

— GOING FROM — ***POINT A TO POINT B***

The No-Nonsense Guide To Setting Goals
So You Can ***Achieve Anything In Life***



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INTRODUCTION

Have you set important goals for yourself only to let them slowly slip away? How many New Year's resolutions have you made? How many have you actually kept? If you're like most people, when you think about it, you won't like the answers to those questions. I actually know people who don't have goals. They just go about their lives from day to day thinking, "This is my life. This is what I have to do. I may not like it, but I can't change it." It's definitely time for you to make a change for the better.

Ultimately, you are the only one who CAN change it. You hold all the cards. Of course, life can always hand you a "trump" card now and then, but if you have strong, realistic goals, you can get over the results of that trump card and move onto a wonderful, fulfilled person.

Life without goals is kind of like a ball on a Pin Ball machine. You give it a push and it bounces all over the place. It has highs and lows and big scores and low ones. It doesn't do what it wants. It just bounces back from hitting other things. The other things seem to be in more control than the ball. When the ball does finally go through the bottom it doesn't return. You don't want to let your life be that way. You don't want to just wander around letting other things push you around and into your grave. You need to fight back. You need to have good goals.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT TO SET GOALS



Goals are important in life for many reasons. Here are a few:
Below are 6 key reasons why setting goals is so important:

- **Helps you envision your future**—Where will you be in five years? Where would you like to be? If you don't know, how are you going to get there? You're working and working, going through life every day, and struggling to work for what everyone else wants. Doing what your boss says, listening to your friends, moving on as quickly as you can to nowhere.

Setting goals helps you verbalize what YOU want for a change. It gives you an opportunity to start working toward something that is going to make YOU happy. Do you actually like your job? You'd

be surprised at the number of people who don't, yet they continue to get up every day and go to work just because it pays the bills. The question should be...If you don't like it, what are you going to do to change it? If you do like it, what can you do to advance? Envision where you want to be, and then set a plan to get there. Look deep inside at the crystal ball within you and see exactly where you want to be and what you want to be doing. There's nothing wrong with working to pay the bills. It's something you should do. It's a question of doing something you like that pays the bills that's important.

It doesn't have to be something as big as a new job. Maybe you want to lose weight. Envision yourself 10 pounds lighter. Buy yourself something to wear that you absolutely love in a size smaller and put it where you can see it. Close your eyes and see yourself in it.

If you are working to save money for a car, envision yourself driving it. What kind is it? What color? Can you actually smell that "new car" smell in it? What features does it have? Dream it and set your mind on achieving it.

- **Gives you motivation**—When you're hungry, you have incentive to fix yourself something to eat. Then, you get to enjoy the food. It's simple, yet the basic principle for goal setting. Want something, do something about it, and reap the rewards. Whenever there's a need in your life, there will be motivation to fill that need. Setting a goal toward something will help you see what

life would be like if you got that goal. Therefore, it motivates you to move forward.

We all have “down” times where we seem to falter in the motivation department. Thinking of the goals we want to achieve—the rewards—can give us the motivation we need to get through these times. Our desire to achieve our goal motivates us to work toward it.

- **Keeps your focus on what’s important**—What things do you focus the most on in your life? Is it family, finances, or simply getting through the day? Wherever your focus is will be where you exert your time and energy. To focus on your work is, of course, important, but it shouldn’t be where your entire focus is. You need to be exerting some of your time and energy working toward things that make you happy. If you set goals, then you’ll know what is important to you, and be able to focus on them. In other words, you will be exerting your time and energy on yourself, and not others for a change.

You may have a general idea of what you would like to do “someday.” This “someday,” however, may never come around if you don’t narrow your focus. Decide what you need to do and set the goals to get there.

In baseball, if you want to hit a homerun, you have to keep your eyes on the ball. Watch the ball all the way to the plate. Watch it as you swing. Then, give it everything you’ve got. That’s what goals can do for you. They can help you keep your eyes on what’s

important and hit that homerun...reaching your goal. Whatever sport you like, getting a goal of some kind is necessary to win. They focus on getting that goal through the whole game. Life is like that. If you have that goal to focus on, you'll be able to reach your goal faster. After all, no one ever scored a touchdown by taking off running into the stands. That won't get them a goal. If you get sidetracked in life, it can cause you to fail at things. Keeping your eyes on what's important is imperative and setting a definite goal will help you do that.

