



*Journey to a
Better Life!*

How Do I Set Goals That Work?

Tim Brownson

Introduction

Philosophers and more recently scientists, have been, pondering, debating and stroking their chins over the meaning of happiness since the dawn of time. Happiness is not an easy thing to pin down as you can imagine, because it's highly subjective and contextual and there can never be just one definition.

Whereas we don't know entirely what can guarantee happiness we do know a few things that usually help. Meditation and/or prayer helps, as does remembering to feel grateful, helping others less fortunate than ourselves, savoring the moment, and rather counter-intuitively, denying ourselves immediate gratification. We also know that setting and achieving goals can go some way toward helping the majority of people to experience a happier and more fulfilled existence.

And 'majority' is the operative word, because as I have said before, goal setting is not right for every individual. Indeed it can, and does, stress certain types of people out, especially if the goals are poorly formed and not thought through in the first place.

And that's part of the reason that I pondered long and hard before finally deciding to write this ebook, because like almost every other aspect of self development, there's no cookie cutter approach that works every time for every person.

Most industries have their conventional wisdom and it is, to a large extent, a good thing. It would get incredibly tiresome continually having to verify things we believe to be true over and over again.

However, sometimes conventional wisdom needs to be challenged if we are to progress. I believe it's our duty if we suspect something may be wrong to ask questions without the fear of being thought of as a pot-stirrer at best and a heretic worth burning at the stake at worse.

Goal setting is the Sacred Cow of the life coaching and personal development industry. In fact it's not far short of being an industry in its own right.

There are specialist goal setting coaches, goal setting websites, courses designed to help you set goals and the bookshelves are crammed with ways of setting 'can't miss' goals written by goal setting Guru's.

Some of the giants of the self development industry like Norman Vincent Peale, Jim Rohn, Napoleon Hill, Brian Tracey and Zig Ziglar have been hammering home the goal setting message since (it seems like) the dawn of time.

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Quotes like the ones below abound and regularly get trotted out to drive home the message; If you don't have clearly defined written goals you're somewhere right around the level of plankton on the evolutionary scale.

- *"All successful people have a goal. No one can get anywhere unless he knows where he wants to go and what he wants to be or do."* – Norman Vincent Peale
- *"Success equals goals; all else is commentary."* – Brian Tracy
- *"If you don't design your own life plan, chances are you'll fall into someone else's plan. And guess what they have planned for you? Not much."* – Jim Rohn

I started to wonder about goal setting and its ultimate efficacy for certain types of people and in certain situations. Sometime in 2009 I was working with a client who was a serial goal setter and serial goal hitter. Here was a guy that was moving goal by goal through life in textbook style with unencumbered ease.

Yet he was as miserable as sin and wasn't getting any pleasure hitting his goals never mind the journey toward them.

Then shortly after I had three other similar clients. All excellent goal setters, all excellent goal hitters, but all were left with a sense of emptiness when they finally hit a goal and they immediately felt the need to set bigger and better goals to fill the void.

It made no sense.

According to Messrs. Peale, Tracy and Rohn, success is setting goals, so how can some people don't feel successful when they are so good at it?

Unless, Heaven forbid, the Godfathers of self development are wrong in making such sweeping generalizations and goal setting isn't right for every single person.

After all, we now know the famous Yale study that showed the 3% of students with written goals out performed the 97% without them, is a self development urban myth. That irrespective of how many times it gets dusted down and trotted out, it never really happened.

Don't get me wrong, I do believe for a number of reasons that written goals are in the majority of cases more likely to be achieved (and I will explain why later on), but that isn't in any way the same as saying they define success.

The problem I see happening with some efficient goal setters, is they think hitting their goal will make them feel happy and worthwhile. And come that magical day when they nail their target they think they will finally be able to relax and enjoy life.

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Then they achieve whatever it is they want and it's like:

"Er, oh, is this all there is? Hm, maybe I need to set another bigger, better goal to focus on."

And off they go again, not realizing that they aren't enjoying the ride because they're so focused on how they will feel at some random point in the future. Rather than on what they feel and what they are doing right now.

Or worse still, they miss their target and feel like a total failure and that they wasted all that time and energy and all they got in return was a feeling of not being good enough.

Goals are a means to an end the same way money is a means to an end. It's not the money we want, it's what we think it will give us. And it's not the goals we want, it's what we think those goals will give us.

In terms of client work for me, goal setting is about as easy as it gets. In fact, if you called me up and said you wanted to hire me to help you set goals and nothing else, unless they were incredibly juicy, I probably wouldn't be too pumped.

Firstly, because the actual process isn't exactly stretching or exciting when you have done it a few hundred times.

More importantly though, you really don't need to hire a Life Coach to help you set goals. In what we unrefined English people call a piece of piss (very easy), and not something I would encourage you to spend hundreds of dollars on.

You're far better reading an ebook like this. Which is exactly what you're doing, so congratulations you've saved yourself a boat load of cash!

On the other hand, you may need to hire a Coach to help you hit your goals, because the setting part isn't the tricky bit. And therein lay my doubts.

I know that setting and achieving meaningful goals goes way deeper than I ever would want to in this book because it involves understanding your values first and foremost which is a book in its own right (and yes, amazingly enough that will be coming your way soon).

Without fully understanding your values and aligning with them, you're not only exponentially less likely to hit them, but much more importantly, you are less likely to enjoy the process, and that is the real waste.

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Having said that, for the purposes of this book I'm going to assume you at least have a rough idea of your values. And also just in case, I'm going to take you through a couple of processes that will massively reduce the chance of you setting goals that are completely out of alignment with who you are as a person.

Warning

Before we get into all that juicy good stuff though, let me add a word of warning.

