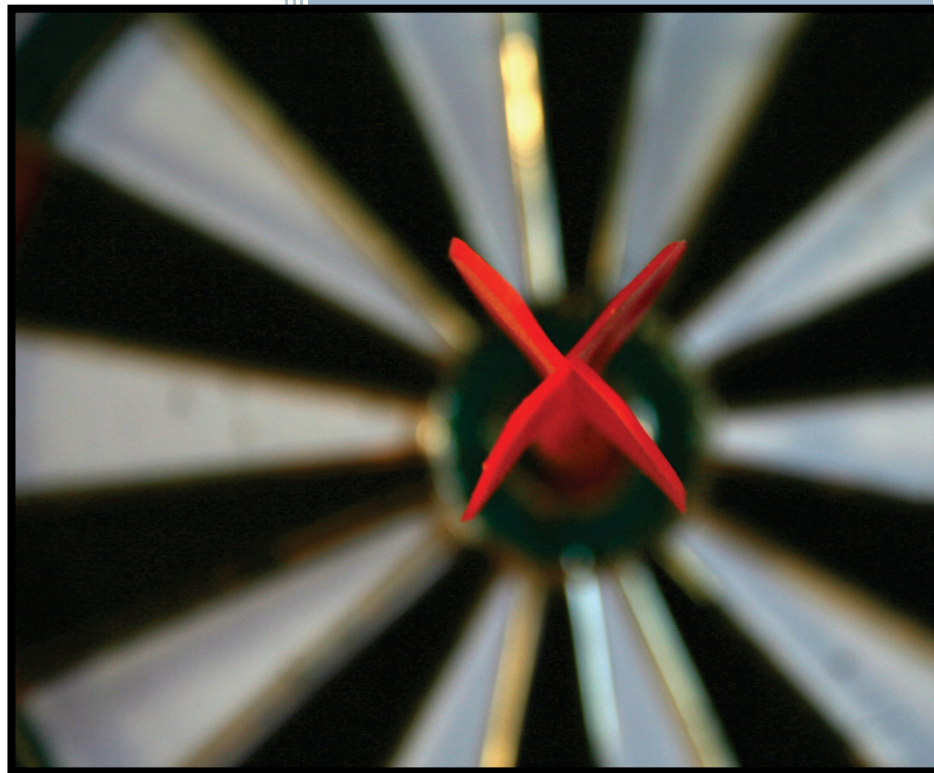


Goal Setting

002



LearnThis

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<http://LearnThis.ca>

Resource: 002

Introduction

GOALS

Introduction

OK, I wrote recently about [not setting any new year's resolutions](#) and that was really because resolutions are generally missed, forgotten, ignored and never adjusted. They are not written, planned or even thought about that clearly. They are VERY different from goals. So, I'm going to be exploring goals and goal setting, tracking and following goals for the next several articles and I wanted to just introduce a bit about goals and what a difference they can make in one's life.

Setting and achieving goals is a process, it is not a single event. I think this is the biggest mistake that people make with goals. They set them, leave them and eventually realize when its way to late, that they didn't achieve them and *voila*, they no longer believe that goals work. That is simply not true. Goals do work, but to make them work, you also have to work your goals. There is a process that is needed to attend to them, track them, adjust them and even to identify them in the first place. They don't just happen!

What are Goals Really Good For?

Plain and simple, **goals are the one fundamental key to success and achievement**. They are the key to accomplishment in every aspect of life. Living without having and utilizing goals means living in the wake of reaction and circumstance. Its living just to live instead of choosing how to live and why to live. Goals allow a person to focus their energy and life for purposes and [passions](#). They help to add value to a person's life by keeping them on track with what means most to them and they help a person to better understand themselves and what is important to them. Goals are a way to live with meaning and obsession for what brings the most joy and satisfaction to a person. They are something to [express passion](#) for, to motivate you and others who see your determinism and they simply bring to your life more of what you want.