- **Makes you accountable to yourself**—When you set a goal for yourself, you determine whether or not you reach it. You tell yourself you're going to do it, so you answer to yourself if you don't. It's up to you to make the action happen. Sure, there are outside forces that you can't prevent that may interfere, but ultimately, you are accountable to yourself!

Whatever goal you set, being accountable to yourself can motivate you. If you're like most people I know and hate to let people down, the one person you should hate letting down the most is YOU. This can make a difference in you.

Goals don't have to be major, life-altering goals. Maybe you've always wanted to go on a cruise. That is your new goal. How do you get there? That's the plan. Cut back one mocha latte—or any number of other things a day—and put the money aside. That's your plan. Once you've saved the money to go, you'll feel very good about yourself for reaching the goal. Not only that, you get the reward of actually going. If you don't save it, however, you feel

bad. You've let yourself down. Only you are accountable for your actions. Only you can change them.

- **Help you reach your potential**—How will you ever know what you can do in life if you don't try. Not having goals will keep you from growing. Your goals can help you broaden your horizons. You can experience many different things if you reach beyond what you can do now and strive for higher things. If you'd like to know if the grass is greener on the other side of the fence, look! If you'd like to see if your life could be more, look! Look deep within yourself, see what you can be, and go for it.

If the goal seems to be a little out of your reach, that's what a step ladder is for. Take the necessary steps to reach it. If losing 15 pounds seems impossible, lose five pounds at a time. Baby steps until you reach your ultimate goal. If you want to be your own boss some day, then prepare for it. Take the necessary classes or get the necessary experience in the field you're interested in. Don't just sit around and say, "If I was in charge..." Be in charge! Setting goals can help you achieve all of that because you'll have a clear vision. You'll also have a plan of action. Reaching your potential is so much easier when you know what you're reaching for, so reach high. Stretch that reach until you've become what you knew you could be.

- **Live life to the fullest**—Having goals and reaching them helps you live a much happier life. Instead of dreaming, you can actually be doing it. You'll be reaping the rewards of your goal setting, and feeling good about yourself. Setting goals and striving to reach

them helps you maximize your life. You've heard the saying, "You can do it if you put your mind to it." Just consider the fact that if you've dreamed it, you've set your mind on the goal. You know what it is. Now set your mind on what life would be like if you actually reached the goal. Once you've set your mind on that, don't give up until you get it. Then you'll be living life to the fullest.



You'd be surprised, but reaching one goal is often all it takes to motivate you to set more. Once you see the benefit of having that goal in site and a plan to get there, it will make a difference in the way you look at goal setting. Reaping the rewards of a goal will be helping you to live life to the fullest and fill like a worthwhile person. If you don't believe it, try it. Set a small goal and each it. You'll feel good about yourself. It will improve some aspect of your life.

Everyone wants to have a happy, fulfilled life. The way you get this is by living the life you want to be living. When you see how great it is to actually find a way to get that life, you'll want to keep doing it.

If you're not used to setting goals, they can seem a little different at first. You may have a difficult time setting them and reaching them. Once you get used to it, however, you'll wonder how you ever lived life without them.

WHAT PREVENTS GOAL SETTING

Before you can begin setting goals, it will be helpful to understand why you haven't been setting them. What has gotten in the way before may get in the way again. You need to be prepared for each of the following roadblocks so you can know how to break through and reach your goals. Here are a few big roadblocks that keep people from setting goals in their lives:

- **Fear**—This can be the biggest roadblock of them all. Sometimes our goals just look too big to ever reach. They can be quite intimidating at times. When this happens, we would rather give up than fail.