If you are easily offended by the occasional swear word, poor grammar or run on sentences stop reading now and go and have a lie down!

This book contains a smattering of such abominations and I don't want you fainting in shock when you stumble across the 'F' bomb or a poorly constructed sentence.

So enough with the preamble, if you're ready to set yourself some big fat hair audacious goals that you can actually hit, let's get going.

Chapter 1

What's Your Motivation?

Before you pitch yourself head first into setting goals ask yourself one very simple question:

"What will this goal or goals give me?"

Do not ignore this stage because it's absolutely crucial and can potentially save you a lot of time, money and misery further down the road.

If you don't do this there is the chance that you will set a goal or goals you think are important to you, only to realize a few weeks, months, even years down the road, that they were not only not important, but possibly meaningless, or in some circumstances harmful to your well-being.

You may very well think that won't happen to you, and that is pretty much what everybody thinks, so let's just conduct some due diligence and make 100% sure you're on the right path.

What's Your Biggest Goal?

For the sake of this exercise pick out your biggest goal and ask yourself what's the main reason you want to achieve whatever it is?

Really think about the question deeply and I'd encourage you to write your answer or answers down right now so you can stare at them in the cold light of day.

When you have done that come back and we can take a closer look at what you have.

You have done it right? You're not one of those types of people that can't stand to do the exercises in self development books and then wonders why you never make any lasting change, are you?

Ok, so I'm trusting you realize a lifetime of happiness is worth investing a few minutes of having to think about this stuff deeply and you have done the work.

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Now ready to chuckle at some less than stellar reasons for setting goals that I'm confident you would never adopt but some poor souls do.

Crap Reasons For Setting Goals

Answers that will ultimately lead you to feeling pissed off, empty and unfulfilled are:

- *I need more money*
- *I have to make my parents (or anybody else for that matter) proud*
- *I need a bigger house*
- *I want to show people how successful I am*
- *I'd like to be famous and have people adore me*

The common denominator for all of the above is that they are extrinsically motivated.

In other words they are by and large out of alignment with your values because they come from the mindset that external things (including other people and their opinions) will make you happy.

They won't, they'll just hold you hostage to fortune and may you feel like you have no control over your life.

Let's take a closer look at each one of those and really examine why they don't just suck, but suck massive donkey balls.

"I need more money"

I have no idea if you really do need more money. If you're house is in the process of being repossessed, you've lost your job and you're literally struggling to put food on the table then I will concede you really do need more money.

However, if you're raking in a 6-figure salary, driving a Mercedes, can pay all your bills each month without too much difficulty, but you're pissed off because you can't afford that third week sailing round the South Pacific, then you really don't need any more money, you just want more.

Whatever your circumstances, I'd still not encourage you to set a goal of earning 'X' amount of cash without a *lot* of thought and really understanding what is behind that desire.

In my experience when people set financial goals and hit them, they are almost always left disappointed when the brief high of hitting the goal has worn off.

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They normally then counter that disappointment by presuming the goal wasn't significant enough and rushing to set another, even bigger one. Only to discover when they get there, that isn't it either. And thus the process rolls on and on.

There is no amount of money that will make you happy. Trust me on this one because there is a mountain of scientific data to back me up.

Time and time again researchers have concluded that the link between money and happiness is (once you lift somebody out of poverty) small at lower levels of income and statistically meaningless with high earners.

In other words, the guy earning \$10,000,000 per annum is statistically speaking no happier than the woman earning \$250,000 per annum.

Most people get this, but they only get it for other people and rarely think it applies to them. Which is why they really do need that 20% pay rise that will make things hunky dory. At least for two or three months until their friend gets a pay rise.

"I have to make my parents (or anybody else for that matter) proud"

I have worked with a great deal of clients who were in jobs that they thought would make their parents proud, but made themselves miserable.

First and foremost, that is a ridiculous reason for choosing a career even in the unlikely event it's true and your parents do want you to be unhappy.

In the event that you do make your parents proud by adopting a career path that doesn't feel right for you, I feel sure they would be mortified if they realized they'd pushed you in a direction that made you unhappy.

The one thing your parents almost certainly want, is for you to be happy. Now don't get me wrong, they may very well firmly believe that if you dedicate yourself to becoming a doctor, attorney or TV star you will be happy, but guess what?

Parents get stuff wrong.....all the time!

In fact, I'll go as far as to say by and large they suck at knowing what will make their kids happy in the long-term.

If you don't know what you want to do for a living, I'm damn sure your parents don't know.

Make sure your goals are yours, and yours alone. I realize you may want to make other people proud and there's nothing wrong with that per se, but I want you to

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realize that desire in isolation could very well stifle your own happiness. So don't do it!

If you have kids or plan on having kids, will you want them to head off on a career path that they think you want them to have? Or would you rather them follow their true passion and be happy?

Unless you're a selfish bastard (you're not by the way so don't worry) who likes to live vicariously through others you'll want the latter. So what makes you think your parents are any different?

"I need a bigger house"

No you don't.

You may want a bigger house, but that is an altogether different proposition to thinking you **need** one. As long as you have a roof over your head you're good to go and you really can manage without the 4th guest bedroom, underground garage and bowling alley.

Semantics out of the way, there is also another more prescient reason why aiming for a bigger house is a crap goal. It's because of the process called adaptation.

Humans (and you are one of those so yes this does apply to you) are brilliant at adapting to their circumstances. That's why we can live in the Arctic Circle, on the equator, in the jungle, in the desert and even in Cleveland.

It's also why people that have no money can be as happy as Larry. And millionaires be as miserable as Larry's buddy that lost the winning lottery ticket shortly after punching his boss and resigning his highly paid job.

It's also the reason why when you get that bigger house you will eventually adapt to living there and probably become restless and want an even bigger or better house.

