- What Do You Want -

“The starting point of all achievement is desire... Weak desires bring weak results, just as a small amount of fire makes a small amount of heat.” - Napoleon Hill

It’s said that goals help you accomplish far more in a shorter amount of time than anything else.

So, the first step with goals and goal setting is to decide - ‘what do you want’?

Which is, well, obvious. But curiously, it’s often forgotten or simply overlooked. Likewise, the crucial word in ‘what do you want’ is - YOU. It has to be important and meaningful to you.

If it’s important to someone else, or just a ‘should goal’ (I should do this, or I should do that), it won’t have the energy and juice to be motivating and transformative. Accomplishing your goal(s) needs to make you happy and offer a sense of fulfillment.

Get Started

An easy way to get started with your ‘what do you want’ list is to write down at least 10 things that would make your life awesome/exciting/better than it is right now. Have fun with it - there’s no judging.

- What do you want to: achieve/become/own?

- Go through and envision if you could achieve any one goal, which one
would have the biggest impact on your life right now?

**Be Specific**

Besides just being exciting & motivating, your goal(s) need to be as specific and concrete as possible. (So you have a barometer to work toward!)

Rather than something vague (and commonplace) like “I’d like to have more money”, it should be specific - “I want to earn X amount within 12 months”.

**Make it Measurable**

Make your goal measurable, if for nothing else, so you know when you’ve achieved it.

Frame your goals in such a way so you can measure your progress. For example, plan on measuring weekly, monthly or quarterly depending on the goal.

And remember, success builds momentum (no matter how small), which builds interest, confidence and commitment...

**Set the Bar**

There’s a fine line between setting a goal that’s within your reach right now, and the possibility of being within your reach.

So, while there’s no point in setting a goal that you believe to be
impossible, which almost ensures you’ll abandon it...

- “No one is ready for a thing, until he believes he can acquire it... What the mind of man can conceive and believe, it can achieve” - Napoleon Hill

You also want to make sure that your goal stretches you to achieve it, because if it isn’t engaging, it will also have a high abandonment rate...

- “Any person who selects a goal in life which can be fully achieved, has already defined his own limitations” - Cavett Robert

So, your goal needs to be ambitious without being impossible.

**Communicating with Your Subconscious**

When you write out your goals, in order to communicate successfully with your subconscious, you need to root your goals in language it understands...

- Present. As though you are looking back, you need to write your goal as if you’ve already achieved/accomplished it. So for instance, rather than say “I will lose weight”, a more effective goal would be “I lose 15 lbs. by (certain date). Or instead of “I will get my diploma”, it should be written as, “I earn my diploma from CU by (certain date)” ...

- Positive. Your subconscious doesn’t understand negative sentences, so instead of saying “I will quit smoking”, your goal should be “I am a non-smoker”, or the statement “I won’t eat dessert” should be “I eat healthy foods - I am a healthy eater”.
- Set Deadlines To Accomplish Your Goals -

“Procrastination is the thief of time” - Edward Young

Simply put, deadlines are needed for effective goal setting. Without a timeframe, there is no impetus or driving force to achieve your goal, and it becomes too easy to procrastinate and put off the work that needs to be done.

Besides providing motivational energy, a deadline also helps shape your plan of attainment.

- Ex - If your goal is to lose 10lbs, the way you achieve it will definitely be different if your deadline is four-weeks compared to four-months.

- Or if your goal is to get a Masters degree, how you go about it will be different if your deadline is two-years compared to ten.

As you see the deadline approaching, it helps crystalize your efforts and forces you to work faster and more efficiently. And having a deadline also helps you stick with your needed tasks when more tempting/less productive options come along.

Break It Down

If it’s a bigger life-changing-goal (after you set a deadline), you can break it
down into smaller, short-term increments with smaller attainable tasks.

They say there’s no unrealistic goals, just unrealistic time frames. So setting shorter time frames and smaller tasks can keep you on time and on track towards your larger goal.

- Why You Need To Write It Down -

“Goals that are not written down are just wishes.”

According to some, less than 5% of the population actually writes down their goals...

By writing them down, you take the half-formulated thoughts floating in your head, and turn them into something clear and concrete that your conscious mind can focus on.

And by writing your goals down, you’re already committing to the goal itself which helps build momentum.

- “The discipline of writing something down is the first step toward making it happen.” Lee Iacocca

Make Copies

Whether you write your goals once, or write them every morning, you should think about posting them in a place that will help you stay strong when unproductive urges bubble up.
- Plan and Progress -

“The biggest goal can be achieved if you break it down to enough small steps” - Henry Ford

Just like breaking down your goal into shorter increments, time-wise, if you can chunk down the actionable items into smaller and smaller steps, you can take them one task at a time.

