down 'I want to be rich'? How do you know that you are on the path to achieving your goal? In the timeframe set, how will you review exactly what you are aiming for? Therefore it is important to be specific and write down, for example, I want to earn £1,000,000 per year.
- Make your goal(s) measurable. It is important to be able to accurately measure your achievement, once you have completed your goal. For example, 'I want to lose weight', does not tell you how much weight you want to lose, whereas 'I want to lose 10kgs in weight' does tell you how much weight you want to lose and is measurable. When you sit down to analyse your achievements, you will know that you have achieved this goal by the measurement you set as part of the initial goal.
- Achievable / Action-oriented. It is important to choose a goal that you can achieve. A goal that is easy to achieve is one that you probably will not achieve as there is no excitement in the completion. A goal that is large and feels overwhelming probably won't be achieved, unless it is broken down into management actions or tasks, all working towards achieving the one large overall goal. We have all heard the saying 'if you fail to plan, you are planning to fail.' Well this is true – if you do not develop your plan (as discussed in tip 8) you may not achieve your goal.
- Realistic. Realistic does not mean that you can easily achieve your goal; it means that you are setting a goal that may stretch you, but is achievable. You may need to do some learning, or set aside specific times, for example. If your goal is not challenging, is too easy to achieve, you may get bored easily and either not achieve it or when you do, not feel a sense of achievement. In the same way, setting a goal that is so challenging that, without breaking it down, it becomes virtually impossible to achieve may give you a sense of not being able to achieve your own goals. Setting a goal to lose 10kgs next week in a healthy manner is not achievable, but setting a goal to lose 1kg next week is.

"You have to set goals that are almost out of reach. If you set a goal that is attainable without much work or thought, you are stuck with something below your true talent and potential." **Steve Garvey**

- Time-frame. When do you want to achieve your goal? Setting a time-frame will allow you to know when you have achieved your goal. It is on this date and at this time that you will be able to measure the success of your goal. Having a time-frame allows you to set your milestones – for example, a goal with a time-frame of three years from today, can be broken down into six-monthly, three-monthly, monthly and/or weekly goals.

"Whoever wants to reach a distant goal must take small steps." **Helmut Schmidt**



- Exciting. Do you find that some goals are easier to reach than others? Are tedious, boring goals hard for you to finish? Is there a relationship with the level of excitement of a goal and the probability of completion? I think there is.

“You measure the size of the accomplishment by the obstacles you had to overcome to reach your goals.” **Booker T. Washington**

- Recorded. Writing down your goals in short focused sentences encompassing all areas of the SMARTER acronym allows you to clearly focus on your goals, in the same way in which we use road maps to determine our route when driving to a new destination.

“Your goals are the road maps that guide you and show you what is possible for your life.” **Les Brown**

2. List the benefits to yourself

“What is the real purpose behind your goal and what will that mean to you? Are you truly willing to make the effort?” **Teresa Ryan**

Unless you are clear about your reasons for achieving the goal(s) you have defined, are you are not really willing to make the effort, then either modify your goal so that it is workable for you as well as important to you, or choose a different goal.

Take this opportunity to write down the benefits you will get from achieving your goal(s) and the reasons you have selected this specific goal(s).

3. Affirmations

Affirmations work! They expand your thinking and shift your perspective. Take this opportunity to document the affirmation(s) you can say out aloud that will make you feel absolutely incredible, in support of your goal(s).

4. Where are you today?

It is important to analyse where you are today in relation to your goal(s). Using techniques like the SWOT analysis will allow you to fully understand your Strengths, your Weaknesses, your Opportunities, and your Threats. It is important to identify each element of the SWOT analysis including the obstacles and risks – these can be captured in the threats element of SWOT.

5. Identify investments and sacrifices

Take this opportunity to list out all the investments you will need to make in order to achieve your goal(s). Investments include items like time and money.

Take this opportunity to list out any sacrifices that you will need to make in order to achieve your goal(s). Sacrifices include items like giving up time with your family.

6. Levels of knowledge

It is important to understand what knowledge, skills and information that you have; and what you need to gain in order to achieve your goal(s). Take a moment or two to list out the knowledge and/or skills and/or information that you need to gain in order to achieve your goal(s).

7. Support

What resources do you need to assist you? List out all the people who you would need; the technology that you would need; and any other resources.

“You have to know what you want to get it.” **Gertrude Stein**



8. Design and develop your plan

“Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now.” **Alan Lakein**

It is important that you develop your plan, identify your milestone and take one action (however big or small) every single day, until you reach your goal(s).

It is in this step that you will use all the information found in the previous tips.

List in chronology order each milestone that you need to reach. Once these are clear, set against each milestone it's target date for achievement. Now that the milestones are clear, break each milestone down into it's individual tasks, activities, learnings and actions that you need to complete to achieve the milestone. It is important that the early milestones are broken down into detail now.

Take this opportunity to add the task to make reminders for not only your goal(s) but also for your milestones. Think about where these reminders should be – whatever way this works for you will be important, as these reminders will keep you on your toes.

As you define each task and activity, think about what achieving this goal is teaching you. It is important that you capture the learning. Think about how each element of learning can be incorporated in future tasks, activities, and learning.

“Man's mind, once stretched by a new idea, never regains its original dimensions.”
Oliver Wendell Holmes

9. Set your deadlines

In tip 1 you set your timeframe for your goal(s). It is important when you are determining your milestones, your tasks, and activities that you set clear, realistic, and achievable deadlines. Working through each milestone, each task and activity; will allow you to fully understand whether the timeframe you have set is achievable – if not, now is the time to review and update it.

Deadlines allow you to track your goals. There are a variety of ways in which you can track your goal – project plans, gantt charts, keeping a detailed journal, working with your coach. It is important that, whatever method you choose, you make sure that it works for you and follow it through.

10. Celebrate – how will you reward yourself?

Identify how you will recognise your achievement on the success of your goal(s). Once achieved – celebrate!

On achievement, take some time out to enjoy the satisfaction of your achievement. Learn from the experience, absorb the implications, and observe the progress you may have made towards achieving other goals.

Celebrating and rewarding yourself is motivating. It enforces the learning and the achievement. It helps us identify our success(es)!

The most important thing about goals, is having one.
Geoffry F. Abert

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