"I want to show people how successful I am"

Hold on there Tiger, because on the whole people don't really give a rats ass about you or your perceived successful levels. They're way to concerned with getting on with their own lives than worrying about what you're up to.

And anyway, how many people do you want to recognize your success? Is it just your family, or your family and friends, or maybe your neighborhood, the town you live in or perhaps the entire world?

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And how would you measure a goal like and know when you'd hit it?

Your definition of success is likely to be different to mine and whereas you may see yourself as being successful because you have 'X' amount of money in the bank or you have 'Y' title printed on your business card, I may disagree.

I may reasonably say that's meaningless to me because I measure success by how happy and content somebody is, not how much material stuff and status they have.

How frustrating will that be when you can't convince people that you epitomize success which effectively means you have missed your goal.

"I'd like to be famous and have people adore me"

What, like Charlie Sheen you mean?

Why do you think so many celebrities turn to cosmetic surgery, drugs and appearing on embarrassing reality shows when their careers start to slide, and sometimes even before that happens?

Pure unadulterated fear is the reason.

Fear of not being adored. Fear of not being wanted. Fear of not being thought of as attractive. Fear of failure (whatever failure is). Fear of moving on. Fear of life in general.

Do you want to be like that? Do you want to be constantly chasing something completely unattainable?

Not only is a goal like this not specific or measurable (more later), it's also entirely extrinsic. It relies entirely on what other people think which is something you have at best very little influence over, and at worst, zero.

As you will see later when we look at the guts of goal setting, having a goal that is out of your control and determined by others is not only a recipe for misery, but it's not even a real goal.

Wanting to be famous for the sake of fame is probably the most fucking ridiculous and misplaced desire on the face of the planet.

Seriously it is. Yet it's one that millions of people forlornly cling on to. Don't be one of them.

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If you don't believe me that so many people harbor this desire, check out the audition stages of American Idol and you'll see what I mean as thousands of people are prepared to humiliate themselves just to get their 5 minutes of fame

If you're feeling a tad crestfallen because you really, really do want to be famous, ask yourself what are the reasons for that desire.

What will that fame give you that you don't already have? Because a desire for fame for fame's sake often emanates from a low self esteem with the person in question thinking that fame will validate them as a human being.

Sorry to be the bearer of more bad tidings, but as with money, fame will not make you happy, so switch off TMZ, put down People Magazine and concentrate on the job at hand because we have some work to do!

Great Reasons For Setting Goals

Now we have got the crap stuff out of the way and I've stopped lecturing you, let's look at some answers that will have you not only pumped and excited about your goal, but actually enjoying the process rather than focusing on the end result all the time and missing half your life.

- *I want to leave a legacy*
- *I want the world to be a better place for me having been here*
- *I want to set a great example for my kids*
- *I want to be able to leave my 9 to 5 job to spend more time with my family*
- *I want to align with my own core values*

The difference between the first list and the second is that the first list as we have already discussed utilizes extrinsic motivation and the second list incorporates intrinsic motivation. The latter is waaaaay cooler when it comes to goal setting.

The first list was all about you and what you can get the second list is still about you, but it is a lot more focussed on creating win/win situations with other people.

Now you may well be thinking that you're really not arsed about any of that helping other people malarkey and you just want to set goals that make you lots of money.

Well be my guest, but you are going against your hard wiring and in my experience you won't get anything like the pleasure achieving your goals when you hit them, nor will you enjoy the ride as much.

The Rich and Happy Goal

At the end of 2009 I sat down with my co-author, John Strelecky to talk about our plans and goals for *How To Be Rich and Happy*. We decided to set a goal of selling 1,000,000 copies of the book, because that would be huge, we'd be superstars, have lots of money and everybody would adore us.

Do you know how many new titles sell 1,000,000 copies? No, neither do I, but it isn't many. And when you narrow it down to the self-development field, it's a damn site less.

As I type this, and depending on how you view self development (for instance would the 'Chicken Soup for the Soul' books classify? I'm honestly not sure), I can't think of more than about a dozen that have sold that many. So that was a pretty big goal.

It was also a pretty crap and meaningless goal because we hadn't thought it through at all and we were soon contacted by the Life Coaching Police and ordered on pain of death to rethink our goal.

The fact that we didn't do our own due diligence meant we had fallen into the trap that many people do when setting goals. We were guilty of being extrinsically motivated and outwardly focussed for a short while.

Fortunately we soon came to our senses and we did so by asking ourselves one very simple question.

If you know me very well or read my blog, you may know I really don't like the word 'why'. The reason being is that very often it forces people on to the defensive and to justify their decisions rather than focussing on solutions. At least in a coaching environment, that's not very productive.

However, this is one of the few occasions I'd encourage you to adopt it and ask the same questions of your goal that we asked of ours.

Why do I want that?

It doesn't matter what answer comes back, simply ask the question again. And then ask it again and again and again. Until hopefully you will come to an answer that satisfies your most important values.

If you can't do that, then your goal definitely isn't right for you and I'd urge you to scrap it and start over again.

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Myself and John soon came to the conclusion that we really wanted was to leave a legacy and positively impact the lives of 1 million people, irrespective of whether we made any money ourselves.

From that sprung the idea of giving the book away to people that couldn't normally afford to buy it or wouldn't be exposed to such material.

Now that's what you call a win/win and an intrinsically motivated goal. And the ride to date whilst never being easy (at the time of writing we have given about \$125k worth of books away) has been incredibly rewarding.

Even if we don't hit our target, we've still had a great time and I have a folder full of emails from grateful people and that really is worth more than the few grand we'd have earned from an advance.

