



Tools for Better Living

Setting goals you can reach

IF WE AIM AT NOTHING, WE WILL HIT IT EVERY TIME.

Dr. Win Wenger, author of 55 books and pioneer in accelerated learning, noticed a connection between writing out goals and later success in life. He believes that the very act of writing helps stimulate development in our brain, which in turn help us achieve our ambitions. When we set goals we must make plans for action, work on it diligently and continue until our goal is realized. Sometimes our daily activities, obligations and limited knowledge hinder us from doing this. That's why we need to learn the life-skill of organization. First let's define some points.

WHY WRITING DOWN GOALS IS IMPORTANT FOR SUCCESS

- **Writing down goals** helps work through what is important, and provides a means of visualizing the things that need to be done. It can increase results in our life by helping create a detailed plan of action for achievement. Like the old saying goes - People don't plan to fail. They fail to plan.
- **Writing down goals** is an investment in your self, and can help other people in your life. It provides a target to reach, and a means to measure our progress. Remember progress has little to do with speed, but much to do with direction.
- **Writing down goals** aids in connecting cause to effect. It can provide the tools we need to comprehend how various parts of our life interact with each other. This in turn will help provide potential solutions.
- **Writing down goals** is a great way to reduce stress and free our mind. With our dreams, goals, and desires firmly established in writing, we can stop thinking about all the things we have to do, and spend our time focusing on providing solutions, and accomplishing goals.
- **Writing down goals** is like a written contract with ourselves and provides a way of transforming wishes into wants – can't into can - dreams into plans - plans into reality.

FOUR THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN WRITING A GOAL

1. Specific: Write down goals as specific, and with as much details as possible. An example of a specific goal is, "Lose 10 lbs by my next birthday", not just "Lose Weight". ***The more specific we can be, the easier it is for us to take action.***

2. Ownable: It is human nature to desire change in other people in whose behavior or attitudes we find unappealing. The problem is we can't set goals for other people. When we identify goals that are important to us, we can find ways to make them come true. ***If we base our goals on personal performance, then we keep control over the achievement of our goals, and draw satisfaction when we reach them.***

3. Attainable: If we continue to set goals too high, or with too many variables beyond our control, then we are probably setting ourselves up for defeat. It can be quite dispiriting to fail to achieve a personal goal for reasons beyond our control! When we set goals too far out of reach, we probably won't commit to accomplishing them anyway. ***It's like having a goal for world peace, sounds great, but far beyond our ability to reach.***

4. Measurable: ***If we can't measure it, we can't manage it.*** A goal must have a deadline, and we must ask ourselves, "When do I want to reach my goal?" Set a time limit and choose a goal with ways to measure its progress. This way it's easier to see the changes, and make corrections along the way. For example if we write a goal like, "I will read three books on investing before my next birthday" then you have a way to measure your success.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER

Categorize: When we are born, we start our lives categorized for us by society. Our age, gender, location, family, upbringing, education, occupation, skills, is pretty much organized into categories, because it's a more convenient way to organize not only our lives and society in general. It can also be a great way to focus our attention, and set specific goals that target these areas.

Be Positive: Remember try to be positive. For example, when we set a goal don't say, "I want to quit smoking", but rather say, "I will stop smoking to live a more healthy life by the end of the year."

Try to have a mental picture of goals: It is good to say, "I will live a healthy life", but to be able to reach it, and see it mentally; we may have to write down more specific sub-goals like, "I want to take karate with my son." Then we can have a mental picture that will help us stay focused on our goal.

Re-write goals: One way to increase our determination, and make the effort to complete goals is to consistently write, re-write, and even modify our goals often. This keeps them fresh in our mind, and increases our active participation in their completion.

Try to make it emotionally attractive to you: Our goals must be something we really desire to reach, because sometimes it's really about motivation. If we set something as a goal, where we don't have an emotional attachment, it will often be very difficult to realize.

Be careful it is not destructive: When setting goals try to make sure it doesn't become destructive to ourselves, and those around us. To set a giant goal like traveling around the world, and then make plans without our spouse's knowledge, or talking to our children, is a great way to alienate our family.

Fill out the form on the next page: It's one thing to explain how to do something; it's another to provide the information and tools we need to get things done. This why we design these interactive guides, of which you will find on the next page.

DIRECTIONS:

As humans we need the fuel (motivation) and energy (inspiration) to keep our lives moving along. One easy way is to break our lives into general categories, and make goals specifically targeted to reach these areas. Below is a list of many ways to categorize goals, along with sample instructions and goals to give you a basic idea on how to begin.

