

Setting Goals for Yourself, and Motivating Yourself to Succeed



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Be in Control of Your Life

If you want to be in control of your time and your life, you must believe you are the master of your fate and the captain of your soul. To be the master of your fate, to sit in the driver's seat, you must control time and not let time control you. To control time, you must be motivated, you must have a goal, you must have a plan and you must take action!

Importance of Being Motivated:

According to the creators of the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory or LASSI, motivation for college students is about *accepting responsibility for performing the everyday behaviors associated with college, such as reading textbooks, preparing for class, finishing assignments on time, and studying for exams*. A student can have a good attitude toward college but be unmotivated about doing the work necessary to be successful in his or her classes. Motivation will be important once you get out of college, as you enter the work force, purchase homes, and start families. Staying motivated is very important, and there are some basic tips you should always remember:

- We choose to work on goals we value
- We are capable of achieving these goals if we believe we can achieve them.
- We can choose whether or not negative beliefs or emotions get in the way of our success.

Importance of a Goal

A goal is a target toward which you can direct your efforts. Without a goal you are bound to move off in the wrong direction, thus wasting time and effort. Your goal should be more specific and less general than simply getting a college education. You need to formulate a clear notion of not only what you want in college and in life, but also why you want it. It's the goal that establishes the deep-seated almost blind faith that if you keep going, things will work out all right.



Importance of a Plan

With a goal in mind, it is not too hard to make a plan for reaching that goal. It is a good idea to take a clean sheet of paper and write on it:

- What type of job or profession you'd like;
- How you plan to prepare for it;
- What you have done and are doing presently; and
- What you plan to do henceforth to progress toward your goal.

Having written it, you will have thought through your goal and plan.

Don't underestimate the value of thinking out and writing your goal and your plan.

With such a document you greatly increase your chances for success.

How to Take Action...

This is the hard part! When action is not taken, goals and plan become nothing. The saddest words in life, "I could have been..." become reality. In plain words, taking action boils down to self-discipline. Actually it is easy to adapt oneself to military discipline, and it is not too hard to cope with the discipline imposed on us as children. But the hardest type of discipline, especially as a college student is the kind that we must impose upon ourselves. Yet this is the kind of discipline we must have if we are to take the action required to implement our plans. Thomas Huxley said it best: "Perhaps the most valuable result of all education is the ability to make yourself do the thing you have to do, when it ought to be done, whether you like it or not."



MAKING CHOICES.....AND MANAGING THOSE CHOICES

You've identified your problems, clarified your goals and developed a plan of action for taking charge of your education. Now, you must come face to face with the reality of making choices. Making appropriate choices is critical because change usually meets with some form of resistance. Some types of resistance may be in the form of one or more of the following:

- Friends and family may be supportive of your efforts to improve until they see what this change actually means.
- Parents who have been on you to do something about your grades may have difficulty understanding what this means you may not be able to visit home or talk on the phone quite as often.
- Friends may be less than enthusiastic when you hesitate to join them for a spur-of-the-moment party or night on the town.
- If you are dating someone, this person may need help understanding that your lack of "attentiveness" is due to your new plan of action for taking charge of your education. You may need to ask for this person to help you with managing your choices.

Responding to Resistance

The easiest way to respond without thinking and relying on old habits to tell you what to do. It's easy to say, "I guess I can go downtown for a little while" or "It won't hurt to talk for a few more minutes," or to think that it won't really matter if you miss a class so you can roll over for a few more winks. Somehow, going downtown for a little while or talking on the phone for a few minutes more ends up for a few HOURS, and that one missed class ends up as 5 or 6! That's what relying on old habits to make choices means!!

A Plan of Action

To give your Plan of Action a chance to work, it is important to make good decisions on small choices! The first step in good decision making is knowing what your choices are, and then asking yourself these questions:

What are the choices?

What are the consequences of each choice?

How do you want to manage this choice?



Make a Conscious Decision

Making a conscious decision about your choice puts you in control of the situation. The more aware you are of your choices, the more likely you are to make a good decision.

Example of how to use this process:

⇒ Situation:

It is Tuesday, around 7:30 pm and you are writing an English paper. When you finish with the paper you plan to finish your Math homework. Your roommate and some friends decide, at the spur of the moment, to go downtown and insist you go with them.

