

Goal Setting

Goal setting is a technique that helps people achieve their goals. It is used by all sorts of people (such as successful business-people, students and athletes) and provides them with long-term vision and short-term motivation.

The use of a structured goal setting method can greatly increase your chances of attaining your goals.

By setting goals on a routine basis you decide what you want to achieve, and then step-by-step move towards the achievement of these goals.

The process of setting goals allows you to choose where you want to go in life. By knowing precisely what you want to achieve, you know what you have to concentrate on to do it.

By setting clear goals, you can measure and take pride in the achievement of those goals. You can see forward progress in what might previously have seemed a long pointless grind.

By setting goals, you will also raise your self-confidence, as you recognize your ability and competence in achieving the goals that you have set. The process of achieving goals and seeing this achievement gives you confidence that you will be able to achieve higher and more difficult goals.

The Goal Setting Method

1) List your goals and select one or two to work towards

Think of all the goals you have over the next year or two. Ask

yourself “What is it that I want to accomplish?” and “Where would I like to be one year from now?”

Your goals might relate to work or school, recreation or hobbies, getting more exercise or having more social contacts.

If you initially have difficulties coming up with goals, think about whether there is anything about your life that you would like to change or anything you are not happy with. For example, you may be unhappy with your current job or would like to socialize more often. It can become your goal to change things that you are not happy with.

Write down these goals as you come up with them. Try to write your goals down so that they are positive: “I will pass this course” rather than “I will not fail this course”.

After thinking about your goals for a while, you may find that you have many different goals that you want to achieve – and if you do - this is great! However, working on all these goals at once would leave you with less time and effort available to focus on each and will likely make you feel overwhelmed. Take a closer look at your list and prioritize your goals. Try to really focus on just one or two for now.

When thinking about goals and selecting ones to work on, it is important to be realistic. In order for goal setting to work, the goals have to be possible and achievable. Some goals are clearly not realistic – for example, many people would

love find a job where they earn \$1 million dollars this year but for most people this clearly isn't a realistic goal! With other goals it may be much more difficult to determine whether or not they are not realistic.

Talking about goals openly with your EPI Clinician or a trusted friend will often help you decide if these are goals you can attain.

Setting your goals at the right level involves making sure that they are not too difficult or too easy to achieve.

It is ideal to have goals set so that they are slightly out of your immediate grasp, but not so far that there is no hope of achieving them.

It often takes practice to find what the right level of goal is – and often goals may have to be revised if they begin to appear too easy or too difficult.

Don't be disheartened if you have to revise your goals – this is all part of the goal setting process and is to be expected.

2) Define your goals clearly and break them down into small steps

Once you have selected one or two realistic and achievable goals, you will then need to clearly define these. Be precise in defining your goals - putting in dates, times and amounts so that you can measure achievement.

Divide each goal up into small steps that are also precise. These steps should be ones that you can attain in a short period of time - over days or weeks.

If possible, try to make these steps enjoyable – there are often many different ways to attain the same goal – choose the more enjoyable way when you can.

3) Review your progress and revise

You should regularly review your progress towards achieving your goal. Identify and write down any problems or obstacles you have encountered.

Engage in problem solving to determine if there are methods of fixing these problems so that you continue working towards your goal as planned. In some cases, the problem may not have an apparent solution and either the steps towards the goal or the goal itself will have to be revised.

Do not be disappointed if you have to revise your goals – this is actually to be expected and indicates that you are correctly using the goal setting method.

In reviewing your progress, note whether you are achieving the goal too easily or if progress is slow, difficult, or non-existent. All this means is that the goal wasn't set at the right level and that you need to make adjustments to the goal.

There are no failures in goal setting – just adjustments to the process or to the level of goal.

Also, remember that your goals may change simply with the passage of time. Just because something was your goal six months ago, doesn't mean that it has to be today.

If goals do not hold any attraction any longer, then simply change them or let them go. Goal setting is a tool to help you achieve the goal *you want to achieve*.

4) Take satisfaction in your efforts and achievements

Of course you should enjoy your success in achieving one of your goals. Congratulate yourself – you have worked hard and deserve to feel good about your success!

But success could not be possible without your efforts and without achieving the individual steps towards your goal. Along the way towards a goal, whenever you achieve a step or have made a significant effort, always take time to enjoy the satisfaction of having done so.