Goal Setting
Excerpt Printed From: Success is Not an Accident by Tommy Newberry

Eight Rules for Highly Effective Goals

When you follow each of these eight rules you can expect to develop your full potential and join the top 1 percent of high achieving men and women. Many skeptics of goal setting and many underachievers have haphazardly attempted goal setting without following these rules, and failed as a result — erroneously concluding that goal-setting does not work, at least not for them. **Goals work for anyone who subject to the law of gravity.** To ensure your success, follow these simple guidelines sincerely and the results will take care of themselves.

1. **Highly effective goals are written!**

   **This is by far the most important step in goal setting.** Wishes and fantasies are transformed into goals through the act of writing them down. By writing your goals on paper, you make them concrete, tangible, and physically real. Remember all the studies that have shown that people who write their goals down are ten times more likely to achieve their goals than those who have their goals only “in their head.” Similar research shows that people with written goals earn ten to 100 times more than equally gifted individuals who neglect to put their goals in writing. **Writing down your goals helps you to crystallize your thinking and gives you a physical device for focusing your attention.** It stimulates your brain’s reticular activating system, which is the mechanism within your brain that controls your awareness. When you are more conscious and aware of your goals, you will notice the people, resources, information and opportunities that will help you achieve your goals. Written goals also create a scorecard that you can evaluate and learn from. This scorecard acts as a measurement of your success and progress in life. Having your goals on paper increases your self-confidence. Being able to look down and see that you accomplished something you decided in advance to accomplish will give you a powerful sense of self-worth and will encourage you to set better and more challenging goals in the future. Your successes will begin to snowball! Writing goals on paper forms an accountability contract with yourself which automatically strengthens your character and boosts your self-confidence. Remember, in our society we assign a higher value to written agreements than oral agreements. They simply hold up better. **So make your goals written contracts with yourself!**

   When people tell me they don’t need to write their goals down because they “have it in their minds,” I know they are really coping out and eventually will be missing out. You should state your goal as if its accomplishment were already a fact. For example, “I earn $125,000 this year,” or “I lower my handicap to 6 by June 1.”

2. **Highly effective goals are stated in present tense.**

   Writing goals like this allows you to recruit your mind to help you reach your goals. It creates what is called structural tension or dissonance in your mind when there is an obvious discrepancy between where you’d like to be and where you are currently. There’s a gap between reality and your vision for the future and, since your mind hates tension of any kind, it immediately begins to alert you to all sorts of people, resources, and ideas that can help push
you toward your goal. In essence, it creates a new field of sight. Stating a goal in the present tense communicates that goal to your brain in the most effective format, allowing you to clearly visualize your goal and start to really believe that it is possible for you. It signifies to your conscious and your subconscious mind that you are not where you want to be. Refuse to state your goal as, “I will do this,” or, “I will accomplish that.” When you use the term “I will,” you mentally push your achievement somewhere off into the vague, distant future. There is less pressure to come up with the ideas and strategies to achieve your goal and less pressure for you to take immediate action. Using “I will” promotes procrastination and, of course, we want to put that off as long as possible.

3. Highly effective goals are stated positively.

For example, “I eat healthy, nutritious foods” instead of, “I no longer eat junk food.” It’s important to avoid stating, writing or talking about your goals in a negative way. You don’t want to say, “I’m not going to hit the ball into the water.” You should state it in positive terms because we think in pictures. Words are simply symbols for thoughts and ideas. Every time you write or say a word, you evoke a vision in your mind. And you can’t evoke a vision of not doing something. You may say, “I don’t eat junk food,” but your subconscious mind only processes, “I eat junk food.” It simply omits the “not” and shows you the “I eat junk food” vision. If you say, “I am not fat,” it simply sees, understands, and goes to work on, “I am fat.” If you say, “I am not hitting the ball into the water...” Again all your mind understands and goes to work on is “I am hitting the ball into the water.” Now, you can play havoc with your golf friends by reminding them of the water right before they are about to take their shot. And they’ll usually respond, “I’m not going to hit it into the water.” But the reverse is often exactly what they do. Remember, you’ll always act consistently with the dominant pictures you allow to occupy your mind. You must state your goal in a positive way so that your mind will understand it accurately and go to work on it. The reason most people state goals in negative terms is that they’re much more aware of what they don’t want. But whatever you’re most aware of is what you experience. If you’re aware of nice people, you’ll start to bump into more nice people. If you’re aware of your goals, you’ll reach more of your goals. If you’re aware of and conscious of prosperity and ways to serve others, you’ll earn more money. And along the way, a lot of people will call you “lucky.”