Before you think, "Well yeh that's alright for you, because I bet you have lots of money", I don't. And anyway, it's really not about the money, it's about being happy, and doing worthwhile shit makes you happy!

Chapter 2

Goal Clarification

I know, I know, we're barely into this book and I'm throwing another bloody exercise at you. I know it's a pain in the ass having to think so much, but it will be worth it, trust me.

As with the previous exercise I urge you with all the urge I can muster and then some more urge, to put pen to paper, or at least finger to keyboard on this one too because it will exponentially increase its efficacy.

Dream Big

If I told you that when you woke up tomorrow you could do anything, with anybody and be anywhere you wanted, what would you do? There are no constraints whatsoever.

This has nothing to do with being reasonable or sensible. If you want to play on Center Court at Wimbledon, prior to partying all night with Sarah Palin and watching the sun rise over the Grand Canyon with the Spice Girls, you go for it petal, this is your dream day.

The idea is not to set this up as your goal, but it's to clarify the kind of things you really want out of life. People are absolutely brilliant at compromising their hopes and dreams, and trust me it's a crap thing to do, so don't do it....ever!

So write down what you want, what you really, really want and don't spare the horses.

You have 24 event filled hours to fill and you've even borrowed a wormhole vortex time travel machine thingy off your buddy Stephen Hawking that he knocked up in his garage last weekend. It will take you from one event to the next in less than a second, which is nice, especially as it's a hybrid version and does 55 miles per gallon.

When you have your perfect day written down what does it tell you?

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How close could you get to that lifestyle? Are your family involved? Are you in the limelight or relaxing? Are you with friends or alone? What do you look like? Are you moving toward any of that now, or do you tell yourself a life like that isn't possible?

How does it make you feel to think about a life similar that? Is it worth a bit of hassle and effort to achieve it?

Or would you rather lie on the sofa eating pizza, drinking beer, watching crap soap operas and procrastinating until it's too late to change and all you're left with is a shit load of regrets about a wasted life?

Of course not, so can you look at what you have and adapt it to set a goal that whilst being tough and stretching is actually physically possible to do?

If so, what's holding you back, it is the fear of failure? If it is, remember this:

“The surest way to fail is to adopt the belief that it isn't ok to fail.”

Failing is a fact of life so you may as well get used to it or find yourself a nice snugly warm cave to live in.

Chapter 3

Write It Down

I have seen lots of Life Coaches and supposed expert speakers talk about the importance of getting goals down on paper (or at least on your computer).

However, I have seldom seen anybody bother to explain the rationale behind the logic. And even when they have attempted to explain it they often make a half-assed attempt, so let's redress the balance and tell you why writing your goals down will help you.

Telling people to do something is fine I guess, but about 1.5% (made up statistic) as effective as telling them why it will be helpful and how it works.

Have you ever been to a workshop or training event and taken no notes? Have you ever then been to a workshop or training event where you did take notes?

Which is the one you remember most clearly, presuming all things are equal?

Even if you never referred back to your course notes you will still remember the latter event more easily.

The reason is that to write something down uses a different part of the brain than to listen to something. In other words you are doubling the chance of recalling the information at a later date.

Not only that, but some people are more auditory and others more auditory digital (written word) in their recall. So if you have gathered the information in a weaker representational system you will have more problems tapping back into it.

That's the reason why mind maps work so well for some people. If you are a visual person, you are way more likely to remember a mind map than a bunch of text. It's also the reason why highly auditory kids should be given books on audio to learn from, but that's another matter.

Make It Real

The act of writing the goal down also does a couple of other really important things.

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Firstly, it means you actually see your goal in front of you and it looks more real. There's lots of stuff floating around in your mind that will never happen.

Your unconscious can't be expected to be working on all of it at the same time no matter how brilliant it is because it has a shit load of other work to be getting on with. Your heart doesn't beat itself you know.

So by writing it down you're concentrating your focus and demonstrating the importance to your unconscious as well as making sure you don't forget the goal.

You are also setting up a disconnect in your brain between what you have and what you want. The disconnect will make your unconscious go to work on bridging the gap. This can manifest in all manner of subtle coincidences that start to crop up.

When we first decided we were going to move to the US and started to draw up a plan, it was amazing how many people we suddenly started to come across that could offer some form of help.

These people were there all the time, it's just that now my unconscious was on the look out for them.

If you are in a room full of people talking and you are engrossed in a conversation, what do you think the odds are that you will hear your own name if somebody mentions it in another conversation ten feet away?

Even if there are several people talking between you and the person using your name, you are highly likely to pick it out because of a phenomenon known as the Cocktail Party Effect.

Your unconscious mind in the form of (largely) your amygdala is constantly on the look out for stuff it thinks you need to know about even when you are busy doing other stuff at a conscious level.

So give it a pat on its back and thank it very much for all its hard work and be relaxed in the knowledge that your written goal is now far more likely to come to fruition.

Chapter 4

Goal Statements

There are three different approaches to this stage. The first two are very similar and only require a few minutes prep.

The last one though is considerably more involved than that and requires a bit more commitment. The kind of commitment I like to believe you have in spades though, so feel free to scroll past the wussy methods and go straight to goal setting on steroids!

There is a process called the 3 P's in goal setting and it stands for Personal, Present Tense & Positive.

Personal means it has to be your goal and can be achieved by you. In other words you can't have a goal for your best friend to win the lottery and give you some of her cash.

Also as we talked about earlier on, it has to be your goal in terms of something you want. As we have talked about already, never ever have a goal because somebody else wants you to have it.

Present Tense means the goal needs to be written as though it has already been achieved so that you create something called cognitive dissonance (more in a moment).

Positive means it has to be something you want to achieve and not something you want to avoid. In other words, having a goal to not go out and get hammered on Tequila with the girls this Saturday doesn't cut the mustard.