⇒ Choices:

- Go with your friends
- Don't go with your friends
- Set up a time and place to meet them when you finish your homework.
- Study at the library so you won't be around when spur-of-the-moment parties happen.

⇒ Consequences:

Going with your friends:

- I might have a good time with my friends.
- My concentration will be interrupted.
- I might not finish my paper or math homework.
- I will receive a lower grade for incomplete homework.
- I may not know the answers to questions asked in class.
- I won't be ready for a pop quiz in Math.
- I might stay out too late and not be awake and alert for my morning class.



Not going with my friends:

- I may miss out on the fun.
- My friends may feel I don't want to socialize with them.
- Setting a time and place to meet them later relieves me of some of the pressure of having to get up and go immediately, allowing me time to finish my work.
- Instead of concentrating on and putting forth my best effort to complete my homework, I might think about being with my friends.
- I might stay out too late and not be aware and alert for my morning class.

Studying at the library:

- I'll be distracted by people walking around.
- Walking to the library will use up some of the study time.
- I don't like to walk to and from the library in the dark by myself.¹

SELF APPLICATION:

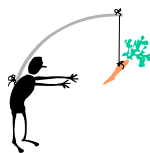
Think about a similar situation you found yourself in:

What are your choices? (3)

What are the consequences? (3)

What is your decision based on your choices and consequences?

¹ Condensed and adapted from "Turning Point: getting off probation and on with your education" by Joyce D. Weinsheimer.



Staying Motivated²

Write your story

Write down, in a paragraph or two, the story of your desired future. Write down what you'll be doing, where you'll be living, and the successes you'll be enjoying.

Visualize into the Future

Close your eyes and see yourself doing whatever it is that you wish to be doing. If you want to get in shape, picture yourself as being slim, healthy, you running or working out. If your dream is to start a business, see yourself on opening day, greeting customers and employees.

Visualize Backwards

When you visualize backwards, you see where you were and how far you have come. If your goal was to get organized and you have made enormous improvement in that area, visualize back to when things weren't going so well. This will keep you heading in the right direction.

Dream Big

When you think about your future, don't be afraid to dream big. This will make short-term failures easier to handle. When you hit an obstacle it won't stop you because your eyes are set on a bigger goal.

Educate yourself

Learn, read, talk about, listen, and experience everything you can about your particular goal or dream. If you wish to be an author, you can take classes, read books, write, talk with other writers, join workshops, etc.

Find a Role Model

Choose a role model to learn from. You won't have to reinvent the wheel when you can follow an exemplary exam with someone you respect.

Get Organized

A clean, tidy, and well-organized home, office, and life are a must for the motivated mind. Physical clutter can easily lead to mental clutter. Keep your life organized and you will find more energy and clarity in every day.

² Jason Garcia Motivated in Minutes



Place Motivators in Your Home and Office

Place symbols, signs, notes, or objects that remind you of your goals and dreams in your home, office, car, wallet, planner, or calendar. These reminders will guarantee a constant stream of motivation.

Read Motivating Quotations

Located on the internet and in books are thousands of quotations that inspire, motivate, and cause us all to think of our lives in a different way. Search the internet for quotations and you will find millions of pages that match just what you are looking for.

Spend Time with Children

Spending time with children will put things in perspective for you. You may be stressed out from work and worried about getting everything done on time, but when you play with kids, the worries and stress seem to melt away. Children have a simple way of looking at things, and that is something we could all benefit from.

Read Success Stories

Read the success stories of those around you. In the daily newspaper alone, there are dozens of small success stories that can serve to motivate and inspire you into action. The library is filled with autobiographies and biographies of ordinary men and women who have done extraordinary things.

Create a Healthy Diet

Energy is very important to living a happy life, but that is dependent on eating healthy. Be sure to create a healthy diet that includes all of the necessary nutrients, minerals, and vitamins for your system.

Get Enough Sleep

Some people can get by on six hours, while others require seven to eight. Regardless of what you need in sleep, be sure you get enough. A few nights in a row of only three or four hours a night will take its toll on your motivation, energy and attitude.

Change the People Around You!

