

PERSONAL *TRANSFORMATION*

MASTERY



- Master your brain
- Overcome fear
- Build confidence
- Get motivated
- Know your life purpose
- Develop a healthier you
- Build good habits
- Get focused

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GUIDE 9:

GOAL SETTING MADE SIMPLE

In order to get what you want from life, you first need to know what that is. How can you fulfil your potential if you don't know who you are or what makes you happy?

This is why goal setting is such a crucial skill to cultivate and something that everyone should spend more time learning. If you don't know what your goals are, then life becomes a little like going on a journey with no destination. Even if you might enjoy the journey, you're still going to risk ending up somewhere you don't want to be and you certainly won't take the most efficient route to get there!

So, it's simple right? You just have to ask yourself what you really want from life and then go and get it. Right?

Unfortunately not. Unfortunately, goal setting is anything *but* easy and is very much a skill in itself. The problem is that not many people realize this and they never think to assess the quality of the goals themselves. They blame their motivation, their circumstances or even other people.

But rarely do they assess whether the fault might lie with the goal itself.

In this guide, you're going to learn what makes a great goal and you're going to discover how to formulate goals and targets that you can *actually* stand a good chance of completing. Once you've

finished, you might well realize why life hasn't *yet* turned out quite the way you want it.

AN EXAMPLE OF BAD GOAL SETTING

To understand how to write a good goal, it can help to first take a look at what makes a *bad* goal. Why is it that some goals just don't work out the way they should? What should we do differently to avoid this happening the next time?

Let's imagine for a moment that you want to get into shape. You're planning on losing weight and building muscle – which is a pretty popular goal that an awful lot of people are interested in accomplishing.

In this case, a typical goal might involve writing down the ideal bodyweight and/or measurements that you are trying to reach and then setting yourself a target – 3 months, 6 months or 1 year. And then you get to it!

But this is a goal that is destined to failure. Why? Because it is far too vague, far too distant and far too out of your control.

Let's fast forward two weeks, at which point you have hopefully been training hard for a while and changing your diet. Suddenly, life starts to get in the way. You find yourself bogged down with

other things you have to do and you just don't have the time or energy to make it to the gym today. Or tomorrow. And Wednesday is looking tricky. So is Thursday.

But it's okay. Because you don't need to work out. Not working out on those days is not breaking your goal. You have plenty of time to reach your goal and it is up to you how you are going to go about making it happen. So, if you take time off today, you'll just put some more time in tomorrow. Or the next day. If this week is a write-off, then you can always make up for it *next week*.

And so it continues, week after week, until you get to the end of your allotted time span and you realize you've blown any chance of accomplishing that goal.

Or how about this alternative scenario? Imagine that you *did* put in the time and you worked very hard every day to get into shape. But the pounds just didn't come off. Maybe this is due to a slow metabolism, maybe it boils down to people offering to take you out for dinner too frequently.

Either way, you get to a certain point and you realize once again that you aren't going to make it. *Even though you tried your best*. So, what do you do? You give up, disheartened, and you leave it a *long* time before you ever try again.

A BETTER GOAL

So, let's imagine that same scenario but this time write the goal correctly. What would a good goal look like if you wanted to lose weight and build muscle?

For starters, you should remove the time element. Instead of aiming to accomplish something in X number of days, how about you instead aim to do something *every day*. Look at the goal that you want to accomplish and then break that down into much smaller steps. In order to lose weight, you need to eat 2,000 calories or less a day. And you need to work out three times a week.

If you can do that, then you will *eventually* notice changes – be they big or small.

So instead of focusing on the end goal, set yourself a short-term goal. This is something that is entirely within your control – meaning that you cannot 'fail' for reasons outside of your control. It is also completely resistant to being put off or delayed. You can't 'work out today' tomorrow! Likewise, a slow metabolism isn't going to prevent you from eating only 2,000 calories.

Jerry Seinfeld explains a technique that he uses in order to make sure he sticks to these kinds of goals and he calls it 'the chain'.

The idea is that he builds a chain as he completes his daily targets and this then creates an immense pressure *not to break* the chain.

You can do this with a calendar and a pen. So, every day that you successfully work out, you put a tick on the calendar for that day. This will then start to gradually build up a row of ticks and over time, you will come to feel proud of that row of ticks and not want to ruin it by missing one. You won't want to 'break the chain'.