Whereas having a goal to stay at home on Saturday and drink wild organic mountain spring water whilst watching documentaries on Otters would be fine.

As we spoke about above, your unconscious doesn't like to make a fool of you, so if you say "I'm a healthy weight with a body that Zeus/Apollo would kill for" and you really look more like Mr. Creosote in Monty Python's 'The Meaning Of Life', your unconscious probably thinks, "Holy shit I have some work to do, let's put that 13th donut back"

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There are two potential downsides to the above method. Firstly, if you are a long way from your goal and it is a huge one, it may feel ridiculous for you to say that and you can create internal resistance.

Secondly, you may be the kind of person whose conscious mind thinks "Oh I'm super fit and sylph like I am? I may as well relax and have that extra slice of deep fried chocolate pizza and a gallon of beer then."

What Is Cognitive Dissonance?

Your brain hates to hold two contradictory beliefs at the same time because it makes it feel all weird. As such it will usually sift for information that will undermine the weaker belief and support the stronger one.

The present tense method creates cognitive dissonance because you're telling your brain something it's pretty sure isn't true.

As such the theory is that your brain will sort for information and help to bridge the gap. Of course, it may also decide that the gap is too large to bridge and opt for a nap instead, so be careful.

The second method is to do exactly as above, but future base it. So the previous goal statement would be "I'm moving toward a healthy weight with a body that Zeus/Apollo would kill for."

Another tip here is to add the words 'or better', 'or more' etc to the statement so you don't limit yourself.

It doesn't quite fit with the above example, but for our Rich and Happy goal it could be "We are moving toward giving 1 million copies *or more*, of How To Be Rich and Happy away."

Goal Statement on Steroids

The third and without doubt the best alternative is to write a goal contract. This involves lots of lovely details similar to the perfect day exercise. In fact it requires as much detail as possible to really make the goal as vivid and real to you as possible.

It also requires you commit to it by signing in the blood of an 18 year old virgin. If you don't know any 18 year old virgins that are happy for you to sacrifice them, ink will do at a push.

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I would take the contract a stage further by posting it online for others to see. That way you're utilizing leverage (more later) and you're probably more likely to push on during the times when you have a hangover, it's raining or you'd rather just take a nap.

I think the latter is the best option, but it really is your call on what works best for you. Whatever it is though, I want you to look at your goal statement every day and keep reminding yourself what it is you are moving toward and enjoying the associated cool feelings.

Once you have the goal statement or goal contract, do this.

See It, Hear It, Feel It

Sit in your favorite chair and take several deep breaths. Make sure the exhale is about 50% longer than the inhale and allow yourself to relax. When you are well chilled, I want you to imagine having your goal. I mean really imagine with all your senses.

See what you would see, hear what you would hear and allow all those emotions and feelings that go with hitting your goal to arise. Really let them build and then build some more. Know that you can have this feeling if you really want to.

Spend some time watching yourself, or if you are looking through your own eyes, seeing yourself, and see how brilliant your life is. You can even make the picture or movie bigger and brighter and see if that makes it even more appealing.

You can even try adding a motivational sound track if you like and if it makes your goal feel more attainable. There are no rules, you really can do whatever you want inside your own head without fear of repercussions.

Once you are there I want you to see yourself dealing with any potential obstacles with aplomb. Think of sticking points that may arise and visualize yourself dealing easily with them.

You can make them content free if don't know what they are likely to be at this stage. By that I mean, just see yourself looking confident and overcoming issues without necessarily knowing what the specifics are.

This type of visualization* is very powerful and I would recommend you do this as often as is feasible, preferably on a daily basis. A great time is first thing as you wake up or last thing before you go to sleep when your conscious mind is all dozy and won't insist on crashing the party and trying to be all realistic.

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Have you ever wondered why you get some of your best ideas arise whilst your conscious mind is occupied? You could be working out, driving, taking a shower, asleep, unwell or even a bit worse for wear with drink.

As I have already alluded to, your unconscious is where the real computing power lies and this is the time when it comes to the fore. Not that I am condoning you go out and get hammered on the pretense of practicing your creative thinking, but it explains why so many creative geniuses are a bit too fond of alcohol and/or illicit herbs.

If necessary step into that feeling again and ask yourself the question “Do I really want to deny myself the chance to feel like this?”

* In case you have any doubts, visualization has been scientifically proven to work time and time again and is used by successful people in almost every sphere. If you want more information on how and why it works, check out a cool book you may have heard of called ['How To Be Rich and Happy'](#).

Chapter 5

Commit, Commit, Commit!

A study undertaken by Scranton University concluded that one very simple action undertaken by you as a goal setter can increase the likelihood of you hitting your goals by 1,000%.

Yes, that's what I said.

Just doing one thing that involves next to no work, can increase your odds of success by as much as ten times, and yes, that is probably more than even writing your goals down can achieve.

What is this amazingly cunning trick that can almost do the work for you I'm sure you're wondering?

Like most great ideas in life, it is neither complicated nor surprising when you think about it. But it is, very, very, simple.

According to the good folk at Scranton University, people who announce their goals to their family, friends and peers are ten times more likely to attain them, than people who keep their goals to themselves.

Now if that stat doesn't blow you away, you're either not really into this whole self development malarkey and I have no idea why you're even reading this blog. Or you got an 'F' in math and that was only because they couldn't give you a 'G'.

Short of asking for a date or needing a root canal, can you think of anything else in life where you can improve your odds of success tenfold, simply by opening your mouth?

It's not hard to understand why this works so effectively if you can grasp the concept of status and how crucially important it is to every person on the planet.

