
Goal Setting Guidelines

Once you decide who you are, what you are, and where you want to be, you have identified what success means to you. Now you need to learn how to establish goals to carry you along the road to success. To set effective goals, it is important that you observe the following guidelines. A goal must be:

- **Conceivable** – You must be able to conceptualize the goal so that it is understandable and so that you can clearly identify the first step or two.
- **Believable** – In addition to being consistent with your personal value system, you must believe you can reach the goal. Bear in mind that few people can believe a goal that they have never seen achieved by someone else. Look to other people who have met your goal for role models.
- **Achievable** – The goals you set must be accomplishable with your given strengths and abilities. For example, if you were a rather obese 45-year-old, it would be foolish for you to set a goal of running the four-minute mile in the next six months – which simply would not be achievable.
- **Controllable** – If your goal includes the involvement of anyone else, you should first get permission from the other person or persons involved; or the goal may be stated as an invitation. For example, if your goal were to take your girlfriend to a movie on Saturday night, the goal would not be acceptable as stated because it involves the possibility that she might turn you down. However, if you said your goal was merely to invite your girlfriend to the movie, it would be acceptable.
- **Measurable** – Your goal must be stated so that it is measurable in time and quantity. For example, suppose your goal was to work on your term paper this week. You would specify your goal by saying, “I am going to write twenty pages by 3:00 PM next Monday.” That way, the goal can be measured and when Monday comes, you know whether or not you have achieved it.
- **Desirable** – Your goal should be something you really want to do. Whatever your ambition, it should be one that you want to fulfill, rather than something you feel you should do.
- **Stated with no alternative** – You should set one goal at a time. Research has shown that a person who says he/she wants to do one thing or another - giving himself/herself an alternative – seldom gets beyond the “or”. He/she does neither. This does not imply inflexibility. Flexibility in action implies an ability to be able to make a judgment that some action you are involved in is either inappropriate, unnecessary, or the result of a bad decision. Even though you may set out for one goal, you can stop at any time and drop it for a new one. But when you change, you again state your goal without an alternative.
- **Growth Facilitating** – Your goal should never be destructive to yourself, to others or to society. A mentee recently set a goal to break off fourteen car antennas before 9:00 am the next day. The goal was certainly believable, achievable, measurable and so forth. Obviously such a goal cannot be supported. If a mentee is seeking a potentially destructive goal, an effort to encourage him to consider a different goal should be made.

H