

Ten Sure-Fire Steps to Achieving Your Goals

With every new day, comes the promise of opportunity. There is no time of the year that creates such a widespread feeling of optimism as the beginning of a new year. However, anytime is the right time to start working towards your goals. The challenge is defining how to begin. Here is a ten step guide to work towards your aspirations for 2009.

1. Identify what you really want to achieve.

Sounds simple, doesn't it? However, there is more to understanding your choices, than simply making them. Ask yourself why it is important to you to achieve that particular goal. Once you have answered that question, ask yourself why the answer you have given yourself is important to you. Drill down until you really identify why that goal is important to you. For instance, if you are aiming for a promotion, ask yourself why. The answer will vary depending on what you value. It may be more money, or status, or challenge. If your answer is more money, why? Are you driven by financial freedom, the need for possessions, or keeping up with the Jones's? In turn, why is that important to you? Keep going until you get to the true meaning of your goal for you. Identifying the real meaning behind your goal allows you to ask yourself if your goal matches what you truly value in life.

2. Ensure your goal is the right goal for you.

It is vital that your goal enhances and utilises your strengths. If your goal is to become a lawyer, and you find conflict extremely uncomfortable and unenjoyable, you will find this a very difficult and possibly unpleasant goal to achieve. Identify your strengths and ensure that your goal utilises these to the maximum.

3. Turn your goal into a SMART goal.

Now, we know, you've all heard this before. The reason you have heard it everywhere that goal planning is

discussed, is because it is absolutely essential to goal achievement. Your goal must be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely. If any of these aspects are missing, planning for your goal will be disorganised and unstructured.

4. Break down your goal into small blocks, or mini-goals.

If your goal is to lose ten kilograms in five months, start with the first two kilograms. It is less daunting, and can appear more achievable to you. Once you've reached that milestone, set your next mini-goal towards your final outcome.

5. Identify the opportunities.

Leave no stone unturned in this process. Once you have identified every possible path you can take, choose the path that best suits you. An informed choice generates ongoing allegiance to your goal.

6. Identify the obstacles.

Once identified, plan how you will counter those obstacles. For instance, if your goal is to meet a certain sales target for the quarter, identifying your competitors, their strategies, and possible customer objections, will allow you to plan the methods you will use to challenge these obstacles.

7. Write it down.

Create an action plan. Diarise the actions, the milestones and the outcomes to ensure your goal takes priority in your daily life. Allocate time to work towards your goal. For instance, if your goal is to reorganise

your office within a month, allocating two hours per week, block out that two hours in your diary, each week. Diarise the specific actions planned for each two hour block and tick them off as you achieve each one.

8. Visualise yourself living your life after goal achievement.

It has been said that everything is created twice, once in the mind and then in life. You need to visualise how a house would look before you design the plans to build it. Likewise, in order to achieve your goal, you must be able to imagine a successful outcome. See, hear and feel your successful outcome. For instance, if your goal is to win "Team Member of the Year", take two minutes regularly, to see yourself accepting your award, hear the applause of your colleagues, and feel the excitement and satisfaction of your achievement.

9. Reassess your goal.

For a long term goal, it is important to step back periodically, in order to assess if your chosen path is still the most effective course of action. Identify alternative paths as new information comes to light, to ensure that you are utilising all of the tools at your disposal in the most effective manner.

10. Celebrate success.

As each milestone is reached, celebrate that milestone. Don't wait until the end result to enjoy your progress. Celebrating every step will reinforce your commitment to the end goal.

Finally, it is important to understand the key distinction between motivation

and commitment. Motivation is an emotion. As such, we cannot always expect to be motivated in a particular task, or area of life, 100% of the time. On the other hand, commitment represents an overall internal attitude and is crucial to achievement. Your personal commitment to any undertaking signifies what you are prepared to do, or sacrifice, in order to achieve your goal. As distinct from external motivation, your level of commitment will be dependent on your engagement with your goal. Engagement results from understanding the value this goal will provide to your life. Making this connection allows a person to harness the long standing commitment

required to continue to work towards the goal at hand with enthusiasm and determination.

Goal setting is an important facet of the path to success. The importance of honestly identifying, structuring and planning your goal, and the benefits of doing so, are limitless. By ensuring the goal has meaning to you, supports what you value in life and is well planned, you will:

- Discover what you genuinely want out of life.
- Commit enthusiastically and readily to your goal.
- Enjoy the journey to goal achievement.

- Be truly satisfied by the outcome when you do achieve your goal.

So, what are you waiting for? 💡

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