Status Is Everything

A few thousand years ago in the days before Twitter, Facebook and even Friends Reunited, your ancestors used to hang around in small tribes. They did such a thing because the alternative was to lead a very sucky and short existence.

If you were excluded from your tribe you would not only have to find, stalk and catch your own food, but also cook it yourself.

Then you'd have to do the dishes afterward (dishwashers had been invented I think, but electricity hadn't so they had no way of plugging them in) whilst all the time keeping half an eye out for Sabretooth Tigers, enemy tribes and those nasty dinosaurs that hunted in pairs and had really big teeth and bad breath.

Consequently being asked to leave the tribe was a very big deal, slashing your life expectancy in half and removing any chance of building up a decent 401K or scoring with the hot chick or dude in the furry underwear.

As such, people would go to great lengths to avoid letting the tribe down because they knew that if they did so they could severely damage their status. And if their status slipped enough, they could be politely asked to leave the tribe by large, unshaven men with long pointy sticks.

Fortunately there are no Sabretooth Tigers roaming our streets, we rarely come under genuine threat from foreign tribes (no matter what right wing media would have you believe), and dinosaurs went the same way as the Enron, only with a bit more integrity and decorum.

That's the good news.

The bad news is that your brain is a bit slow and it hasn't cottoned on to all this yet. It still thinks you're in a tribe and status is the most important thing within that tribe, and so it acts accordingly.

Status is the reason you like to prove people wrong and the reason you like to tell people news before they've heard it. Status is the reason you like to win arguments, to be at the front of the line and triumph in meaningless online games.

It's also the reason why many people (not you obviously, you are way too evolved and mature) like to see others fail or hear stories of people struggling. Sad though it may seem, your brain raises its own status by default when it notices somebody else's status slipping.

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And that is why telling people your goals helps you reach them, because you hate to lose face and back down because that equates to a drop in status and your brain will resist that at all costs.

If you start a blog telling the world how you are committed to doing this or that and a few people start to take notice, changing your mind will exponentially tougher and as such, success much easier to come by.

When Doesn't It Work?

Even though for a great many people, telling others their goals can be hugely beneficial, that isn't the same as saying it's the best approach for everybody.

if you are the kind of person that would rather hug a Velociraptor than be exposed to public scrutiny then this approach may backfire on you and cause you to freeze up.

If you are incredibly introverted and/or shy then you may find this approach simply too stressful, so either work on reducing your shyness first or don't adopt it.

Equally, if you ever have a sense when you have told somebody your goal that you have achieved it and then you do nothing to move yourself toward it, that's obviously a warning sign to keep it to yourself.

On a personal note, it has been my commitment to a lot of people that we will do our utmost to give 1,000,000 copies of 'How To Be Rich and Happy' away to good causes that has kept me going.

If I'm being honest, without that commitment I could easily have taken the easy way out by accepting an advance in the US and UK and selling the rights to the book.

I was questioned by a blog reader if that meant I wasn't really interested in the goal and it would be wiser to drop it?

Nothing could be further from the truth. The fact of the matter is, by definition, big goals are hard to hit otherwise everybody would be achieving them. I am merely using the leverage that I don't want to let anybody down to keep me moving forward.

Note: I used you as leverage to help me. I announced to my newsletter and blog readers that this book would be sent out in either July or August. I did that deliberately because I didn't want to start getting e-mails from subscribers saying, "Oi Brownson, where the fucks my free book ya lazy bastard?" And trust me, I have had e-mails like that!

Chapter 6

Whatever You Do, Just Do Something!

You are exactly where you are now. It doesn't matter one jot what you've done prior to this moment because you can't influence that and it only predicts what you will do in the future *if* you allow it to.

So right here, right now is your starting point.

I'd like you to get to the end of the ebook, but I'd also like you to commit to doing something today that moves you toward your goal or goals.

Momentum is key to hitting goals. I knew this ebook would take me a while to write, compile and edit, but once I started sorting through material I already had written and working on the structure it didn't seem anything like as daunting or overwhelming.

Commit to taking one action per day, *every* day (even if it's only for 5 minutes) that moves you toward your goal. If you can block out the same time every day that would be cool because it'll help you develop a ritual.

I know it's a cliché, but the saying that people overestimate what they can achieve in a week and underestimate what they can achieve in a year is so true, and something you want to keep reminding yourself of.

One of my favorite authors of all time, Graham Greene, used to write exactly 500 words per day in his early years. My average blog post runs at about 1250 words, so if Graham Greene can bang out over 30 best selling books including 'Our Man In Havana', 'The Third Man' and 'Brighton Rock' just writing 500 words per day, then you can see the potential.

Another thing you can do to help you to keep moving forward and motivated is to write down the task or tasks you want to do each day. Then at the end of the day when you have completed them, rather than just deleting the task, put a line through it and then cut and paste it into a separate document.

Then the following day do the same and every day after that. This achieves two things. Firstly, by only seeing your days tasks you lessen the likelihood that you'll start to overwhelm yourself.

Also, it can inspire you when at the end of every day you copy over the completed tasks and you can see what you have already achieved.

Chapter 7

Use Sub-Goals To Enjoy The Journey

If your goal is a huge one it may seem intimidating to begin with and you may feel overwhelmed. I really do get that because emigrating took us over 2 years, about \$100k and we had to wade through lots and lots of red tape.

If I'm being totally honest there were many times when I wondered if it was at all worth it when there seemed no end in sight.

However, we kept re-connecting and focusing on the stuff we could influence and the work that needed doing at that point in time and totally disregarding everything else.

For example, we knew we would need a house to live in when we got to the US, but we didn't even book flights to come over and start looking until we were 95% of the way toward being granted our visa.