If a goal looks frightening to you and it seems like it's just too difficult for you to ever achieve, don't just toss it aside. One thing that helps is to break the goal down into small steps. Reaching each small step will eventually help us reach the overall goal. If you want to stop smoking, for example, you've probably tried many times and failed. Don't just say, "I'm going to quit smoking." Sure, that's your ultimate goal, but instead of diving in head first, break that up into many small goals. First try, something like, "I'm only going to take one smoke break at work today" or "I'm only going to smoke X amount of cigarettes today." After you reach that, you'll feel good about yourself, and the goal might not look so scary. Then try something like, "I'm not going to take any smoke breaks at work today," or "I'm only going to smoke X amount of cigarettes this week." Before you know it, by reaching many smaller goals, that big bad goal you thought you'd never reach has

been conquered.

- **Comfort Zone**—What keeps you comfortable and safe can also be a roadblock. This is life the way we know it. Sometimes stepping out of that comfort zone can be difficult. That's understandable, but the only way to know about what waits for you is to step out.

Often, we become "content" where we are. We're not happy, but we're not miserable either. It's easy to think, "What if I try it and fail?" "What if I make a change and I don't like it, can I go back?" The worst thing you can say is, "Well, life isn't TOO bad right now, so I better not rock the boat." See what I mean. You get all comfy in your current life, and even though you want more for yourself, you settle for less than you can be. It keeps you from setting new goals and achieving them.

- **No Inspiration**—It doesn't seem like inspiration could be a roadblock, but it can be if you don't have it. If your goals don't inspire you, it can be difficult to reach them. Make your goals things that you really care about. The goal itself should inspire you to want to finish. If it doesn't, it can end up in you giving up.

- **Money**—Sometimes we want to reach a goal, but simply don't have the money. If you don't have it, don't forget there are ways to get it. You may have to borrow, or you might have to save. If you want the goal bad enough, don't let money keep you from it.

In today's world there are special programs for everything. Search until you find something that can help you meet your financial ability to reach your goal. For example, you don't need money to get a college degree. There are grants, student loans, scholarships, and many federal programs that can help you pay for it. All you have to do is look. It's the same with whatever goal you want.

There are other roadblocks, but these are some of the most common. You need to get over the roadblocks you face if you want to have success and reach your goal. Think of track and field. They run the race at a steady pace with a goal in mind. There are hurdles they have to jump over. They work at it until they are able to get over those hurdles with ease and reach their ultimate goal...the finish line. Consider the finish line the success you'll reap from reaching your goal.

HOW TO SET GOALS

Now, you know goals are important. You're prepared to leap over those hurdles life throws in your path. You're all excited, and you're thinking of all the things you'd like to do with your life. You're ready to start setting goals, but you're wondering how to do it. How do you set goals you can achieve in your life?



The method for setting goals may vary a bit depending on the type of goal. It might be a short-term goal, such as a day or a week. It could be a long-term goal such as a month, year, or even five years from now. It may be a complicated goal that takes several smaller goals to reach. Here's how you get started:

- **Setting Daily Goals**—Daily goals may be things from that time-tested “to do” list. When you first start setting goals, it's good to

think of one major thing you want to do today. Sure, you'll have several little things on that "to do" list, but these are just little tasks to complete. Goals are different. Think of one goal you want to do today that's most important to you. If you reach that goal, it will feel like you've had a productive day. It may be to finish a project at work. It may be to avoid chocolate. It might be to run two miles instead of one. Whatever it is, make it your important goal for the day, and achieving it will help you feel successful.

I know...life can get in the way sometimes. If you're busy, you'll have ringing phones, or any number of other distractions throughout the day. Just keep your eye on the prize. If you try to set too many goals, you can't possibly reach them in a day, and you'll feel bad about yourself for not doing reaching them. You'll feel like you've had an unsuccessful, non-productive day. Day-to-day tasks may seem boring and totally not motivating. That's life. If, however, you do those little things around doing something you're excited about, they won't seem as bad. Focus on that one thing.