MENTAL GOALS

The human mind is amazing, and although technically not a muscle, we can exercise our brain to make it stronger. Our mental processes are what give us the ability to function on a higher level, and this is why it's important to set regular goals. Setting mental goals is similar to emotional goals in that they need to be extremely specific, if we are to accomplish them. To strengthen our minds we need to push beyond the norm. For example - If you usually read novels try reading material in different genres (like science, philosophy, politics, finance etc). If you have a hard time focusing try establishing a daily journal that tracks your ability or inability to focus, or spend an hour each day researching focusing techniques on the web. Establishing goals to change our diet, or start an exercise regiment, or even getting more sleep can help us perform better mentally. Now try writing some of your own goals below.

EMOTIONAL GOALS

Emotions in themselves are neither good nor bad, but can get in the way of accomplishing the things we need to do. Emotional goals are hard to define in that it's hard to track results. So we need to set goals that are easier to identify when they are fulfilled. One way is to focus on specific trigger points if we are working on hard to control emotions. For example instead of writing - my goal is to deal with my anger, try writing, my goal is to stop, and focus on one positive thing when I start to get agitated. We can also set goals that use our emotions in a positive way. For example try writing goals like - Work on blog after watching an inspirational movie each Saturday night, or Spend time with family right after church when everyone is in a good mood. If our emotions are dictating our actions, then it's probably a good idea to begin to set goals that will turn your emotions back into being a beneficial part of our lives.

PHYSICAL GOALS

Physical goals are not the same as health goals. Although the two are related, reaching a physical goal may not be good for your health. For example - you might set a goal to finish a triathlon in 7 hours, but suffer heat exhaustion and a broken ankle along the way. The good thing about physical goals is they are fairly easy to track, because the human body responds fairly well to our efforts to increase physical abilities. So try setting some good physical goals in areas such as - exercise, hygiene, weight training, increasing a specific sporting ability, trying a new recreational activity, eating healthier foods or supplements etc.

SPIRITUAL GOALS

These types of goals are not easy to quantify, because spiritual life is intertwined within other aspects of our lives. Many in today's society shy away, because spirituality is often related to monks who abstain from pleasure by isolating themselves high up in the mountains. However most often it involves a change of attitude, and not a change in altitude. So setting simple spiritual goals may often bring great change, and improve to our lives. Some goals may include: Begin a prayer list and pray each morning in the shower. Purchase comfortable mat and meditate for 20 minutes before bed during workdays. Listen to the bible on tape while driving to work. Stop once a day for a few seconds to enjoy the moment. Regardless of the goal, most of us could use a spiritual check up every so often (or for some of us every day).

HEALTH GOALS

It's too bad we spend little time thinking about our health until it goes bad. Then we frantically attempt to fix it by seeing doctors, taking medication, and turning to any quick fix we can find. However we can often save ourselves by focusing regularly on making healthy choices throughout our lives. So it's never too late to begin by setting goals like: Limit junk food to weekends. Lower stress by learning to say "NO" to things I don't have to do, like working late. Hire a trainer for one month at the local gym. Research possible supplements or foods that help my condition. Go to the health food store and try at least one new item per day for the next 10 days.

FAMILY GOALS

Many older parents regret not spending more time with their children, and many children frantically try to find time to spend with parents when they become old and frail. So before it's too late, why not set regular goals to maintain, establish or re-establish relationship with family members. Remember your goal must revolve around what you can do, and not what you want them to do. For example do not set goals like -"Get my parents to set up a family reunion." Instead a more reachable goal would be - "Make dinner reservations for a family reunion, and invite all my family to attend." This way you have provided the family reunion, and given family members an opportunity to attend. Other goals can include: Take a cruise next year for Christmas. Begin a regular family dinner, the second Sunday of each month. Call parents, siblings and grandparents once a month. Start a regular family night, and ask them for their ideas for activities. Whatever you do, don't wait until a family member's funeral to take time to see them.

RELATIONSHIP GOALS

Our relationship goals typically revolve around people we are closest to, or want to become closer to. It may involve - friends, family, acquaintances, romantic encounters, or even group interactions. Possible goals can revolve around forgiving others of past hurts, making attempts to spend more time with someone, apologizing for mistakes, attending activities together, finding lost contacts, establishing regular times for correspondence, etc. Sample goals could be: Establish regular date nights with my spouse. Talk to each of my children and find out what they want to do with me, and then schedule it in. Contact past friends and set up a time to see them.