Whether you use this additional strategy or not, the point is that you should write goals that are immediate and simple. Meanwhile, you can let the overarching objective 'take care of itself'.

IS YOUR GOAL TOO AMBITIOUS?

There's nothing wrong with an ambitious goal. Many people say that 'dreaming big' can even make you *more likely* to accomplish your aim because it attracts attention, gravitates people toward you and helps get people on board. If you tell people you want to fly to space, you'll get a lot more positive attention than if you tell people you want to climb Mount Snowdown (a pretty small mountain in Wales).

This is why another piece of advice that often gets thrown about is to 'have visions, not goals'. Visions are abstract and they are

grand. These are things you visualize and dream about, rather than things you write down and tick off. If you want to get into shape, then your goal can be to train three times a week, but your *vision* would be to become the best physical specimen you can – attractive to everyone and full of confidence and energy.

But while a vision can be as grand and extreme as you like, those smaller steps should still be small and they should be easy. At least at the very *start* these steps should be easy and this will then allow you to build towards your higher overarching objective. Think of this like a hierarchy. At the top, you have your grand vision for the future – something so exciting that it helps you to launch yourself out of bed in the morning.

Beneath that, you might have your ‘realistic’ version of what you can achieve with your current resources. Beneath that, you might have the steps you are taking every day to achieve it.

The mistake a lot of people make is to clump all these things together and not to consider the necessary progression from one stage to the next. This is the reason that someone who has never been to the gym before, might well write themselves a new training program that requires them to train for an hour a day, seven days a week and to do this on a diet of 1,000 calories. They’ll then do stretching on top of that and start a yoga class.

Is it any wonder that we don’t tend to stick to these goals?

The problem really tends to boil down to impatience. People want to accomplish their goals *now*. They don't want to put in the time or the repetitious work that it actually takes in order to get to that point. And they don't want the uncertainty that after all that work, it may *not* pay off.

But you need to change that thinking. Everything worth having comes with work and diligence and this is *often* highly repetitive and boring. If you want to get into shape, you need to train regularly and it takes years to get to a point where your new physique is impressive and 'permanent'. If you want to start your own business, well then there is a ton you need to learn before you even get going.

(Procrastinating on a goal is just as bad by the way though – which is another reason it is so important you have a concrete action plan!)

Think of this like a computer game. Computer games begin with a few levels that are incredibly easy and this is necessary to prevent you as the player from rage quitting. Your goals should be the same – if your 'level one' is a massive boss battle, then you won't be successful.

Lots of people get this wrong when they are taking up running for the first time. Here, they aim to start running long distances right

away and losing weight. It's grueling, painful and unrewarding and it leaves them gasping and achy for days after.

What they *should* do is to first focus on *getting good* at running and on *learning to like* running.

So that means they should be running short distances, not running too fast, not running too far and generally not pushing themselves beyond a sensible point. This way, they can gradually start to *like* running and they can gradually find themselves running further and further without even trying.

And in fact, often it only takes small changes to get to the place you want to be. This is best exemplified by the Japanese notion of 'Kaizen'. Kaizen essentially means 'lots of small changes that build up to big results'.

For instance, if you want to lose weight, then it might be easier to look at small changes you can make to get there, rather than massive ones:

- Walk from the bus stop before your destination on your commute
- Stop drinking calorific coffees in the morning
- Swap sugary soda drinks for still water as your main source of hydration
- Take your lunch snack out of your lunchbox

- Eat off of smaller plates

These are just a few small changes that should be easy enough for most people to stick to and yet they can be enough to really sway your calorie total in your favor – eventually leading to cumulative weight loss!

Closing Comments

As you can see then, learning to structure your goals correctly can make a big difference when it comes to your likelihood of accomplishing them. The key is to set your sights high, but to have concrete, small steps that you can take along the way in order to get there. Forget how long it is going to take, deal with it being ‘boring’ and just focus on repeating the same few actions every day until you eventually achieve the thing you want to achieve or become the person you want to become.

And if you assess the situation in a year and you still haven’t made the progress you’d hoped? Then perhaps you need to rethink those goals again. Like anything else, this takes time, practice and effort. But you’re not in any rush!