Different aspects of Goals

So, the point these articles is that I'm going to reviews goals in a few separate sections. It's a big enough topic its easier to take in pieces and helpful if you are already experienced with goal setting but need some helpful tips in just one area. Goal setting really is important enough (and there are many blogs and series out there to show this) that it can be the sole focus for an entire site or longer series as well. I hope to cover a few specific things I've learned from using goals through my life and I want to present it in a short and actionable way so it is easy to help others

enhance their experiences with goals as well. So, I've broken down a few separate articles into the following sections:

- Setting and Identifying goals
- Tracking and Monitoring goals
- Completing and Closing goals

I believe goals should be focused on achieving life lasting skills, relationships and changed behaviors or habits, not simply temporary or material things. The reason I believe this is because temporary and material things don't really bring a true lasting satisfaction to anyone, so achieving them doesn't build on the value of goals nearly as much as goal accomplishment in those other areas. A goal that is remembered and lasts forever will be much higher valued and will re-enforce the value of goal setting in the first place, even more. So, through these goal setting articles, keep focused on behavior impact of your goals, things you want with a lasting impact, not just some new job, toy, or even some dollar figure. What will last for years to come? What will you be most proud of on your death bed? What will help you leave a legacy to others when you pass on? Those are the types of content for great goals and accomplishing them is truly something to be proud of.

Setting and Identifying



Setting goals isn't easy. Actually, settings great goals isn't easy. And that is what you want, great goals. Great goals are goals you really desire, have some passion for and will be happy making progress to meet them. If a goal is more about just the end result and you are afraid of what it takes to get there, it's not going to be a great goal and its likely not going to work either. So, it's best to look at setting great goals. And this article is about a way to actually go about doing this. I use it and it truly works.

Background to Identify Goals

Everyone makes decisions every day in life and everyday those decisions are based on the pain and pleasure that you believe that choice will lead to. That is exactly what leads to your decisions and its helps to really recognize this and to use it to your advantage in goal setting. The process outlined here is based on using those beliefs and really understanding the impact of them in the sense of pain and pleasure to you which will help to better identify the great goals for you!

Step 1: Brainstorm a Categorized Idea List

You first need to have some ideas and areas to explore your goals. It's great to simply do a brain dump here and write down everything that comes to mind. It helps to keep things categorized, and I use these categories for goal setting:

- Spiritual
- Personal
- Financial
- Career
- Stuff



Spend just a few minutes in each category writing down all the ideas you have as goals in those areas. If you don't have many, that is fine, just write down everything, its common to have lots in one or two categories and not much in others.

Step 2: Note the Pleasure and Pain Related to Each Goal

What is the pleasure you will experience in achieving your goal, what will it feel like, and how is that feeling going to help you or others? What kind of pleasures will you experience while working to obtain your goal? Note all these in point form under a pleasure heading for each of your goal ideas. This will take some time especially if you have a lot of ideas down. Make sure to think about the pleasure you will experience in getting it, having it and holding on to whatever that goal idea is. Think of how it will affect others in a pleasurable way.

Next, do the same thing but thinking of all the pain that will exist getting, having and holding onto the achievement of each goal idea. Write down the pain caused by the work involved, the risks if they will be painful, the pain you might experience to/from others in achieving your goal.

Step 3: What Belief Backs Each Goal

Use the Pain and Pleasures in a positive way. You can do this by turning a current pain into something pleasurable by stating that the goal will help you to avoid certain pain. For example, this can work well in health and dieting goals since there is SO much pain to get to the goal. Turning this around in a more positive way, lists all the pains that can be avoided like health problems, self doubt and low esteem, feeling better by achieving the goal. Not only that, but if you don't achieve the goal, then there will be even more pain caused by further health problems, feeling bad about yourself and still not being able to control your health. These can be very powerful driving forces for goals and you should use as many of them as you can.

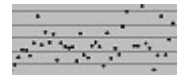
A goal is about a target or end, not a description of how to get there. Which means that you really need a belief as the basis to build a strong and compelling to do whatever it takes to get to the goal, the target. You need to truly convince yourself why that goal is important to you and have the believe to build on it. A belief in something won't shatter when one step fails, you don't stop because of little or slow progress and you won't easily change your mind from outside influence.

That's the reason why every goal should have some deeper beliefs feeding them. Maybe these are moral beliefs or simply beliefs about happiness. Perhaps they are beliefs about relationships or how others will see you, whatever they are, a belief is powerful and can really drive goals, much more than simply thinking that you want something. Or wishing for something or even being hopeful without a real reason. Those types of goals don't last when things get tough and difficult to achieve.

Record the beliefs you have that reinforce each goal. You may also have beliefs that hold you back from achieving your goals. Turn these around into positives and set your mind on the beliefs you will have when you reach your target.

Step 4: Rate Your Goals

Put a number from 0-10 beside each of the goals to indicate which ones you want the most, 10 being the highest. Next, make another column and put a number from 0-10 to indicate how easy the goals are for you to achieve them. 10 being the easiest. And finally, rate each one again with a 0-10 on how strong your beliefs are that backs each of the goals, 10 being the highest.