Sometimes a negative people in your environment can limit one's motivation. If you have friends who bring negativity into your life, you may have to "change the people around you" and create friendships with people who are positive and of like mind with yourself. If you can't change the people around you then change the people around you.

Positive Affirmations

An affirmation is something declared to be true, or a positive statement of judgment. They enable you to let go of negative emotional baggage and allow you to visualize a new order and sense in your life, which you can work toward achieving.



Positive Affirmations: Self Affirmation Statements³

These forms of affirmation are words, phrases, or statements written on 3x5 index cards and placed where you can see them daily and be reminded of positive aspects about yourself. Every time you see these affirmation cards they will remind you to affirm yourself about these positive qualities or attributes. State all affirmations in a positive way.

Suggested places for affirmation cards:

mirror in bathroom	dashboard of car	mirror on dresser
desk at office	closet door	desk at home
refrigerator door	in your wallet	front door in
your brief case	bedroom door	at your telephone

Affirmation Visualizations

Word Visualizations:

- **Step 1:** Take any single target word about who you are, your ability, or what you want to accomplish. Write it on a 3x5 card.
- **Step 2:** Get yourself into a relaxed state, preferably just before you go to bed. Hold the card about 12: to 24: from your eyes. Focus your eyes on the word and concentrate your attention. Hold this thought for up to 20 or 30 minutes.
- **Step 3:** Do this exercise nightly for at least two weeks. As you continue, you are burning the image of your goal word into your mind. It will be with you in your thoughts as you proceed in your everyday life.

Image Visualization:

- **Step 1:** Create or find an image of an object, person, or thing that embodies your goal for who you are, what your abilities are, or what you want to accomplish:

a comfortable house	a rainbow
a degree	a good grade
a cruise ship	a calm ocean
a happy, healthy child	a sunny day
a slim body	a snow topped mountain

*Adapted from www.coping.org, a public service of James J. Messina, Ph.D.



- **Step 2:** Get yourself into a relaxed state and either look at the picture or imagine you reaching your goal. Do this for 20 minutes each night for one month.
- **Step 3:** Get copies of your picture of a simulation of your goal, and tape them in places where you will see them as you go through your normal day.
- **Step 4:** Continue to keep your images in place until you have accomplished the “goal” feelings of success and/or achieved the “object” success. The important thing is to believe that it is possible to achieve. This motivation is the most important step on your journey to success.

Scenario Visualizations:

- **Step 1:** Once you have a goal in mind for yourself, daydream a full color movie in your mind of what your life would be like if you achieved the goal.
- **Step 2:** Get a tape recorder and talk out the whole movie on tape. Be fully descriptive, colorful, positive and uplifting. Use your imagination to the fullest and describe how positively you will be handling the change resulting from your goal attainment. Describe how key “significant others” in your life will cope successfully with your change. Save this tape for future reference.
- **Step 3:** Write out a description of the goal attainment scenario, and keep it handy for future reference.
- **Step 4:** When you are in a relaxed state, listen to the tape and read your description of the scenario every day for two weeks.
- **Step 5:** Refer back to the tape and script as time goes on until you have reached full attainment of your goal.

Affirmation of the day exercise:

Write a single positive affirmation on thirty 3x5 index cards. Take one card a day for each day of the month. This card is your affirmation for the day. When you get to the last card, start again. To make this daily affirmation process grow, write out thirty different affirmations for each month of the year. Keep the 360 cards in a recipe box and continually use the collection year after year, adding new affirmations as you need them.



Affirmation word examples:

bright	capable	creative	strong
intelligent	giving	smart	peaceful
quick	loving	hopeful	caring
responsible	Successful	Problem solver	calm
quiet	pretty	handsome	relaxed
enjoyable			

Affirmation phrase examples:

think happy	take it easy
be calm	think wisely
take action	work smart
do it	take the time
do it now	have some fun
be a winner	relax and enjoy
take a risk	sit back
dare to be different	step back
seize the opportunity	take the lead
get in control	give them space
let go	believe in me
let them be	trust in me
let it be	enjoy good health

Affirmation statement examples:

I can be a winner.
I am the best friend I have.
I have solved problems like this before.
I have the ability to handle this.
I am a capable human being.
I deserve to love and to be loved.
I am a skillful and artistic person.
I can show others a good example.
Letting go is best for them and for me.