Make everything you do help you work toward that goal. Be sure to write these goals down. They can be in a notebook or a daily calendar, but it will help you keep track of them. If you try it the paper and pencil way, and it doesn't work for you, don't worry. There is goal setting software that can help you. On these programs, you list your core values. Then based on these areas of your life, you create goals and tasks. When you write a goal, you have to list a task and a deadline. You can usually set up a few goals on these programs for free. If you want to do more, there's a

small yearly fee.

They even will send you a reminder to keep you focused. Many of them work with Google Calendar, and even have iPhone apps.

These programs work well for those into technology. If you're not, don't worry. Just get a notebook or calendar and write them down though. It will make a big difference.

- **Setting Weekly Goals** —Reaching weekly goals can take a little more discipline than daily ones. Ask yourself, "What do I want to achieve this week?" Your weekly goal may be just one for that week, or a step in a long-term goal. Keep these goals either on a weekly calendar you write, or an online calendar. Again, try to focus your tasks around that goal you're excited about reaching. It is important that you review your weekly goals at the end of each week. Notice what you completed, but also notice what you didn't. Think of why you didn't. This will help you plan a new way to do it the next week and avoid doing the same things that kept you from reaching it this week. It will also help you identify weak areas in your goals setting/reaching abilities.

When you reach your weekly goals, acknowledge it. Be proud of yourself. You'll begin to feel more confident and successful by completing a few goals each week. You'll probably begin to notice how much you're accomplishing. No, you're not working harder...you're just working in a more focused manner. That's what setting goals is all about. That's the purpose of them. They're there to give you a structure to your life that makes it

become a better one.

- **Setting Monthly Goals**—Life can surely sometimes drive you crazy. You can get so busy you realize you haven't taken any time for yourself. If you prepare monthly goals, you want to make sure you set aside time to not only reach the goals, but have a little time left over to enjoy your life.

If you're using a monthly written calendar, or a notebook, it's important that you don't neglect to check it each day to see your progress and keep up on what still needs to be done to reach the goals. If you don't reach them, look back to see if maybe you tried to do too much. That's often the case when you're new to goal setting and excited about it.

Setting and reaching monthly goals is easy if you stay organized. You don't have to be a major organizer to keep things straight. You just have to have the desire and a few helpful tips. Here are several things to help you:

- *Get yourself an organizer calendar of some kind.* All you really need is one of those small ones you can carry in your pocket, but if you'd like a larger one to carry in your brief case or purse, that's fine too. For those of you who prefer the electronic way, you can use the calendar on your phone or pocket organizer of some type. Any and all of those methods work. Just find the one that's best for you

- *Having the calendar handy at all times will allow you to keep your work and personal schedule at a glance.* If you have any days you want to dedicate to yourself, simply block them off by highlighting them before you do your monthly schedule. Work your other work and family goals around this time. This allows you to set your goals and the days you want to reach them on the other days during the month.

If you like, you can use different color highlighters and highlight work, family, or social goals each differently. The important thing is always having a way to see what your goals are and where you are in your steps to reaching them.

- *Set your goals for various things.* Write them in the time you've allotted for each category. Don't just stop with work and personal goals. You can also set financial goals. To do this, for example you might write: "Spend no more than \$10/day for lunch this month at work." Then each day, you can write down how much you spend. Meeting that goal will not only make you feel good about yourself, it will help you save money. That could be a small goal on the way to a bigger goal to buy a car, pay a down payment on a house, take a college class or any number of things you want to save for.

You don't want to put every goal for each individual day's work. Just write down the important ones. Things you need to do every day, such as take a shower, for example, don't need to be included. Write down one goal a day, or at least one or two goals a week, that are important to you and schedule time to work on

them.

- **Setting Yearly Goals**—Annual goals can often be difficult to keep. After all, how many New Year’s resolutions have you actually stuck with until completion? While they can be difficult sometimes, they can also be a great roadmap for your year in both your professional and personal life. That’s why at the beginning of each new year, you need to set goals. They need to be both specific and realistic.

Think of things you’ve dreamed about achieving. Now pick one of those to focus on for the year. It doesn’t matter if others think it’s crazy, it’s your dream.

