



CHALLENGE



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A Herff Jones IMPACT Resource for Students

Goals: Your Blueprint for Success

What do you think would happen if a builder started to build a house without a blueprint? With no plan for how many rooms to build or where to put them in relation to each other, the builder wouldn't get very far. So it is with setting goals. Without goals to guide choices, most people don't get very far in life. Goals serve as a blueprint to help people build the future they desire.

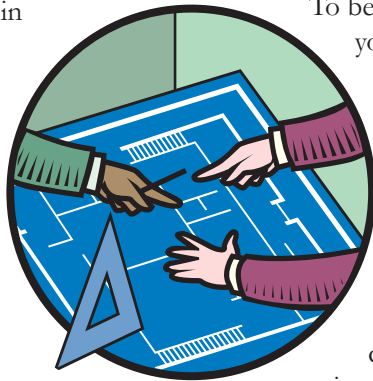
Every time you have a desire, in a certain sense you have a goal—something that you would like to be, do, or have. Some desires are merely passing fancies, but others stay with us and go deeper. Our desires and goals give us direction and focus.

Clearly defined goals are the keys to achievement. There are many good reasons to set goals:

- Goal setting establishes where you are now, shows you where you want to go, and helps you figure out how to get there.
- Goal setting improves your self-image and your self-awareness by making you aware of your strengths and helps you make plans for improving your weaknesses.

- Goal setting forces you to set priorities that guide your actions.
- Goal setting makes you responsible for your own life and your own behavior.

Guidelines for Goal Setting



To begin, create a vision of yourself at some point in the future. What is the best you can imagine for yourself? Visualize yourself as having made a significant contribution to your school and community. Imagine yourself successfully completing school and moving on to an exciting future. Picture yourself feeling better physically and looking more fit. Take this image you have of your future and create goals in the different areas of your life that will help you achieve your vision.

To set a goal, you need to define it in a clear, precise statement that has the following:

- It is realistic and achievable, but provides a challenge.
- It has measurable results (i.e., you can tell whether it has been accomplished or not).
- It is clear, specific, and understandable.

- You are responsible for whether it happens or not (i.e., it doesn't depend on someone else to happen)
- It is beneficial.
- It has a deadline for completion.

Write down your goals. This helps define them and separates goals from wishful thinking. The most successful people carry their written goals with them. Only three percent of people have written goals. Ten percent more have goals and plans but keep them in their heads. The others wander with no commitment to future plans at all. When he was a struggling young actor, Jim Carey once wrote a check to himself for a million dollars and carried it around with him in his wallet. For him, it represented the goal of becoming a successful actor so that he would one day be able to cash the check. Years later, he achieved his goal.

Setting Objectives

An objective is a specific task you want to accomplish that contributes to the achievement of your goal. How you write objectives is critical to your success. Good objectives start with the word "to" followed by an action verb. They specify a target date for completion and are specific and measurable. For example, "to save \$500 toward a down payment on a car by the end of the summer." By

the end of the summer, you will know if this objective has been achieved or not if you have \$500 saved.

Making Choices

Not all goals you set are equally important and not all of them can be accomplished at the same time. Some of your short-range goals or objectives will probably be aimed at helping you achieve your long-range goals. Planning backwards in time helps you make choices in the present that will help you achieve those long-range goals. For example, your goal might be to save enough money to buy a car. To help achieve that goal, you might choose to get a part-time job, pack your lunch and save your lunch money, not go to the movies as often with your friends, and so forth.

Sometimes goals conflict with each other. Your goal to maintain a good relationship with your friends might conflict with your goal to buy a car if you are constantly not able to go out with them and spend money. How much you are willing to change your behavior and make sacrifices are measures of how badly you want to achieve your goal. The choices are up to you.

The Challenge

No one can set goals for you. Parents, teachers, and others might have goals they'd like to see you achieve, but if it's not something you are committed to working toward, you will not make the necessary choices in behavior and actions that will accomplish the goal. To determine what goals you

would like to set for yourself, go back to the vision of yourself you created earlier. Ask yourself:

- What do I most want to accomplish?
- What do I want to be doing one year, five years, and 10 years from now?

Write down a plan for what you need to do today, this week, this month, and this year that will move you toward making your vision a reality. Set goals in all areas of your life—social, family, finan-

If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them.

Henry David Thoreau

cial, cultural, educational, physical, professional, spiritual, intellectual. Examples of these goals could include such things as:

Family: to get along better with siblings

Educational: to achieve the honor roll this semester

Physical: to get in shape to try out for a sports team

Financial: to save money for college.

Choose actions that achieve your objectives. This means that you must consciously choose to do those things that move you in the direction of your most important goals. What steps will you take to achieve the goals you have set?

By thinking of the kind of future you want and setting goals and objectives to get you there, you are creating a blueprint for your future.

Personal Goal Setting

My main goal for **today** is:

Steps I will take to achieve this goal:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

My main goal for **this week** is:

Steps I will take to achieve this goal:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

My main goal for **this month** is:

Steps I will take to achieve this goal:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

My main goal for **this year** is:

Steps I will take to achieve this goal:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.