FINANCIAL GOALS

Financial goals typically revolve around the way we make, spend, or save money. By looking at the individual debt load of most nations one can see that people are great at spending, mediocre at making, and lousy at saving money. However to reach most financial goals we need to focus on all three. Some examples include goals like: Set 10% of my monthly salary into a savings account. Spend 2 hours a night studying for the manager's advancement test this March. Make a list of all expense items, and research ways to lower each one by at least 5%. Remember some goals may take years to complete, so keep at it, and learn to adapt as your situations change.

CARREER GOALS

Unlike the past, many societies have made it possible to start, change, modify, or even create one's own career fairly easily, and even make changes later in life. So don't be afraid to begin or continue working towards making a living at what you love to do. Some examples include: Go back to school and complete (or finish) my degree. Contact possible people interested in starting a new business venture. Brainstorm possible ways to make money of my musical abilities. Research other career fields in my area of expertise, and apply for 3 new positions in these fields.

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

Like they say it's never too late to learn. Educational goals do not necessarily have to include educational institutes but can include things like - personalized studies, web based research, studying at a local public library, watching informative television, visiting educational centers like museums and local trade shows, taking trips to foreign countries, volunteering at community service projects, meeting new people, helping local non-profit groups, reading new books, joining civic organizations, or even talking to people more experienced than you.

RECREATIONAL GOALS

If your first thought was, "recreational goals are just for slackers, and people who don't work for a living", than you are probably the one who needs these the most. Another way to look at recreation is see it as a vital component in our ability to recoup and refresh our mental, emotional and physical processes. So don't forget to include goals such as: Go out camping with my friends every quarter. Buy some paint supplies and start painting on my days off. Talk to my co-workers, and see if they are doing anything this weekend. Stop watching TV, and try out for a part in the local community theater spring play. Go online and research weekend outings nearby.

BUSINESS GOALS

Businesses goals aren't necessarily for business people, but for anyone who wants to one day become self-employed or own their own business. These types of goals are vital to keep our business practices fresh, and compete in today's ever changing business environment. Goals may cover topics such as: advertisement, sales, accounting, employee development, administration, overhead, or ways to increase business and profit margins. Example goals could be: Find local training events for my employees. Hire legal help to cover contracts and company policies. Research possible business opportunities using my unique skill sets. Meet with my family and friends to pitch my new business idea.

INVESTING GOALS

Investing goals are basically ways to use your money to make money. If you ever want to stop working, you will have to invest in something. The key is to set aside a regular amount each month, and then change your lifestyle to adjust to the change in monthly income. Some goals may include: Stop cable and magazine subscriptions and put money into a stock market account. Buy a book on various ways to invest my money, and choose three ways to invest my tax return money. Talk to my boss and ask him how he invests his money. Spend next weekend reviewing finances with my husband and children, and make a budget we can all live with.

TRAVEL GOALS

There is one goal that is common throughout the world, and that is the desire to travel to places away from home. The problem is traveling requires a significant amount of money, time, and the ability to get from one place to another. However before trying to go to the top of Everest, try going to the top of your State, because the greatest place may only be a few hours away. However regardless of where you travel to setting goals may just get you there. Some good goals could include: Saving money by working on side jobs for a travel fund, Saving up vacation or sick days to have more time to travel abroad. Researching alternative travel opportunities like staying at hostels, traveling across country by sleeper van, going with a larger group and sharing hotel rooms, or stop eating out and put money saved in a travel fund.

ATHLETIC GOALS

You do not have to be an athlete to have athletic goals. Sometimes it's good just to get away from our computers and televisions (and not just to go shopping, which by the way could be its own category for goal setting). Some good non-shopping athletic goals could be: Instead of driving by the park, stop one evening and play in a pick-up game. Call a friend who plays a sport and ask them if you can join. Buy a tennis racket (or some other sporting equipment) and go down to the local court and start practicing. Join a local athletic club and try something new. Sign up for a karate, zumba, weight lifting, or even gymnastics at your local Y, or community center. Start walking or running with a friend. Go to the local golf course and hit a few balls at the range. Go hiking at a nearby forest.

ARTISTIC GOALS

All people have some type of artistic ability, but most of us stopped as soon as we got out of grade school. There are many forms of artistic expression including: music, drawing, painting, graphic/computer design, photography, acting, dancing, writing etc. Why not explore these abilities by setting a few goals. Artistic goals could include: Taking a class at the local city college or community center. Purchasing art supplies, and experiment at home after work. Join a church choir. Buy a sketch book, and next time you're at a coffee shop practice sketching things around you.

MAKE UP YOUR OWN CATEGORIES....