

# SETTING PERSONAL GOALS

...and Seeing Them Through



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# SETTING PERSONAL GOALS ...and Seeing Them Through

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“One of the amazing things we have been given as humans is the unquenchable desire to have dreams of a better life, and the ability to establish goals to live out those dreams.” – Jim Rohn

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**I**f you've ever dreamed of the perfect life, this book is for you. You'll discover how setting personal goals can help you achieve the life you've always wanted – and deserve.

It's important to know exactly what you want to achieve and the period of time it'll take to manifest that achievement. With clarity comes concentrated effort and an ability to weed out diverting distractions. According to Edwin Locke's famous goal setting theory, the more challenging and specific a goal, the more likely it will be achieved. So think big!

***Setting goals will boost your self-confidence and help you discover the meaning and purpose of your life.*** It'll propel you into action and seeing your progress will give you great satisfaction.

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“Are you bored with life? Then throw yourself into some work you believe in with all your heart, live for it, die for it, and you will find happiness that you had thought could never be yours.” – Dale Carnegie

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## KNOWING WHAT YOU REALLY WANT

It's possible to pursue and accomplish a goal, only to find out that the dream in your heart was something entirely different. Sometimes, the journey to the goal is more enjoyable than actually attaining it.

For example, let's look at the story of Martha. Martha was obsessed about buying her new home and spent several months renovating it. But when she actually moved in, she found she'd lost her enthusiasm. She realized that it was the renovation that had been most exciting for her and this realization enticed her to take a different career path. Today, she is a successful interior decorator.

The true desire of Martha's heart was actually to become an interior decorator. The house was a major component of the realization of her dream, but it wasn't its ultimate fulfillment. ***So dig down deep and discover your true goals to enjoy your maximum happiness from them.***

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“People with goals succeed because they know where they are going.  
It's as simple as that.” – Earl Nightingale

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## BE SPECIFIC

Avoid setting vague goals like being a “good” writer. ***Be specific!*** Instead, decide that you want to become a best selling science fiction author. Instead of deciding to make “a lot” of money, commit to a *specific* salary figure as the goal you pursue. Instead of saying that you want to get married, determine the qualities your ideal mate will possess.

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“A goal properly set is halfway reached.”  
– Abraham Lincoln

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## SET MEASURABLE GOALS

Your goals should be measurable in time (how long they will take to achieve) **and** in quantity. For example, decide whether you want to quit smoking or cut down on the number of cigarettes. Your brain needs clear instructions to know where to begin. Giving your mind a clear direction keeps you from procrastinating.

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“If you try to figure out how you will get what you want, you will limit yourself to what your ego or conditioned mind can do. The key to creating what you want is to turn your desire or your goal over to your subconscious - which is connected to the Universal Mind or Universal Subconscious - and let it bring the goal to you and you to your goal.”  
– Dr. Robert Anthony

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## LIFETIME GOALS

Start with an overall vision of your life and decide on the long-term goals you want to achieve. The next step is to break these down into the smaller goals that will lead you to realizing your lifetime goals.

To make this clearer, let's take the example of Barbara, whose lifetime goal is to be a famous novelist. In order to turn her dream into reality, she must draw up a plan of action comprised of smaller goals, such as:

- ▶ Reading the kind of books she wants to write
- ▶ Writing a page a day
- ▶ Keeping a journal
- ▶ Joining a creative writing workshop where she can get feedback on her work
- ▶ Doing a course in fiction writing at an acclaimed university

- ▶ Completing her manuscript
- ▶ Looking for agents and publishers

Chances are good that you'll have more than one lifetime goal. Apart from her artistic goal, Barbara can look at the other areas of her life (career, financial, education, spiritual, family, and relationships) and create a lifetime goal for each.

## ENSURE YOUR GOALS REFLECT YOUR OWN DESIRES

If you want your goals to be achievable, let them be your own idea. Chase the dreams of your heart, rather than the aspirations others have for your life. For example, if you want to lose weight just because your partner wants you to (and you're happy with your body), your lack of motivation will snuff out the success you seek.