CREATING GOALS

Without goals, long-lasting changes are hard to make in life. Use the tips below to set effective and efficient goals.

Use Goals in your Life

This is the most important tip about goals – use them! Without goals you will have a difficult time improving any area of your life. Leaving your future up to chance isn't a good way to get what you want. Make use of goals throughout your life and enjoy the success and happiness they bring.

Brainstorm

Get out a clean sheet of paper and a pen. Sit in a quiet, well-lit area, and think, think, think. Write down any ideas that pop into your head. Financial goals, personal goals, relationship goals, health goals, etc. Write down every area, and when you're finished you'll have more than enough goals to work with.

Write your goal down on paper

Once you select a goal to work towards, write it out on paper. This makes it more tangible and concrete. A goal that is left to float around in your head may be forgotten before you have had a chance to work on it.

Make your goal specific

Goals must be specific in order to be effective. Improving your relationship with your children is an important and worthwhile goal, but it may be too broad. Instead, your plan could include a play-day once a week, family dinner each night from 6-7 and a game night once a week. This plan has a greater chance of success.

Use deadlines

Procrastination is deadly to your goals and objectives. A great way to leapfrog that problem is to give your goal a deadline. As with the goal itself, make your deadline specific.

Use a Start Date

Deadlines are very important to goal setting, but we can't forget about their counterpart – start dates. Once a goal is created you may have many reasons for putting it off. Give your goal a start date and stick to it.

Make your goals challenging

In order for goals to be effective, they must be challenging. If your goal is too easy to achieve, your motivation and dedication will decrease. Your goals should make you reach and extend your current abilities and skills.



Make your goals Achievable

Setting a goal that is out of your reach completely will cause frustration, anger and self-doubt. Be sure to set goals that challenge you, but are also reasonable.

Make a Detailed Plan of Action

Create a detailed step-by-step plan of action for each part of your goal. One of the main reasons many goals are not accomplished is the lack of understanding of what needs to be done. Plan your work and work your plan.

Don't overdo it

Don't set too many goals at once. One to three is a good amount to start with. Spreading yourself too thin will create a situation where no single goal will receive the attention it requires.

Measure your progress

Measure your progress as you work on your goal. You may wish to write a 300 page novel. Don't set 300 pages as the only goal. Break it up into 25-50 page increments and keep a daily tally of the pages you complete. Measuring your progress keeps your motivation peaking during your goal's lifecycle.

Reward yourself

Set a reward for yourself. If you accomplish a small step or your entire goal, celebrate. You've worked hard and you deserve it. Go out to dinner with your family, take a short vacation, or do anything else that makes you happy.

WIFM?

Why are you setting this goal? Write down "What's In It for me" for each one of your goals. You must be able to see clearly the reasons why you are setting this goal. If you cannot, delete the goal from your list and move to the next one.



Setting Your Goals

What were your goals when you first came to the University of Cincinnati?

How have your goals changed or what has happened to change your goals?

What are your current goals (i.e., education, career, personal)?

What G.P.A. do you want this quarter?



Reality Check: Are your goals realistic?

List one of your goals:

List another of your goals:

Benefits from reaching this goal:

Benefits from reaching this goal:

Major obstacles in reaching this goal:
goal:

Major obstacles in reaching this

Skills or knowledge required to reach this goal: Skills or knowledge required to reach
this goal:

Plan of Action:

Plan of Action:



Goal Planning Schedule

Goals, especially personal development and career goals, have more than one aspect to achieve in order to accomplish them. Goals need to be attainable but challenging, specific, concrete, written down, and dated with reasonably short timelines for the greatest success rate. Use the following model to design your goals.

In the column devoted to each category of your life, list the top five actions that you feel need to make. For example, if in the familial area, you recognize that you need to spend more time with your mother, put that down. If you need to take action in the personal area of your life by devoting a few minutes every morning to organizing your day, then put that in writing, too. The point here is to simply identify some key areas of your life where action is needed, and to record them for future reference.

1. Family & Home

2. School & Career

3. Spiritual

4. Physical & Health

5. Social & Cultural

6. Mental Health

