

Key Points

Goal setting is an important method of:

- Deciding what is important for you to achieve in your life
- Separating what is important from what is irrelevant or a distraction
- Motivating yourself
- Building your self-confidence based on successful achievement of goals

Goal Setting Tips

- State each goal as a positive statement
- Be precise
- Set priorities
- Write goals down
- Keep operational goals small
- Set performance goals, not outcome goals
- Set realistic goals

Personal Goal Setting

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Starting to Set Personal Goals

- First, create the concept of what you want to do with your life and what large-scale goals you want to achieve.
- Second, break these down into the smaller targets that you must hit to reach your lifetime goals.
- Finally, once you have your plan, start working to achieve it.

Your Lifetime Goals

Lifetime goals give you the overall perspective that shape all other aspects of your decision making.

To give a broad, balanced coverage of all important areas in your life, try to set goals in some of these categories, or in categories of your own, where these are important to you:

- Artistic
- Attitude
- Career
- Education
- Family
- Financial
- Physical
- Pleasure
- Public service

Spend some time brainstorming these, and then select one goal in each category that best reflects what you want to do. Then consider trimming again so that you have a small number of really significant goals on which you can focus.

Starting to Achieve Your Lifetime Goals

- Once you have set your lifetime goals, set a 25 year plan of smaller goals that you should complete if you are to reach your lifetime plan.
- Then set a five year plan, one year plan, six month plan and one month plan of progressively smaller goals that you should reach to achieve your lifetime goals. Each of these should be based on the previous plan.
- Then create a daily to-do list of things that you should do today to work towards your lifetime goals. At an early stage, these goals may be to read books and gather information on the achievement of your goals. This will help you to improve the quality and realism of your goal setting.

SMART Goals

A useful way of making goals more powerful is to use the SMART acronym. While there are plenty of variants, SMART usually stands for:

S—Specific

M—Measurable

A—Attainable

R—Relevant

T—Time-bound

For example, instead of having “to sail around the world” as a goal, it is more powerful to say, “To have completed my trip around the world by December 31, 2015.”

Staying on Course

Once you have decided your first set of plans keep the process going by reviewing and updating your to-do list on a daily basis. Periodically review the longer term plans and modify them to reflect your changing priorities and experience.

Achieving Goals

- When you have achieved a goal, take the time to enjoy the satisfaction of success.
- Absorb the implications of the goal achievement and observe the progress you have made towards other goals.
- If the goal was a significant one, reward yourself appropriately.
- With the experience of having achieved this goal, review the rest of your goal plans:
 - If you achieved the goal too easily, make your next goals harder.
 - If the goal took a dispiriting length of time to achieve, make the next goals a little easier.
 - If you learned something that would lead you to change other goals, do so.
 - If you noticed a deficit in your skills despite achieving the goal, decide whether to set goals to fix this.
- Feed lessons learned back into your goal setting program.
- Remember that your goals will change as you get older.
- Adjust goals regularly to reflect growth in your knowledge and experience and if goals do not hold any attraction any longer, then let them go.