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“One's philosophy is not the best expressed in words; it is expressed in the choices one makes. In the long run, we shape our lives and we shape ourselves. The process never ends until we die. And, the choices we make are ultimately our own responsibility.” – Eleanor Roosevelt

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## KEEP IT REALISTIC

Determine if you have the ability, or can gain the necessary skills, to achieve your goals. Take into account any limitations you may have to work with that could make the journey longer or force you to make adjustments along the way.

For instance, Ralph has a chronic respiratory challenge that requires hospital care from time to time. Since he doesn't have access to a hospital

out at sea, this will likely prevent him from being the first man to sail around the world.

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“Be careful the environment you choose for it will shape you; be careful the friends you choose for you will become like them.”

– W. Clement Stone

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## SET A DEADLINE FOR YOUR GOALS

If you've given yourself 10 years to achieve some large goals, **divide that time frame into increments to achieve smaller goals that will lead up to your large goal.** The next step is to set a one-year plan, a six-month plan, and a one-month plan. Decide what you'll achieve in these time frames.

For example, Barbara can set the tasks it takes to complete her manuscript within reasonable time frames for her. Perhaps she would give herself a month to plan out her novel and then a month to write each chapter. When her initial writing is finished, she might give herself 3 months to revise it (including the time she must let the work alone so she can return to it with fresh eyes), and another six months to find a publisher.

**Tailor your tasks for your goals and your time frames around what works for you!** This sets you up with a reasonable expectation of the time it will take you to achieve each goal. Adjust your timeline as necessary to move past challenges along the way as you pursue your goal, but always have the big picture, with your ultimate success, in mind.

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“Goals give you a compass in order to direct your path through life.

Goals focus your thoughts and actions on areas that have precise purpose and meaning.”

– Catherine Pulsifer

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## PLAN YOUR DAILY ROUTINE

Next, decide on the things you'll do each day to achieve your smaller goals. Barbara will write a page every day. She'll fill in her journal every week. If you stick to your daily routine, you'll remain motivated.

Once you've divided your lifetime goals into smaller ones, you may find yourself feeling overwhelmed, **but all you have to do is prioritize your intermediate goals and keep them practical and achievable.** Writing down your goals helps clarify them and also reminds you of them when life is trying to distract you.

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“Instead of worrying about what people say of you, why not spend time trying to accomplish something they will admire.” – Dale Carnegie

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## THE ADVENTURE AND JOY OF GOAL SETTING

**Your life will be much more exciting once you've set your goals.** Every little goal reached will boost your self-confidence and your enjoyment of life. You'll banish boredom because there's always something to do and a pot of gold to look forward to at the end of your rainbow.

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“The more intensely we feel about an idea or a goal, the more assuredly the idea, buried deep in our subconscious, will direct us along the path to its fulfillment.” – Earl Nightingale

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## HELP WITH SETTING GOALS

The following questions will help you begin the process of goal setting. Answer them honestly:

- ▶ **How balanced is your life?** Do you constantly encounter extremes in circumstances? For instance, you might feel too rushed or too



stressed out to spend enough time on the things that are important and worthwhile. How can you balance your life and schedule time each day to work toward your goal?

- ▶ **Do you have a sense of purpose?** What are your most important core values? What matters most to you? What goals can you set that support this purpose?
- ▶ **Are your thought and behavior patterns getting in the way of a happy, successful life?** Are you habitually pessimistic? Are your feelings of success dependent on what others think of you? How could you banish these limiting beliefs?

Once you have some answers, you can ask yourself which of these areas are the most important for you to work on. Jot down the benefits of the goal you set and the challenges you're likely to face on your journey of self-development.

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“A goal is not the same as a desire, and this is an important distinction to make. You can have a desire you don't intend to act on. But you can't have a goal you don't intend to act on.” – Tom Morris

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## WELCOME CHANGE

Be prepared to flow with the changes in your life. This way, you'll be in sync with the universal flow and life will run much more smoothly. ***The only constant in life is change.***

As you grow older, your priorities may change. What you wanted to achieve years ago may be less important today. So it's a good idea to review your goals from time to time. Choose the goals that are most important to you now. Put yourself in control of the changes ahead.