Once you have your list of your most desirable goals, and envision them happening, you’re ready to begin preparing your annual goals. You want to start by asking yourself which goals, specifically, will move you closer to having the things you dream about. Remember as you prepare your goals, they should be measurable as well. For example, if you want to save \$1,000, you’ve put a dollar amount down, so it’s measurable. You can even measure it at any point during the year to see how much you’. It’s the same with weight loss. You can measure that. Maybe you want a promotion, but there are several things you need to do first. Each step along the way is a measurement. After you have specific, realistic, measurable goals, you want to make sure you set a date you want to reach that goal. It may only be one that you feel will take six months. If so, write down the date you want to complete it. You need to have that target goal so you

can push yourself toward it.

Be sure not to write too many goals. If you do, it will be easy to lose focus. You probably don't want to write down more than five. Once you've written the goals, you need a plan of action for each one. What steps do you have to take to reach them? If there's something that will keep you from doing it write it down too. Then write a plan to overcome that obstacle. For example, if you want to lose 10 pounds, but you're a "chocoholic," not buying chocolate will solve that problem.

Write the goals on a calendar, either online or off, and target dates. Now write on your calendar each step you need to take to reach the goal and target dates for those things as well. You have now set yearly goals. It's as simple as that. You'll need to prioritize them so you know which things to focus on first. Set your focus on those things. Keep your eye on the overall goals, but the little things that help you reach that are what you should focus on.

PRIORITIZING YOUR GOALS

Sometimes it can be difficult to prioritize your goals. If you feel that way, you're not alone. It isn't, however, impossible. Here are two ways you can try that will help you prioritize them:

- **Give them a number value**—Look over your list of goals. Which of them are the most important? Give each goal you've set a number value. You can use whichever scale you want. For example, give the most important ones a "1" and the least important, a "10." Things that are #1 are thought of as the best or the most important in other things, so make your goals the same way.

- **Target date**—When do you want to have that goal finished. Some may be weekly goals, while others may take months or even the entire year to reach. When you separate them by the date you want or need to have them finished by, you know which ones you want to finish immediately, and the ones that can wait a little while. If you're still having a hard time prioritizing your goals, here are some things you might want to ask yourself:

- What goal do I find myself thinking about most often?
- Which goal would make you feel the best about yourself if you could finish it right now?
- Which accomplishments will last me a lifetime. Which ones are the most permanent? Does this matter to me?
- Will this goal matter to me five years down the road?

- Which of these goals are not dependent on others, but totally in my control?
- Is it a “have to” or a “want to?”
- Do I feel this is urgent and I need to do it right away?
- Which goals are you excited about, and which ones do you dread?
- Which goals matches what is going on in your life right now?

Now look at your goals again and narrow them down even more. From your list, select two or three that you would consider to be your top goals. These are your “Priority” goals. These will be the ones you work toward first.

FOLLOWING A SCHEDULE

A schedule is something that lets you know where you need to be and when you need to be there. It's as simple as that. Setting your goals on a schedule simply lets you know what you need to work on, when you need to work on it, and when you need it completed. By using a calendar to set your goals on a schedule you it you can see each day, week, month, or year at a glance. You'll know what your goals are for that time period. If you've thoroughly worked them out ahead of time, you'll have what steps you need to take and what you need to do to reach that goal. If you haven't worked through all your goals ahead of time, it will give you advance warning when you need to prepare for that goal.

I know your goals can't be everything on your schedule. You're a busy person and you have other things to do that give you a paycheck. That doesn't mean you can't take some time to work toward your goal each day. All you have to do is schedule the time to do it. If it's a work-related goal, schedule the time during your work day. If not, schedule the time during your free time. You'll want to make sure there are no distractions during this time. Turn off the phone, shut the door, and put out the proverbial "do not disturb" sign. Just let people know you don't want to be disturbed, and usually they'll leave you alone unless it's an emergency. This is YOUR time. It's time to work on something YOU think is important. You can use it to write in a journal about how your goal is going and the progress you're making. You might want to come up with a strategy for a goal, or work toward one of

your goals. Whatever it is you need to do, work on it during this time. It should be at least an hour of uninterrupted “ME” time! People are always saying, “If I only had the time.” The time is always there. You just have to schedule the time to work on what is important to you. If you don’t schedule the time, it’s for sure no one else will.