Add up the numbers from each goal which is a score from 0-30. This is an easy way to get on the fast track to picking the great goals, which are the ones you desire most, have true beliefs in and are the easiest to achieve). Pick the top 2-3 goals (highest numbers after adding them up) and make these your focus or primary goals. Put the next 5 goals or so on your list as well which will be your secondary goals. It's much easier to only have one or two goals to focus on so keeping the priority ones you main focus will help achieve them faster. Often some of your goals will relate which is great, since you might be able to work on multiple goals at a time.

So, these are your goal topics. Next is to clarify these goals and finishing settings them.

Step 5: Clarify Your Goals

Clarifying your goals simply involves writing them in a way to make them useful. The method I recommend for this is simple and called MT goals, which stands for measurable and time based goals. Measurable means you must have something you can measure your progress and completion by.

Without this measure, a goal is vague and not really useful at all.

Measurable is something with a number or a simple yes or no answer. This is critical since most people's goals fail because they don't have a simple way to measure completion and progress. Make sure your goal has a way to check for completion. For example, here is one of my goals from a previous year:



Have a reading speed of at least 500 wpm by July 1, 2007.

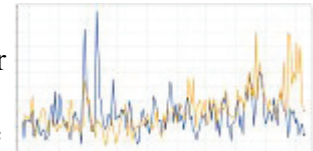
It's simple and easy to measure. There are software tools, online websites or you can simply count words and test your own speed. The other point in the example goal you can see is the time based part. It states when the goal will be accomplished by a specific time. This is crucial. Without a time, you have no urgency and nothing to push yourself for. State a specific date, not some implied time, or relative time, just pick a single day and decide on that day to complete your goal by.

The simpler your goals are the better. They don't need to be elaborate, long or complex in any way. You know what they are and you already have the ones with meaning to you and in categories you care about. Try to avoid using terms like improve, increase, develop, reduce, help, change unless you have a specific number attached that you can measure. You can usually just replace those words anyway by stating the target you want, not a relative change.

Goal Setting: Tracking and Monitoring

GOALS Tracking and Monitoring

Tracking goals is an ongoing process, not a onetime thing. This is the time when you are actively working on your goals and it is generally over some long period of time. During that time, it's important that goals are not just forgotten. They need to be looked at on a regular basis. The more you think about your goals, the more you enhance the related beliefs and the more attention you will put to achieving these goals. I have some recommendations here for working towards your goals as well for tracking and monitoring them.



Working On Your Goals

The next important thing to do for working on your goals is pick the absolute simplest thing you can and make it the next thing you can work on. It should be something that you can do immediately (today or tomorrow). It might be as simple as looking up a contact name or finding some article or reference material, but that in itself is progress and a step towards your goal. Come up with a list of these simple things that will lead to progress towards your goal and write as many of them as you can think of. Making a habit of doing simple tasks towards your goal is very important and a great way to ensure that your focus will last without feeling overwhelmed by the work and that you have an impossible goal.

Make sure you keep tasks simple so you don't get bogged down by any one long task and break them into pieces if you need to so you can always work on some small part. Keep a running list. Update it frequently so you don't run out of things to work on. As mentioned above, you should

focus on your goals on a regular basis and spend that time planning, reviewing and working on the tasks to help towards your achievement.

Some people find it helpful to use a goal buddy that they can share their plan and tasks list and hold them accountable to so that they are responsible to get things down not only for themselves, but also for the other person since they will be expecting it. Try this out to see if it works for you. Sometimes even just telling someone else and reporting to them on how it's going is enough to keep you working with extra inspiration. A mentor here is perfect for helping to track and monitor your goals.

This may be daily, weekly or perhaps only monthly. The preference highly depends on each person and on the goals themselves. I recommend weekly, no matter what the goals are, since most people can remember tasks and items from about a week, but not much more.

Progress is Success!

Progress. The one and only thing that really matters for goal achievement. Continuous, steady progress will lead to accomplished goals. You will never get there without progress. This is why the small tasks work so well since you can easily remind yourself when you review your goals of the success and progress you are already having towards your goal if you are taking it on in small pieces.

Taking a simple action everyday or every week is a great way to have success in your whole goal setting process and it will definitely continue to inspire you to keep going strong with it. Keep that list of items going and keep them small enough that every time you review your goals, you have at least one thing to check off as being done.

Is Changing a Goal Cheating?