If we'd been trying to juggle the house searching ball along with everything else it would have just added to the stress levels. And anyway, even if we'd have found a house we loved the odds are it would have been rented or sold before we had chance to move in.

As such it was one thing we didn't have to think about. After all, there was no doubt we'd find a house when we needed one, so we chose not to give it any more head space than it deserved.

If you have a big or long-term goal, chunk down! You can only do the next task and that is where you focus wants to be.

Successful football coaches don't start the new season planning for the Superbowl. They start by planning for the first game, because unless they win that their chances of getting to the Superbowl are reduced.

If you want to know more about chunking down [check out this post](#).

I've talked about making goals personal to you and being under your control rather than being left to the vagaries of life. The reality is though is that it's impossible to

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make any goal 100% within your control and that's another reason sub-goals are paramount.

Life happens from time to time. Economies crash, people get sick, natural disasters hit, people die and goals come unstuck through no fault of the person concerned.

The Danger Of All Or Nothing Goals

Imagine you are a world class athlete and your ambition is to win an Olympic gold medal in your event. You train for 10 years slowly but surely establishing yourself as the best in the world and favorite to win gold at the next Olympics.

Then at the Olympics a relative no-name from China jacked up on testosterone and HGH (you suspect) bursts onto the scene and smashes the world record in your event. Or maybe you catch the flu the week you're due to compete, or you pull a hamstring, or a close family member gets seriously sick and you want to be with them.

By and large those things are out of your control and if you have set that goal to the exclusion of everything else, and anything less will be a failure, how do you think you will feel as you head to the airport to fly home?

Well, unless you have the kind of mental strength that would shame Nelson Mandela, you will be somewhere on a linear path between pissed off and devastated. And my guess is you would be nearer the latter than the former.

Therefore, it is crucial to set yourself stage or sub-goals that are within your power that you can really help you enjoy the journey.

It is sometimes difficult to differentiate between smaller goals and tasks, but my advice would be this. Think of a goal as something that will stand alone and give you pleasure and satisfaction whereas as a task is something that moves you toward that that goal.

So for example using the How To Be Rich and Happy project again, I could decide I am going to send copies of the book to 10 magazines or bloggers per week with the hope of getting reviews.

That's really a task. Sending the books in the mail in and of itself doesn't really get me nearer my goal. Of course it may do, but I won't be lighting up a big fat cigar and pouring a glass of Remy Martin after I return from the Post Office. I actually don't smoke or like brandy, but you get my meaning.

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However, we did have an initial goal of getting to the stage of giving away \$50k worth of books and when we hit that I did indeed celebrate and tell anybody that was prepared to listen. I did the same when we hit \$100k and will do so again at \$250k.

By having these sub-goals I'm not only avoiding getting overwhelmed by the main goal and the fact that it is still so far off, but I'm also allowing myself the chance to enjoy the entire process and as I explained above that is really important.

Not long after we started the project a person left a bizarre (to me) comment on the How To Be Rich and Happy blog. She said that if we only gave away 500,000 books then we would in effect have failed in our goal.

Yeh, well maybe in her map of the world getting the book into the hands of half a million people is failing, but to my mind that's a massive success irrespective of what goal we set ourselves.

If you adopt that kind of all or nothing attitude you will make the process of achieving your goals and arduous one and will leave you wide open to potential misery should you miss.

I'm presuming you are with me on all this, right? You goals are yours, you know why you want your goals, you agree that sub-goals are even cooler than submarines, and you're now just itching to get rolling and set some real goals the like of which will catapult your life to a whole new level.

Ok, well whatcyu waiting for? Let's do this thing!

Chapter 8

Smarter Goals

You may well be familiar with the SMART method for setting goals because it has been around forever and is used a lot in the corporate sector. I've used it many times over the years both for myself and with my clients to varying degrees of success.

When I first qualified to become a Life Coach back in 2005 I saw no reason to change my approach and for the first couple of years adopted the SMART method with clients.

I was never totally convinced it was right though. Of course it ticks many of the boxes when it comes to the structure of a goal, but it misses on what I think are two crucial areas.

I'll not get into what they are for a moment because it's important that we don't throw the baby out with the bath water because there are some really powerful elements to SMART goals that it would be foolish to ignore.

In terms of helping you understand how this works I'll run the How To Be Rich and Happy goal through the SMART process to see if it stacks up.

SPECIFIC

Is our goal specific? Could anybody read it and understand what it is we are trying to achieve?

The answer is an emphatic yes. We know that we want to get 1,000,000 copies of the book into the hands of unemployed people, single parent families, high school kids, people recovering from illness and injury and homeless people and that is fairly specific.

If you're goal is vague or unclear, then how will you know when you hit it? A goal of being happier, having a hot body or helping others is not specific and as such not a real goal.

MEASURABLE

It is also measurable? In other words, at any one point in time do we know exactly where we are in the process? Ours is easily measurable because I know when we have given away 100,000 copies we're 10% of the way there.

It's important to be able to measure goals and track your progress easily. Without the ability to do that you can easily lose heart and focus.

ACTION ORIENTED

Books do not distribute themselves. Both John and myself will have to get off our arses and do something if we are to giveaway 50,000 copies never mind 1,000,000

You cannot have a goal that doesn't require you to do something. That's merely a wish, and good luck with those coming true.

REALISTIC

This is a tough one for me because I firmly believe that realism is the single biggest killer of peoples hopes and dreams. I urge you to set your own reality (you do anyway, so you may as well do it consciously) and ignore the people that can't wait to tell you why you will fail or it's a stupid idea.

Having said that, there are physical limitations that even I recognize. If you came to me with a goal to represent the North Korean Synchronized Swimming team at the next Olympics and you were a 55 year old fat American dude with asthma, I'd tell you to pull yourself together and get realistic.