STAYING ORGANIZED

You're all organized and ready to go. You've made your list of goals, narrowed it down, written them down, prioritized them and scheduled them—now what? The next important thing is staying organized. If you know you're one who gets off task easily, or someone who has difficulty being motivated to complete tasks, it's important that you do things that will keep you focused and on task.

- **Update Daily**—Make it a point to update your to-do list for each step of your goal every day. Write down your progress that day and what you need to do the next day. Working on your goal daily will keep you focused. If you don't have any task to work on for your goal that day, use it to review your progress and see where you are and if you're headed in the right direction.

- **Complete Daily**—If you have a daily goal necessary to complete for your goal each day, you need to be sure to complete it. Working toward something you care about will motivate you and keep you going in the right direction.

- **Check Long-term Goals**—Take a look at your long-term goals from time to time. Make sure you are where you want to be on them and take a look at what you still have to do in order to reach that goal. Remind yourself of why you're doing it. Think about what motivates you to complete it. Visualize how great it will be to reach the goal. Think of how good you're going to feel about yourself when you complete it. Take notes along the way of the

progress you keep. You may even want to keep a journal in which you write about your goal. Talk about your struggle to get a goal set, and the problems that arise each step of the way. Tell how you overcome the problems. You can use this as a reference for setting and following through on new goals.

- **Make Necessary Modifications**—From time to time, you'll need to modify your long-term goals. Maybe you didn't get a step completed in a short-term goal that leads to a long-term one. Then you may need to change the next step in your plan. Maybe your life circumstances change and it affects your goal in some way. Maybe it makes you postpone it for a brief period of time. Maybe you complete phases of the goal more quickly than you thought you would and need to move the date up. Whatever the reason, sometimes modifications need to be made. If you need to do so, know that it's alright. If it hinders the progress of your goal, don't beat yourself up over it. Remember, things happen. Just keep moving forward and don't give up on reaching your goal.

- **Reward Yourself**—Everyone needs encouraged from time to time. You not only need rewards for your success in reaching your goals, you deserve it. Set up rewards for yourself that are built into your goal preparation. Make sure they are as specific as your goals. If I do this, I get this. For example, if I lose 10 pounds, I'm going to buy that new dress I love in a smaller size. Wanting that dress will keep you organized and on task. You do it for your children all the time. If you make good grades, I'll give you...whatever the reward may be. You deserve it too, so don't

feel guilty. Be proud and enjoy the reward. It will help you stay organized for the future progress of your goal.

- **Keep Your Promise to Yourself**—You prepared the goal, and set up the plan to reach it. You told yourself you were going to do it. You probably take pride in keeping your word to others. You need to do that for yourself as well. If you promise yourself you're going to do it, then work just as hard to do it for yourself as you would do for others. You made the promise to yourself to achieve that goal—keep it. You are as important as other people you make promises to. Knowing that keeping your promises is important can keep you focused if you think of it that way.

- **Track Progress**—Keep records of your progress throughout the goal seeking process. Having calendars, charts, notes, etc. will give you a visual picture of your progress. Write down where you are in the goal process, and what still needs to be done. Write down what you're feeling at that time. Looking back at the progress of one goal may help to give you motivation when you're struggling with another goal. It may also give you ideas for future goals.

- **Support System**—No matter what your goal is, it will be difficult to reach it if no one is supporting you in it. Have friends or family that can remind you of your goal and encourage you to go on. They can also keep you accountable. Invite them to ask you about your progress if you don't tell them. Sometimes the act of telling others about a goal can keep you on track. After all, if no one knows about it, they won't know if you fail. Of course, you don't

want to go out and tell the world about your first goal and fall on your face. If you have a support system, however, they can help you through it. They can encourage you when things aren't going the way you feel they should be. These are people that care about you. They care about your happiness and well being. They want to see you succeed and will be willing to do what they can to see to it that you do reach your goals. They'll be there to help you with ideas should you hit a roadblock in your goal.