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“All successful people have a goal. No one can get anywhere unless he knows where he wants to go and what he wants to be or do.”

– Norman Vincent Peale

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## WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU?

Answering these questions honestly will help you set the goals that mean the most to you.

- ▶ What is your definition of success? Is it achieving material goals, great relationships, or spiritual awareness?
- ▶ Can you visualize your life *after* you've achieved your goals? Remember that the more your success depends on the approval of others, the harder it will be to achieve and maintain. But if you chase the dreams in your heart, those you love will be blessed by your efforts as well.
- ▶ How does your definition of success affect you and those you care about most? For instance, if your goal is to get that coveted promotion, how will it affect the time you have for yourself and others?

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“What you get by achieving your goals is not as important as what you become by achieving your goals.” – Zig Zigler

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## TODAY CREATES TOMORROW

Every action you take today helps to create your future. So ***ask yourself if any of your habits could be an obstacle to reaching your goals.*** For instance, you may dream about retiring early and running a luxury spa in a

beautiful location. But if you lack the productive habit of keeping account of your daily expenses, you may find it challenging to save money to realize your goal.

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“Please understand my friend, that where you find yourself tomorrow is a function of the positive decisions and actions you take today.”

– Akin A. Awolaja

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## MAKING A DESIRE STATEMENT FOR LIFETIME GOALS

Writing down your goal and visualizing the outcome regularly will help you keep it in focus. ***Visualizing is a powerful technique for turning dreams into reality.***

For example, you could write: “I am making and saving enough money so I can retire early and open a spa in a beautiful location.”

Then think of an image that goes with this goal. Maybe a scenic countryside is the perfect location for your spa. Or maybe the vision that motivates you is having a chocolate massage in your spa. How does it feel? Enjoy the moment with all your senses.

This exercise can also help you think of all those smaller goals that will create your lifetime goal. Fill in the important details. How much money will you need? How will you attain those funds? What can you do each day to achieve your current tasks that propel you toward this goal?

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“NOTHING happens without desire - not in sports,  
not in business, not in LIFE.” – Colin Dunbar

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## ENTHUSIASM COUNTS

Determine how you can make your goal easier to achieve. While some amount of sacrifice will be involved, your overall journey should be a pleasure as you look forward to the attainment of your dreams.

One way of keeping the enthusiasm going is to reward yourself along the way. Even telling a supportive friend about a small achievement provides a sweet reward in the pride you feel. Maybe you could even chart your progress and keep the sheet where you'll see every day.

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“Picture yourself vividly as winning and that alone will contribute immeasurably to success. Great living starts with a picture, held in your imagination, of what you would like to do or be.”

– Harry Emerson Fosdick

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## LET OTHERS KNOW

If other people are involved in the achievement of your goal, or if it's going to affect them, tell them about it so they may support you in your endeavors. If you need their help in any way, let them know.

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“If you don't design your own life plan, chances are you'll fall into someone else's plan. And guess what they have planned for you?

Not much.” – Jim Rohn

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## BE PREPARED FOR SETBACKS

Sometimes those close to you may find it challenging to understand why you're working so hard to achieve your goals. They mean well, but they may be struggling with their own goals. This could manifest in words and

actions you may find discouraging. Jealousy is another possibility. Just be aware of these realities and keep a positive outlook on your journey.

- ▶ Be prepared to stand on your own feet and rely on yourself instead of your loved ones for support.

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“Life's ups and downs provide windows of opportunity to determine your values and goals. Think of using all obstacles as stepping stones to build the life you want.” – Martha Sinetar

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## TAKE YOUR TIME

It's understandable if you want to try to achieve your goals as quickly as possible, but patience and persistence is what wins the day. ***Taking small steps and building on each small victory leads to more lasting changes.***

- ▶ You'll have time for the other important things in your life.
- ▶ You can change course or make adjustments on the way if something unexpected turns up or if things go differently than you envisioned.
- ▶ You'll enjoy your journey because you'll have the time to pause and celebrate your small achievements.
- ▶ You're more likely to be stress-free by putting less pressure on yourself.