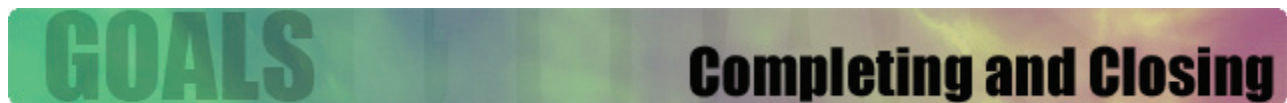
Next, it's important to carefully consider your goal progress and be honest with where you are at. It's even a good idea to change your goals when you are falling behind. It's no use to beat yourself up for falling off-track or getting behind on things, simply change your goal, reset, and starting making progress again. This is where most people fail who do set goals, they seem unwilling to change their goals, get farther and farther behind and eventually just give up. Don't do that, just change your goal.

Adjusting a goal might mean changing the time base of it, changing the goal itself to make it easier for you or even eliminating a goal altogether. Perhaps, just the way you measure a goal needs to be refined so you can tell when you've really accomplished it. Maybe your ideas and priorities have changed. After all, people's minds and circumstances change all the time and therefore, so should their goals. If you've changed your beliefs about a goal, adjust it and make it real again. Remove some goals or add new ones. It's perfectly valid to adjust your goals constantly and actually, it will drastically help you to focus on the right goals that really do mean

something, because those topics don't just fade away; irrelevant and temporary ones definitely do. Is it cheating? No way, its part a proper goal setting process.

So, keep reviewing goals regularly, recognize progress towards your goal and feel free to change things to make them more appropriate.

Completing and Closing



Since your now reviewing your goals on a regular basis, the next step is to actually complete them and close them out. Completing them at this point is simple, it's a matter of keeping to the measure you set for that goal and since you've kept it up to date and accurate, the measure should be simple. It's as simple as have you reached the goal yet? Yes or no. If not, then you're still working towards it and really still in the tracking and monitoring step. If you have reached your goal, hurray! Celebrate! Take note of what you've accomplished and keep your record of this goal with the rest of goal tracking you do. It's a great motivator to be able to review the goal success and achievement from completed goals.

Enhance Your Goals

It may not need to be a specific new goal to set, but it certainly can be, and that is to keep your goal active by enhancing it. This might mean doing some measure again or changing the goal a bit to continue to build on what you've already accomplished. Perhaps this is simple to keep whatever you accomplished going and not simply loose it now that you reached that point. If this is a behavior goal (and it really should be) then making it a habit and keeping that accomplishment active is very important. Great goals should accomplish more than just a single event or measuring point and root some kind of change, it's just important to ensure that change lives on after the goal as well.

Help Someone Else Achieve a Similar Goal

A fantastic way to keep the result of your goal alive is to help someone else accomplish a similar goal. This might be by encouraging them, being a resource to help teach them, give them advice or perhaps mentoring them in similar goal setting steps. All these things can be very rewarding and helpful for you not to forget your goal or changed behavior as well as being able to help someone else achieve their goals.

I believe that goals are only accomplished by truly driven individuals and practicing goals instead of bragging about them is a lot more valuable and less egocentric. Modesty is important if you want to influence others and convince them of how you feel or what you could help with for similar accomplishments. Tell your story of your goals, but make sure it includes the struggle and story of how you felt while working on them. Your doubts, your beliefs that backed them and even the hard work to achieve it. If you had to extend the goal or change it to make it easier, share that with people you tell, it's the best way for them to empathize with the goal setting process and realize it's not simple. It's hard work, worthwhile if you believe in it and it can definitely make a difference in your life.

Learn From This Goal

It's wise to review the process you used to complete this goal and consider all the areas that really helped or hindered you to keep making progress. Did you have to adjust your goal often? Why? Take a critical look at where things went well and need to be improved as part of your goal setting process. This is just a starting point, but you do need to explore your process to ensure you have success completing others goals and more in the future. Have you learned anything from your goal that is a new belief you never had? How can that be used to feed progress with your other goals? Make some notes for each goal you complete and review them to continue to improve your process.

Next Step after Completing a Goal

So, now that your goal is off your list you've got a couple options. Focus more on your other goals to achieve them as well or look at setting a new goal in that category. Go through the process of identifying goals again and tackle the next area you have a strong belief and desire to change behavior. Add some initial tasks for that goal and ensure you continue to work on others at the same time.

So, I hope you can seriously put some effort into your own goals and that you can make good use of this series. I hope that this is helpful to you as I know this process has been very helpful to me. Please, feel free to ask any questions or comments, I would love to continue to help you accomplish your goals!

That's All!

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