4. Highly effective goals are consistent with your personal mission statement.

Your goals should cause you to grow more like the person you were created to become. They should be goals that are personally meaningful to you. Many people make the mistake of setting goals that are meaningful to someone else or that will please someone else, but that have no passion in their own lives. The best way to keep a commitment to reach a goal is to understand why you are striving for it. It’s the “why,” or the link to your values, that keeps you motivated. Effective goals are best established after thoroughly thinking through your life and composing your personal mission statement. Values are those things that are most important to you in life. They include people,
things, virtues, concepts, beliefs, and feelings. Together they constitute your individual philosophy of life or your personal vision. Goals are intended to satisfy or help you realize or experience your unique purpose in life. Trouble arises in our lives when we set goals without first clarifying what we stand for and who we want to become as human beings. We often accept and adopt the values of others because we’ve never invested the mental effort to determine what’s truly important to us. When we set goals that are not in harmony with our personal values, we may still end up being high achievers, but the achievement will be accompanied by a feeling of emptiness, a feeling of “Is this it? Is this all there is?” Most unhappiness and negative stress in life comes from proclaiming internally that something or someone is most important to us, but then acting externally in a different way. Consider these questions:

1. Am I designing and organizing my life around principle-based values?
2. What am I becoming by pursuing this goal?
3. Will the accomplishment of this goal add to my peace of mind?

Make sure that each of your goals is connected to a particular value or role in life. There should be a deep and obvious connection between your goals and your personal mission statement. The pursuit of your goals should force you to become more like the person described in your personal mission statement.

5. **Highly effective goals are specific and measurable.**

   There must be no fuzziness or ambiguity whatsoever in the statement of your goal. A goal must be measurable so that you or someone else can objectively evaluate your progress and determine exactly when you have achieved the goal or if a new course of action should be taken. The more specific your goal is, the more clear you will be about what steps you must take to achieve it. Clarity attracts, so the more vivid you are, the more you will be focused on your goal. The more you are focused on your goal, the more you will be aware of the people, ideas, and resources around you that can help you reach that goal. A clear and definite direction tends to increase your motivation and enthusiasm as well. It prods and spurs you to take action. Often in my coaching sessions clients ask, “How specific do I need to get on my goals?” I always answer, “Can you be more specific?” If it is possible to be more specific, then you should be. Just keep asking yourself: “How can I define this goal more clearly? How can I make it more precise?” You’ll find that your creativity will increase as you more clearly define your goal. Creativity demands pressure. Being concrete and super-specific provides this pressure. Goals like, “I want to be happy,” or, “I want to have a better marriage,” or, “earn lots of money and be rich,” don’t cut it. They offer no clear, unambiguous goal to shoot for. Nothing is measurable. There is little or no purpose, and nothing much gets done. Vague and hazy objectives produce diluted results!

6. **Highly effective goals are timebound.**

   Deadlines put positive pressure on you to take action. Otherwise it’s just human nature to keep putting things off. Strangely enough, human beings tend to procrastinate on the goals that are the most valuable to their long-term peace of mind. We’re funny in that we keep postponing those actions that can really increase the quality of our
lives. We often get stuck in a rut, in the deadly confines of the comfort zone. **Comfort is often confused with success, and complacency is the result.** Make sure your goals are timebound with reasonable deadlines for accomplishment. It’s very important that the time you allow is reasonable! It’s been said that there is no such thing as an unrealistic goal, just an unrealistic time in which to accomplish it. Learn from each experience you have with goal setting so that you become progressively more accurate at setting deadlines.

**7. Highly effective goals are reasonable and challenging.**

They should cause you to stretch, to grow and get out of your comfort zone. In order to fully develop your potential, you must be willing to experience discomfort. It’s often been suggested that you set goals with a 50-50 probability of success. You want to set goals that are achievable, but also build character by exercising your self-discipline and perseverance. In order for your subconscious mind to buy into your goal, it must have some degree of believability. For example, imagine you’re driving a 15-year-old Chevy, but you’ve always had this thing for a Rolls-Royce. Think about pulling up at a traffic light in your Chevy and then a Rolls pulls up alongside you. Would seeing that Rolls motivate you to take action — to drive straight to a Rolls-Royce dealer? Would it cause you to really want to stretch yourself? Would it be a powerful inspiration? Most likely it would not. The reason? The gap between where you are now — the old Chevy — and where you want to go — the Rolls-Royce — is simply beyond believability. Your mind would act as an enemy in that it just wouldn’t accept the idea that you could be the owner of a Rolls Royce because there are no consistent prior experiences or beliefs. That doesn’t mean there’s no hope for you. It just means that you need to set some intermediate goals that act as stepping stones to gradually raise your beliefs and self-concept to that of someone driving a Rolls. For instance, you could set a goal for driving a low-end luxury car and another goal for driving the most expensive Mercedes. The point is to get your mind working with you, not against you. **And the way to accomplish this is to set goals that press the envelope, that are just slightly outside your current belief system.** Goals set in this manner activate your natural creativity, supplying you with ideas for achievement that otherwise would not have occurred to you. Goals that are unreasonable for you (at least at this point in your development) lock up your creativity and tend to act as de-motivators. As you become more of an expert at goal setting, as your confidence grows, you’ll see how simple it is to incrementally strengthen your belief in yourself by setting and then achieving progressively more challenging goals. You’ll be able to set goals that may only have a 20 or 30 percent chance of success. But keep in mind that “reasonable” is different for everyone. Don’t set them too low. If you’re going to make a mistake, it is better to err on the side of setting your goals too high.

**8. Highly effective goals are thoroughly planned.**

You should have tangible action steps for each of your goals. You need to compile the details, make a plan, write out all the activities, prioritize them, time organize them, and rewrite them as often as necessary to make your plan perfect.