

## Successful Goal Setting



As a life and executive coach I do a lot of work with people around their goals. Setting goals puts you in the driver's seat, giving you the power to transform your life or take a company to another level. Successfully setting and executing goals is not rocket science but there is a tried and true way that works for my clients and me. Sticking to this program guarantees success. It doesn't matter whether your goals are personal or they are used to direct a large enterprise, the steps and the pitfalls are identical. I'll

take you through a quick tour. If you like, you can identify a goal of yours and do a test run of the system.

The steps to executing goals are simple, unambiguous and easy to follow and should be practiced every day. Skipping one step increases the odds that you won't realize your goal.

The first step to goal setting is to have absolute **belief and faith** in the process. If you don't believe you can absolutely transform your life and get what you want, then you might as well put down your pencil and do something else. If you are in doubt, look around you. Everything you can see began as a thought. If you identify something you really want, you can make it happen if want it badly enough.

**Visualize** what you want. Think of what you deeply desire in your life or where you want your company to be a year from now. What has to change for that to happen? What transformations need to take place? What do you need to know or learn? What spiritual, emotional, personal, financial, social or physical properties need to be addressed? The clearer you can get with each of these dimensions, brings your vision into sharp focus. The clearer you are about what you want, the easier it will be to focus on making it happen. Write down as many things as you can think about. Not being absolutely clear about your vision will make taking action very difficult.

**Get it down!** Writing down your goals is key to success. A 1953 Yale study followed 100 students to see how they ended up. Only 3% had written goals. Ten years later, this 3% was happier, more satisfied and had reached the goals they had set out to achieve. More importantly, the net worth of that 3% was greater than the rest of the 97% combined. By writing down your goals, you become a creator. Failure to write down

your goals often means you will forget them or won't focus on them, most likely like that other 97%.

If you have multiple goals, you may need to **chunk** elements of your vision into individual goals. Having a list of twenty or thirty objectives can be hard to keep track of and even more difficult to focus on. Chunking involves grouping "like" items together. For instance let's say you have goals around taking your business to the next level. You might chunk your goals into financial, marketing, organizational and so on. It's easier to focus on a few goals than a list of 20-odd items. Failure to chunk results in failure to focus and loss of direction.

The next step is to identify a **purpose** for each goal. Knowing why you want to achieve your goals is powerful. Identifying the purpose of your goal will help you instantly recognize why you want that particular goal and whether it's worth working toward.. Knowing why you want something furnishes motivation to see it through to the finish. After all, if the purpose of earning a million dollars is to put it in the bank to save for a rainy day, you probably won't be as motivated as if you need it to pay for your child's cancer treatment. Your purpose says a lot about you as a person and your goals.

The next step of goal setting is to **commit** to your goals. This might sound obvious to you but it's a step that has huge consequences when it is taken lightly. Write a few pages about why and how you are committing to each goal; why it's important to you, what it means to you, why the outcome is necessary and what are you going to do to make it happen. Without strong commitment you aren't likely to follow through.

**Stay focused.** By staying focused on your goals, you manifest. You may not know how you'll reach your goals but when you make a daily practice of focusing on your goals, they become easier to reach. The more you focus, the more people and things will come into your life that help make your goals a reality. Having your goals written down somewhere where you will see them each day is a good idea. Your mind will notice that there is a discrepancy between where you are now and where you want to be which will create pressure. Pressure is motivation to change. If you lose focus you can always bring it back. Without a regular practice of focusing on your goals you will get distracted by something and your goal will disappear.

The next step is to create a **plan of action**. Being really clear about what you want, knowing your purpose, writing your goals down, committing to them, and staying focused gives you the power of clarity to write down a list of action steps the need to be executed over the year. You may not know all the steps ahead of time but you will know the next steps that take you in that direction. Even if you don't know how you are going to do something, write it down and when the time comes, you will be surprised at the options that may appear. Having goals without a plan of action is like trying to complete a complex project without a project plan. There is too much going on, it's too

disorganized, you miss deadlines and you don't have priorities. Eventually you get frustrated and the project/goal fails or collapses under its own weight.

To show how committed you are to your goals, think of something you can do **right now** that will get you moving toward fulfilling your goal. Even if it's just making a phone call, do it now. You will be surprised how this simple step reinforces all the previous steps and gets you motivated and moving toward what you desire. Why wait? If you are not motivated to do something right now, how are you going to get motivated tomorrow?

To push through when things get tough, you will have to hold yourself **accountable** unless you bring in outside help like a coach. It makes sense to have someone besides yourself who can provide valuable feedback at critical junctures, like in the visualization stage. Some people tell their friends and family about their goals which gives them the accountability they need to stick to it. Once you start to achieve some success you will find it easier to keep motivated. Consider having a backup plan. What can you do if you get stuck for too long?

Make it part of your day to **review** your goals and take action. This will keep your goals alive and top of mind. By following these steps and practicing your goals each day, you have all the elements you need to succeed and achieve your goals. It isn't always easy to push through. Some days will be easier than others but if you keep focused on your goals you will be amazed at the progress you will make. Remember, almost everything begins as a thought. You can be what you imagine if you follow these simple goal-setting rules.

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February 22, 2011