TOP FIVE MISTAKES PEOPLE MAKE WHEN SETTING GOALS

Everyone makes mistakes. How often have you heard that? It's never been more important to remember than when you're struggling to reach a goal. Everyone makes them, but they can be prevented. Everyone wants success in reaching their goals. Failure to reach a goal can be heart breaking, but that isn't the only motivation for not making mistakes when setting goals. When it comes to setting and reaching our goals, mistakes can keep us from success. That's the whole reason for setting the goal in the first place. Since failure to reach a goal can keep us from wanting to set another, it is important to avoid making them when you're setting up your goal and planning the steps you're going to take to achieve it. Here are the most common mistakes people make when setting goals:

- **Unrealistic Goals**—This is probably the biggest mistake of all. It's good to have big goals and dreams, but when it comes to actually setting your goal, you need to make sure it's within your reach. It might be a huge dream. If it's something you're passionate about, go for it. Just break it down into realistic goals. Take it a little at a time. You can't run the Boston Marathon if you've never ran at all. Set goals to build up your stamina and daily training goals to help you achieve the long-term goal of running the race. Eventually, you can reach that big goal by reaching a lot of little ones. Setting the unrealistic goal to start with, however, sets you up for failure. It makes it way too easy to give up. You feel, "I can never do that," so you stop trying.

- **Calculating the Time to Complete a Goal**—When you plan things, they very often take more time than your originally thought. Just ask anyone who is having their house remodeled and the contractor says six months tops to complete it, and a year later, they're finally finished. Things happen that are out of your control sometimes.

Sometimes, for any number of reasons, things just don't work out the way we plan. Things take longer to complete. When we don't reach our goals by the target date of completion we set in our plan, it is very easy to give up. It can make you feel like a failure. Not reaching a goal in a specified time doesn't mean you're a failure. Knowing that ahead of time can help you calculate a time frame for your goal that's reasonable.

Add a little extra time to your plan to make sure you have plenty of time to complete it. It will prevent you from feeling pressured to complete it. Reaching the goal itself may be difficult enough without the pressure. If you finish earlier, that's great. You'll feel extra good about yourself for finishing ahead of the scheduled target date. I'm not saying give yourself a year when it should take six months, but maybe give yourself seven or eight months to be sure.

- **Failing to Appreciate Failures**—Not being able to reach a goal happens sometimes. Does it hurt...sometimes it does. It's definitely no fun, after all, no one likes to fail. The problem is that some people accept this failure as a sign that they are a failure.

Failure is part of the human experience. The good thing is, you don't have to let that failure define who you are. You should take that failure, evaluate it, and learn how you can do better the next time. It takes courage to get up, brush yourself off, and try again. If you do, it will be easier to follow through on your goals.

Since failing at goals is a big issue, and since it's what keeps so many people from reaching other goals, here is what you should do if you fail:

How to Handle Failure

Even the world's biggest optimist can get discouraged when they fail. Not achieving that success you want by failing at a goal can be a difficult thing to handle. An old song says, "You can't always get what you want," but it doesn't mean it doesn't hurt when you don't get it.

Too often, people tell you, "That's life." Why? It doesn't have to be. You need to look at that failure optimistically and look for ways you can use it to redirect your path and find another way to approach it.

Failure is just a chance to grow. It's time to plant a new seed, fertilize it, and watch it become something beautiful. If you look at a road map, you'll see there are many ways to get to the same place. You just have to find the way that works best for you.

When you're faced with a failure, here's what you need to do:

- **Try a Different Angle**—Look at things from a different perspective. If you can't see one, ask a family member or a good friend to help you. Remember, your feelings are hurt, and it's easy to want only positive feedback. Don't just approach your "feel good" friends. Talk to those who will give you an honest opinion.

It may be hard not to get upset from what people say, but you need to grin and bear it. Don't just walk off in a huff, listen to what they have to say so you can determine exactly what went wrong, why it did, and what you can do to fix it.

