

# ON SETTING GOALS



A finding from  
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## **On the Benefits of Goal-Setting**

Insurance statistics figure a person's life expectancy to be about 3 years after retirement ...if he or she doesn't have goals beyond that point.

A person who has a purpose or goal can expect to live 9 or more years past retirement. So, triple your life expectancy after retirement by retiring "toward" something, not "away from" something.

Goal setting also helps us stretch our capabilities and tap into our potential. Statistics show that we only use a small percentage of our God-given talents and abilities. The benefits of goal setting are neither mystical nor hazy. There are real and significant advantages in goal setting. Here are a few:

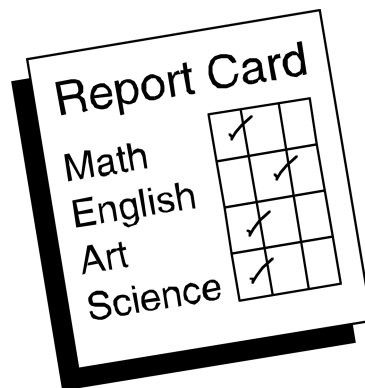
- 1.** Goal setting can improve your self-image. Knowing what you want from life improves your today and shapes you for tomorrow.
- 2.** Goal setting will make you aware of your strengths, and can be used to overcome obstacles or provide solutions to problems.
- 3.** Goal setting will make you aware of your weaknesses. Then you can begin setting goals that improve in those areas or complement them with strengths.
- 4.** Goals give you confidence. Your frustration level is immediately lowered when vagueness and doubt are replaced by structure and direction. Tolerance increases.
- 5.** Goal setting can give you a "grounding" sense of past victories and provide the stimulus for present successes.
- 6.** Written goals can help you visualize, plan tactics, activate, and then actualize.
- 7.** Goal setting can give you a track to run on.
- 8.** Goal-setting forces you to set priorities and therefore establishes the proper direction for your pursuits. It forces you to be specific. It's the first, positive, overt step to success.
- 9.** Goal setting can define reality and separate it from wishful thinking. It isn't daydreaming. It properly separates and defines the various roles you must play.
- 10.** Goal setting makes you responsible for your own life. It forces you to define and establish, in concrete form, your system of values.
- 11.** Goals serve as criteria to sharpen decision-making. Decisions are always made by looking at standards. If the standards haven't been defined, decisions will often be made in terms of immediate pressures.

## Goals are an “attractive force”

The “feelings” of success and of satisfaction come from setting and achieving goals. Life only becomes exciting when we are pursuing goals and it is joyful when we are on route to achieving them.

In order for goals to have the magnetic attraction that draws you to them, propelling you toward success, you must follow the principles of goal setting – the “rules of the game:”

1. Your goals must be your own personal goals. You aren’t motivated by someone else's goals or by the goals of your company.
2. Your goals must be stated positively. An important part of goal setting is developing mental pictures of what you want to accomplish. Since you don’t want your mind to focus on a negative image, you can see the importance of stating your goals positively.
3. Your goals must be realistic and obtainable. They must require effort, but be within your grasp in order to sustain motivation for their achievement.
4. Your goals must include personality changes. Before you can accomplish a goal, you must have the internal qualities necessary for its attainment. For example, if you want to become a physician, you must allow for the necessary knowledge that you must gain.
5. Your goals must be written. Written goals add a degree of commitment, and they help you get specific with your goals. REMEMBER: “Writing crystallizes thought and it's crystallized thought that motivates action.”
6. Your goals must be specific. Definite goals produce definite results. Hazy goals produce, at best, hazy results but they usually produce no results. Specific goals help you to visualize accomplishment, and then they are easier to reach.



## Why most people resist setting goals

Although many people may intellectually accept that goal-setting is an important key to success, most will resist doing it for a whole series of reasons. Here are the top few:

1. Unrealistic perceptions - People get caught in the “waiting for miracles” trap. They sit back and wait to see if Santa Claus or a favorite Saint might help instead of taking responsibility setting and accomplish their goals.
2. Predictability - Many people prefer living in a “rut” than changing because they feel threatened by change. They’ll resist setting goals because it may mean being temporarily uncomfortable or inconvenienced as they move from their rut to a higher plateau.
3. Conditioning - We are conditioned to fail. After we have done something a certain way, it becomes automatic or a reflex. The biggest threat to adopting a new and better habit therefore is the current habit.
4. Anger – Some folks would rather play the blame game... finding reasons and tyrants that prevented them taking action in the past to justify why not to act in the present.
5. Fear of losing - Many people don’t set goals because they are afraid of being criticized or in some way punished if they do not reach them.
6. Fear of winning - Ironically, some people don’t set goals because they cannot visualize themselves being capable of handling success.
7. Over-expectations - Many people inadvertently fight success by continuously setting their goals too high. In this way their self-fulfilling excuse is: “That goal can’t be reached so why even try.”

Goal setting should not be hard work nor even a boring task. It should be as fun and exciting as planning a party. The idea is that while you’re working on a goal, it’s also working on you. The more you use goal setting, the more you must access your potential.

