

# Successful GOAL SETTING

**Goal Setting - the process of making a dream come true step by step.**

Setting goals is important for achieving success, and providing clarity, direction, importance, and meaning to decision making. It is particularly useful if you need motivation and want to be in control of your actions and their consequences.

Based on research and practical experience, goal setting techniques are processes that allow you to measure and chart your progress- know where you want to be, how to get there, and how close you are to reaching your goal. If you want results, a popular guideline for goal setting uses the **S.M.A.R.T.** acronym.

## **Specific / Sensible**

A specific goal is straight forward, clearly defined and makes sense to pursue. The more specific your goal, the more realistic is your success, and the path to it is shorter.

In making your goals specific you clearly see what you want to achieve (your target), identify who is involved, and specify the requirements and constraints.

Before moving forward, ask yourself: *Is this goal something I really want? Does it serve me in my life right now? What will I need to achieve this goal?* Once you are satisfied with your answers, you can begin to create a personal map to success.

## **Measureable**

You need a way to measure your progress and specific criteria to let you know when you have arrived and your goal is achieved. Charting your progress regularly will help keep you focused on your goals.

Since every step toward success is worthy of acknowledgment, it is important to reward your progress. Creating weekly and monthly incentives helps you stay motivated.



## **Achievable / Attainable**

Goals that challenge you work best if they are as ambitious as possible, but still attainable. Then they will provide greater motivation and a greater sense of achievement.

A good way to decide that a goal is achievable (not too far out of reach) but challenging (not too easy) is to visualize reaching the goal. Can you see yourself there?

When goals are viewed as achievable, there is a much greater chance that you will remain committed. If your goal is too far out of reach, it can be destructive.

**You will not reach your goal simply thinking about it.  
Use action statements to describe what you will do to reach your goals.**

## Realistic

A realistic goal represents an objective toward which you are both willing and able to work. You need to believe it is possible. A goal should represent substantial progress.

Check that your goal is realistic by asking yourself-

- *Where am I, and where do I want to go?*
- *What is my plan for getting there?*
- *What may raise barriers to my goal?*
- *How will I overcome these barriers?*
- *Do I believe I can accomplish this goal?*
- *Will I be satisfied in achieving this goal?*



If it is not realistic it can be discouraging.

## Timely

Setting a specific time limit provides positive impetus to get on with it. If your goal is not time based you will not be driven to complete it and may procrastinate. Setting a deadline also protects you from perfectionism: that is spending more energy and time than the goal is worth.

For examples of **S.M.A.R.T.** goal setting on reaching a healthy weight and becoming more active see- [www.actnowbc.ca/EN/adults/s.m.a.r.t.\\_goal\\_setting/](http://www.actnowbc.ca/EN/adults/s.m.a.r.t._goal_setting/) At this site, you can also download a number of tools to help you attain and keep your goals- **Goals & Action Steps Chart & Weekly Activity Log.**

## Goal Achieving & Success

After you have clarified what you want, set your goals and moved to specific action steps, success depends on your self discipline, determination, and ability to take action.

To achieve your goals focus on the consequences of succeeding. Ask yourself- *How will I feel? What are the rewards? What will others think of me?*

Some consequences will be extrinsic (fame and fortune) while others will be intrinsic (self actualization and mastery). Some consequences will be pleasurable and others aversive. While avoiding aversive consequences (failure or criticism) can be motivating, pleasurable ones are more helpful for building positive behaviors. Some consequences will be immediate and others delayed. Immediate consequences are more effective motivators.

To achieve success, you need both **persistence** and **flexibility**. When you face difficulties and unexpected problems, stick to your goals and change the means of achieving them. However, sometimes the unexpected happens, indicating a change in goal is needed. Remember a wise choice can be to drop the current goal in favor of something more timely.

**In addition to helping increase your productivity and motivation, goal setting also increases your self-realization, self-image, self-esteem and self-confidence in all areas of your life.  
The feelings of success in achieving your goals will serve to motivate you further.**