

How To Set Goals

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO HAVE GOALS?

When people have goals to guide them, they are happier and achieve more than they would without having them. Goals are important for the following reasons:

- Goals provide focus. Having no goals is like going on a trip without a map: When there is no destination, vision, or plan, most people tend to drift.
- Goals enable you to measure progress. It is impossible to measure how well you've performed if you have set no goals against which you measure your progress.
- Goals are motivating. When there is a target, people feel driven to meet it.
- Goals enhance productivity. Having goals makes people more productive than they would be without having them.
- Goals enhance self-esteem. Setting and achieving goals makes people feel good about themselves.
- Goals increase commitment. When people have a vision (goal) of where they want to go, they tend to feel a greater sense of commitment than they would without having the vision.
- Goals motivate groups. Having group goals increases the sense of teamwork. This is for the good, because teams tend to be more creative and productive than individuals.

FOR WHAT LIFE AREAS SHOULD I SET GOALS?

You can have goals that cover several different areas of your life. In the following list are some examples of life areas. Choose five or six of these areas and use the guidelines in this handout to write some goals for yourself.

Knowledge / Service / Wardrobe / Adventure / Contribution / Spiritual / Fantasy

Family / Church / Emotional / Career / Politics / Hobbies / Travel / Community

Interest / Financial / Clubs / Study / Income / Relationship

HOW DO I WRITE GOALS THAT WILL MOTIVATE ME?

The best goals are fully defined visions of how you want things to be. The more specific, measurable, and challenging the goals are, the more motivated people will be in attaining them. Good goals have these five elements:

1. They are expressed with action verbs.
2. They are written in specific language.
3. They specify measurable outcomes.
4. They challenge you without being unreachable.
5. They specify completion dates.

Let's look at each of these elements and some examples of how they can be used.

Necessary Element	Example:
Using action verbs:	Paint house
	Reduce weight
	Enroll in college classes
Using specific language:	Paint all bedrooms
	Reduce weight to 130 pounds
	Enroll in English 201
Specifying measurable outcomes:	Paint one bedroom each week in February, to be completed by February 28
	Reduce weight to 130 pounds by March 15
	Enroll in English 201 for the spring term at the community college
Challenging you without being unreachable:	Paint one bedroom each week in February, to be completed by February 28; not paint two rooms each week in February, with the entire house to be completed by February 15
	Reduce weight to 130 pounds by March 15; not reduce weight by 20 pounds in 1 month
	Enroll in English 201 for the spring term at the community college; not enroll in five classes and audit two classes for the spring term at the community college
Specifying completion dates:	Paint one bedroom each week in February, to be completed by February 28
	Reduce weight to 130 pounds by March 15
	Enroll in English 201 for the spring term at the community college by January 1

Now try some for yourself. Remember to include all five elements:

1. Using action verbs
2. Using specific language
3. Specifying measurable outcomes
4. Challenging you without being unreachable
5. Specifying completion dates

MY GOALS:

Life area:

Goal:

Life area:

Goal:

Life area:

Goal:

WHERE CAN I GO FOR MORE INFORMATION?

Blair, Gary Ryan. *Goal Setting Forms: Tools to Help You Get Ready, Get Set, & Go for Your Goals.* Palm Harbor, FL: The Goals Guy, 2000.

Blair, Gary Ryan. *Goal Setting 101: How to Set and Achieve a Goal.* Palm Harbor, FL: The Goals Guy, 2000.

Smith, Douglas. *Make Success Measurable: A Mindbook–Workbook for Setting Goals and Taking Action.* New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1999.