



# GOAL SETTING

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# Contents

**3**

**Smart Goals**

**5**

**Set Goals In Writing**

**5**

**Make An Action Plan**

**6**

**Further Tips For Setting Your Goals**

**7**

**Stick With It!**



# SMART Goals

When you set goals for yourself, it is important that they motivate you: This means making sure that they are important to you, and that there is value in achieving them. If you have little interest in the outcome, or they are irrelevant given the larger picture, then the chances of you putting in the work to make them happen are slim. Motivation is key to achieving goals.

## Set SMART Goals

You have probably heard of SMART goals already. But do you always apply the rule? The simple fact is that for goals to be powerful, they should be designed to be SMART. There are many variations of what SMART stands for, but the essence is this – goals should be:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Relevant
- Time Bound

## Set Specific Goals

Your goal must be clear and well defined. Vague or generalized goals are unhelpful because they don't provide sufficient direction. Remember, you need goals to show you the way. Make it as easy as you can to get where you want to go by defining precisely where you want to end up.

## Set Measurable Goals

Include precise amounts, dates, and so on in your goals so you can measure your degree of success. If your goal is simply defined as "To reduce expenses" how will you know when you have been successful? In one month's time if you have a 1 percent reduction or in two years' time when you have a 10 percent reduction? Without a way to measure your success you miss out on the celebration that comes with knowing you have actually achieved something.

## **Set Attainable Goals**

Make sure that it's possible to achieve the goals you set. If you set a goal that you have no hope of achieving, you will only demoralize yourself and erode your confidence.

However, resist the urge to set goals that are too easy. Accomplishing a goal that you didn't have to work hard for can be anticlimactic at best, and can also make you fear setting future goals that carry a risk of non-achievement. By setting realistic yet challenging goals, you hit the balance you need.

These are the types of goals that require you to "raise the bar" and they bring the greatest personal satisfaction.

## **Set Relevant Goals**

Goals should be relevant to the direction you want your life and career to take. By keeping goals aligned with this, you'll develop the focus you need to get ahead and do what you want. Set widely scattered and inconsistent goals, and you'll fritter your time (and your life) away.

## **Set Time-Bound Goals**

Your goals must have a deadline. Again, this means that you know when you can celebrate success.

When you are working on a deadline, your sense of urgency increases and achievement will come that much quicker.



# Set Goals In Writing

The physical act of writing down a goal makes it real and tangible. You have no excuse for forgetting about it.

As you write, use the word “will” instead of “would like to” or “might.”

For example,

“I will reduce my outgoing expenses by 10 percent this year,” not “I would like to reduce my outgoing expenses by 10 percent this year.”

The first goal statement has power and you can “see” yourself reducing expenses, the second lacks passion and gives you an excuse if you get sidetracked.



# Make An Action Plan

This step is often missed in the process of goal setting.

You get so focused on the outcome that you forget to plan all of the steps that are needed along the way. By writing out the individual steps, and then crossing each one off as you complete it, you’ll realize that you are making progress towards your ultimate goal.

This is especially important if your goal is big and demanding, or long-term.

# Further Tips For Setting Your Goals

**State each goal as a positive statement** – Express your goals positively – “Execute this technique well” is a much better goal than “Don’t make this stupid mistake.”

**Be precise** – Set precise goals, putting in dates, times and amounts so that you can measure achievement. If you do this, you’ll know exactly when you have achieved the goal, and can take complete satisfaction from having achieved it.

**Set priorities** – When you have several goals, give each a priority. This helps you to avoid feeling overwhelmed by having too many goals, and helps to direct your attention to the most important ones.

**Write goals down** – This crystallizes them and gives them more force.

**Keep operational goals small** – Keep the low-level goals that you’re working towards small and achievable. If a goal is too large, then it can seem that you are not making progress towards it. Keeping goals small and incremental gives more opportunities for reward.

**Set performance goals, not outcome goals** – You should take care to set goals over which you have as much control as possible. It can be quite dispiriting to fail to achieve a personal goal for reasons beyond your control!

In business, these reasons could be bad business environments or unexpected effects of government policy. In sport, they could include poor judging, bad weather, injury, or just plain bad luck.

If you base your goals on personal performance, then you can keep control over the achievement of your goals, and draw satisfaction from them.

**Set realistic goals** – It’s important to set goals that you can achieve. All sorts of people (for example, employers, parents, media, or society) can set unrealistic goals for you. They will often do this in ignorance of your own desires and ambitions.



# Stick With It!

Remember, goal setting is an ongoing activity, not just a means to an end.

Build in reminders to keep yourself on track, and make regular time-slots available to review your goals. Your end destination may remain quite similar over the long-term, but the action plan you set for yourself along the way can change significantly. Make sure the relevance, value, and necessity remain high.

Set up cues to keep yourself on track, and set aside time to audit the progress of your goal. Over time, your final destination may stay similar, yet the activity plan you are setting for yourself can change. Ensure that the significance, worth, and need, remain high.

Goal setting is substantially more than just saying that you need something to occur. Your odds of success decrease if you cannot link 'what you want' with 'why you want it.' By adhering to the platinum rules of setting goals, you can easily set goals and reap the satisfaction that comes with realizing that you have accomplished what you set out to do.



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