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“Whoever wants to reach a distant goal must take small steps.” – Helmut Schmidt

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## ALWAYS KEEP YOUR GOALS IN SIGHT

***You are a hero!*** You set out to achieve something important to you and you *already* possess the integrity and courage to see it through. Of course, on your heroic journey, you just might find yourself going off-track once in a while. That's completely normal.

Maybe you'll feel disheartened when you're tested (like all heroes are). At these times, remember that all happy and successful people have goals and challenges. ***You deserve to lead the life you've dreamed of.***

At every milestone you reach, review your progress to keep yourself motivated. Instead of allowing setbacks to derail you, allow them to correct your course. Allow small victories to propel you forward to the future you deserve.

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“A life lived with integrity – even if it lacks the trappings of fame and fortune is a shining star in whose light others may follow in the years to come.” – Denis Waitley

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## AVOID TEMPTATION

Another way to ensure that you reach your goals is to avoid situations where you're likely to give in to temptation. Let's say you're trying to lose weight so you can get into a favorite outfit for a certain occasion. You could find yourself going back to old habits, like diving into a calorie-packed pastry every morning.

You know that eating right and exercising are the paths to your goal, so find ways to build in support so you avoid temptation. Maybe you could get someone to remind you to get up early each morning and take an alternate route that steers you away from the bakery, for example.

This is how most successful people achieve their goals. They avoid situations that would lead them to temptation. If you *do* give in, get back on track without self-recrimination and, instead, be determined to make a better choice next time.

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“Choosing a goal and sticking to it changes everything.”

– Scott Reed

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## DARE TO SET BIG GOALS: THE INSPIRING EXAMPLE OF MELANIE

Steve Garvey, former Major League Baseball first baseman, said “You have to set goals that are almost out of reach. If you set a goal that is attainable without much work or thought, you are stuck with something below your true talent and potential.”

Setting big, complex goals is a powerful way to ensure you always keep your goals in sight and attain them. Consider the inspiring example of Melanie, a seeker of enlightenment.

Ever since Melanie came across the most peaceful and happy individual she had ever seen (a Buddhist nun in the Po Lin Monastery near Hong Kong), she set a big lifetime goal for herself. She vowed she would work towards enlightenment.

On her return home to America, she joined a Buddhist group of practitioners and began to shed the unwanted skins around her (like peeling an onion). Over her ten years of practice, she achieved smaller goals that would lead to her big goal. In an attempt to purify her mind and body, she did the following things:

- ▶ Within the first two months of her practice, she became a vegetarian.
- ▶ In the next one year, she stopped smoking cigarettes.
- ▶ In the next two years, she released the need for partying and rowdiness.
- ▶ After about four years of being on the path, she found she transformed her lifestyle, ensuring more tranquility.

## JOIN OTHERS WITH SIMILAR GOALS

Melanie learned to stop blaming others for the difficulties she faced. Through her experiences, she came to believe in what her spiritual mentors told her. She created her own world. As she progressed, they encouraged her to find the answers within her to important spiritual questions, without depending on them.

Melanie continues to grow spiritually, as she continually learns to watch her thoughts every moment and gain insights every day about the nature of the True Self. She thinks it's the ultimate adventure.

But it's been a challenging path to follow. She struggled with her smoking and it took her a long time to understand the road to the enlightenment she desired. She gradually learned the advantage of depending on herself, instead of external sources for happiness and fulfillment.

She gave in to temptation several times on her journey, but got back on track before it was too late because she was in good company. She was constantly reminded of her goal and inspired by others on the path.

So you see, in Melanie's case, the Buddhist community helped her achieve the small goals that will hopefully lead to her big goal of



enlightenment. One cannot set a deadline for enlightenment, but she realizes it is the purpose of her life so she strives to stay motivated.

If you're a writer with a goal of getting published, you could join a writer's workshop. If you'd like to become a golf champion, join a golf club. An aspiring artist could live in an artists' community for inspiration and support.

***All of us have the hero within us, waiting to be discovered.*** Effectively setting goals that matter leads you to becoming the best you can be and enjoying the happy life you deserve.

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“Goals give you more than a reason to get up in the morning; they are an incentive to keep you going all day. Goals tend to tap the deeper resources and draw the best out of life.”

– Harvey Mackay

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