- **Move Forward**—Always be open to thoughts and perspectives that can get you started moving forward. People are quick to offer their perspective sometimes even when you don't want it. If that happens, smile, say thank you, and move on. When they are offering suggestions, you may have to look at the problem as if it's someone else's problem in order to stand there with a smile, but you can do it. Take out the good suggestions and toss out the bad. Look at what happened, find a way to fix it, and move on.

- **Reset your Focus**—Focus is imperative to reaching your goals. Once you've analyzed what went wrong and come up with a way to fix it, switch your focus to the new approach. Reach out and grab the new goal and give it your complete focus.



There's no time to throw a pity party. Once you've determined what went wrong and planned another way to go after the goal, you need to forget the past and reset your focus toward the future. Sometimes it may be painful to talk about to someone and you may not feel like you have the power to move on. Look back at a time that was very rewarding for you. Look at a former success to give you strength to move forward with a new focus. With a new focus, a failure might not seem like it's the end. It can just be a rest area between where you are and what you want.

- **Setting Goals Others Want for Us**—When it comes to your life, it seems like everyone wants to put their two cents worth in. You should do this, or you should do that...how many times have you heard those words. Probably more times than you can count. It's not that these people are trying to hurt you, it's just that they feel

they know what's best for you.

Others aren't living your life, you are! You have to set your goals according to what will make you happy. Sure, there are times your goals will be based on what your boss tells you to do. That's expected if it's a work goal. If, however, it's a personal goal, it's just that...personal.

Too many times children start out life with aspirations to be a doctor or a lawyer just because their parents want them to. If that's not what you want, be polite about it, but tell them. Set your goal to be and do what you want...within reason, of course. Then, go for it!

- Failing to Reviewing Progress—Always check to see just where you are in the steps to reaching your goal. Document it. Take the time to review your progress. If you're taking a trip, you check your map or your GPS from time to time to see where you are and how far you have to go.

If you never check your progress on your goals, it's very easy for them to fall by the wayside. Checking them regularly will often let you see that you're ahead of schedule, and it will give you a reason to celebrate. You may feel like you're getting nowhere, but when you check your progress, you'll see you really are.

It will also give you a chance to update your goals. Maybe your priorities have become different. Maybe you need to extend your time or alter a sub goal. Goals are like a tree standing by the water. They often bend and alter a bit, but they don't break. If you

have to change something, do it. The important thing is to keep track of your goal until you reach it.



CONCLUSION

Goals provide us with a sense of direction. They let us know what we want as an end result. We just have to figure the plan to get it. Setting goals gives us a chance to look at what we want, learn how to achieve it, and focus on it. We can plan our goals to move in sync with our lives. Everyone needs a little motivation now and then, and knowing you have a goal to reach can give you that.

There is no magic trick that can fix life for you. All you can do is live it and work toward having the best life you can. Imagine the life you want, and work at achieving it for yourself. The more you see it, the more you want it. The more you want it, the harder you work toward it. No one should want to meander around through life with no sense of direction. After all, you only get one chance at life. You shouldn't waste it.

Your big goals in life need to be things you are driven to succeed at. You need to want to reach a goal, or there's no use in setting it. There's nothing wrong with being passionate about a goal. Sometimes it's the passion that drives you to achieve it. If you fail at that goal a time or two, however, you need to be able to handle it. Wish yourself better luck next time and begin the next time as soon as possible.

I know if you see yourself achieving great things, it can hurt when you don't reach that goal. It can cause you to be depressed.

Depression is one of the biggest illnesses in the world. If you don't

snap out of it and go on with your life, it can do a lot of harm. If you realize it for what it is, however, you can decide that you're not going to let one failure pull you down.

When you fail at a goal, always ask yourself if the goal you fail to reach was a realistic one to start with. If it is a realistic goal, then there's a way to reach it. Just take another route. Try conquering another small goal while you restructure the big one. Conquering the small one will give you a small confidence boost. It will probably be enough to help you get over the failure temporarily.

Now you know how to choose the right goal, how to prepare a plan to reach that goal, how to handle it if you don't reach the goal, and how to celebrate when you do reach it. You have everything you need to begin a lifetime of success.