I have been told our goal to give away 1,000,000 books is completely unrealistic by quite a few people (some fairly high profile) and they are all wrong.

- Is it tough? Yes.
- Has it been done before? Not that we know of.
- Will we achieve it? I have no idea.

But none of those mean it's unrealistic, just very tough like any big goal. Every single breakthrough achieved by Human Kind since the dawn of time has at some stage or other been considered unrealistic.

Fortunately for us all, the doers are out there doing and deciding what is and isn't achievable whilst the doubters watch and poke holes in their arguments whilst

secretly hoping they fail so they can feel better about themselves for doing and achieving fuck all!

TIMEBOUND

If you haven't worked in corporate sales you may be surprised to know that one of the biggest deal killers on complex sales is the time element. And I don't mean not having enough time, I mean having too much.

Having vague deadlines to work to in a sales environment can be difficult at best because 'stuff' always seems to get in the way.

If you don't put a timescale on your goal it will almost certainly slip because there will always be other things vying for your time and attention and if you can keep sliding your goal back there will be a tendency to do so.

Our original goal of achieving the giveaway by the end of 2011 looks in retrospect incredibly naive bearing in mind the amount of work and the resistance we have encountered from highly suspicious people that think we are engaged in some elaborate scam.

But that's cool because we can just reassess and set another date that's more attainable bearing in mind we now have a much clearer idea of what we have to do to succeed.

The point of having an end date is to focus your attention. It is not to be used as an excuse to beat yourself up if you don't hit it on time or to then quit in your goal!

You can be flexible with deadlines, especially if new information comes to hand that helps you understand you need longer or things outside of your control slow you down. And that can happen, but it's really no big deal for the most part.

So there you have the bare bones of SMART goals and very nice they are too, but now would be a great time to make them a lot SMARTER with two added elements that rather cunningly begin with 'E' and 'R'.

ECOLOGY

You are not an island and no matter what your goal or goals are, there will be an ecological or environmental effect. I'm not talking about butchering cute endangered wildlife, slashing and burning rain forest or polluting a lake, but the ecology that's going on around you all the time.

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For example you may want to back pack round the world on your own and that would be a cool goal. However, if you have a partner who doesn't work, a \$500k mortgage and 3 kids to provide for it may be a tad reckless not to take that in to consideration.

In terms of our goal, whereas we aren't selling the right for the book into the US or UK because we want to retain the intellectual rights for the English language, we have sold the rights into France, Germany, Netherlands and China.

It may be that some time in 2012 I have to go to Europe to help promote the book and as such will have to think of the effect that will have on my wife and my business.

Can she take time off work? if not, what do we do with two demented Dobermans when she will be at work all day? How will it effect my Life Coaching practice?

None of those are necessarily a reason for me not to go because I'm sure there will be work-arounds, but by bringing any issues to the forefront before I make a decision means I am way less likely to get derailed further into the process.

REWARD

This is the big one for me and it should be for you too if you're going to set goals that motivate and inspire you rather than make you feel pressured and overwhelmed.

This is where it's absolutely crucial to know your values because not knowing them is going to make this stage a lot more difficult than necessary.

Let me make one thing perfectly clear in advance. I am not talking about material rewards such as money, a nice vacation, or a new car, but stuff much deeper than that.

Why are we giving these books away? Is it for the cash, the fame, the adulation? Well yeh of course it is. I want to drop all the little people and go and live on a Caribbean Island with a gaggle of playboy bunnies or better still, buy my own Caribbean Island.

Ok maybe not, but a little extra cash would be nice. This is the part where I HAVE to know what my values are, and fortunately I do because I know a cool Life Coach that does that kind of thing.

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I know what motivates me and drives me and although it sounds cliched, I really want to make a difference in peoples lives. I want people to buy this book and think "Holy shit, this is the best book ever written on self-development."

Whatever your goal is, make sure it is fun chasing it. In my opinion, five years of misery just aint worth it, no matter what you achieve. We don't have that long on this planet and we should be enjoying what we do have not sacrificing time now for something that may or may not happen in the future.

Whatever your goals are, best of luck with them, now go [watch the video](#) of me explaining the SMARTER method if you are still not 100% sure and really embed this stuff.

And Finally.....

I really hope this book has at the very least given you food for thought and hopefully a lot more than that.

Setting your own goals can and should be a fun process. If it isn't, then I'd question whether the goals you have in mind are right for you. If you don't get pumped when thinking about all the amazing things you can do, see and experience in your life then you probably do need to hire a Life Coach.

And yes I am indeed available for hire both for coaching and public speaking. If you want more information feel free to e-mail tim@adaringadventure or simply call me on 407 334 4692.

If you like my writing style, or can at least bear it, you'd be an absolute fool not to check out [How To Be Rich and Happy](#). Not only is it by some way the coolest book I've ever been involved in, but by purchasing a copy you put about 10 more copies into the hands of other people less fortunate and you help me with my goal.

That's a win/win/win by the way.

Even though I wrote this book with my newsletter readers in mind I'd be more than happy for you to distribute it to friends or colleagues. The purpose of writing it is to help people, so the more people that get it the better.

If you would like to reproduce sections of the book or even translate it, please be my guest. The one proviso is that you credit me and if you publish on line you link back to www.adaringadventure.com preferably under the anchor text 'Life Coach' if that's possible.

My guess is there are a few typos in the book because I have edited it myself, and I'm a raving incompetent with this stuff, but whereas I love getting feedback from people that read my material, I really don't want grammar or typo feedback.

Once this book has been designed and converted into a PDF and seeing as it's free, I'm not going to then spend money by pitching it back to my designer for some minor changes.

Thanks so much for reading and best of luck with your goals!

Cheers
Tim

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