These mini goals will seem less daunting than looking at the finished end result.

Prioritize

So, when thinking about your larger end goal, start by making a list of every task you can think of that must be completed. From start to finish.

- It might be easier to start with the most important steps that must happen to achieve your goal, then break down those steps into its components.

- If you’re not sure what tasks are needed, start from the end and work backward.

- It might help to set goals which work to eliminate any potential road blocks or immediate obstacles.

Once you’ve written each step, it might help to organize them by priority and sequence. Some steps will naturally come before others, and some steps will get you much closer to your end goal, so do those first.
Action Items

Once you have chunked down the end goal into mini goals, you’ll want to make an action plan (i.e. a goal setting strategy) with timeframes for each.

- Ex - I will (list each mini goal) by (list the specific actions you’ll do to accomplish each mini goal) by (specific date).

Like your larger goal, you’ll want to make these mini goals specific and measurable to evaluate your success.

Process Goals

Besides ‘Results Goals’ and ‘Performance Goals’, you’ll want to include ‘Process Goals’ to help achieve the other two.

- Results Goals: The end result/destination - “earn X amount within 12 months”

- Performance Goals: How you perform at something - “increase sales by X percent compared to last year”

Process Goals on the other hand help with the all-important ‘how’. They’re the goals you set for yourself in regard to the process for achievement.

- Ex - “Spend one hour before work on X”

- Ex - “Go to the gym at least three times per week”

Make it simple/convenient/realistic for every day.
Once you've finished, you'll have a detailed roadmap with directions to follow.

Just remember, accomplishing your goal won’t be automatic, and that you’ll have to be persistent and do at least a little each day to turn your goal into an accomplishment.

- **Make your goals real to you** -

  “Your subconscious mind cannot tell the difference between an actual experience and one that is vividly imagined” – Maxwell Maltz

  One way to help root your goals and make them more real/attainable, is to visualize.

  Visualizing the end result will help keep your goals out of the abstract, and will help not only your motivation and excitement, but also will help direct your subconscious.

  To get started, it might help to start with your ideal outcome.

  - What does it look/sound like?
  - What do you feel?
  - Who else is there?
  - What do you hear?
  - How will your life be different after completion?

  **Vision Board**

  - Another option is to create a vision board, where you take the mental snapshots of your goal and turn them into visual representations.
Be sure to put the board someplace you see every day - especially right before you go to sleep and right after waking.

- **Evaluate your goals**-

  “There is no failure, only learning lessons”

An overlooked aspect of goal setting AND achievement is to monitor your progress and see how you did.

Whether you achieved your goal or not, you can always learn something. Do some self-assessment and see:

- What worked?
- What didn’t?
- Did your goal reach your expectations?
- If you didn’t achieve your goal - why?

Extracting these lessons will increase your accomplishments even more as you apply them to your future goal setting.

On the other hand, if you don’t track your progress, you won’t know if you’re on the right path or need to get back on track.

**Check Progress**

Rather than waiting till your big goal’s deadline, set recurring times to check your progress. Maybe use your email calendar, or a smart phone, or just a pencil checklist - whatever you prefer stick to a consistent schedule.
If you’re not making progress - take a look and see why.

- Do you need friends or family to help keep you on track?
- Maybe a trainer or outside professional?

Are there certain factors or obstacles keeping you from your goal? If there are, develop a step by step plan of action to overcome them.

**Embrace Failure**

“If you can find a path with no obstacles, it probably doesn’t lead anywhere” - Frank A. Clark

Obstacles and opportunities - how you see them is up to you.

But obstacles and learning lessons are an important part of the goal achieving process. If the goal is important enough - persist. Simply being disciplined and persistent makes all the difference.

**-Take Action-**

“A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step”

Do one thing every day that moves you towards your goal. However big or small - take action and do something. Besides moving you closer to your goal, consistently doing something makes it a habit. And habits are a great ally against procrastination and dips in your resolve.
"Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined" - Henry David Thoreau

Lastly don’t forget to CELEBRATE your success!

You’ve put in the time and effort to achieve your goal, so make sure you celebrate (appropriately).

Sure the satisfaction of setting out and achieving your goal is rewarding in itself, but external reward(s) are also great. Having something to look forward to can help if you feel your motivation waning.

And don’t forget to celebrate your minor goals as well. You’ve accomplished what you set out to do and are that much closer to your overall goal. So, celebrate!

Then move on to the next goal/milestone...

“Arriving at one goal is the starting point to another” - John Dewey