

5 Essential Tips for Goal Setting

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Setting goals is the first step in making your dreams come true. Whether it's about growing as a person, planning your future job, or getting fit, the journey to success starts with a clear plan. In this post, we'll look at important strategies for setting effective goals that will keep you excited and on track.

1. Set Achievable Outcomes (SMART Goals)

The key to successful goal-setting is creating S.M.A.R.T. goals. This method helps you define your goals clearly and realistically. By breaking big goals into smaller steps, you make it easier to succeed.

S.M.A.R.T. stands for:

- **Specific:** Make your goals clear. For example, instead of saying, "I want to earn more money," say, "I want to earn an extra \$10,000 this year." This gives you a clear target.
- **Measurable:** Make sure you can track your progress. If your goal is to earn more money, set a specific amount you want to achieve.
- **Achievable:** Ensure your goal is realistic. Setting a goal like, "I want to make a billion dollars tomorrow," isn't practical. Think about where you are now and what's possible.
- **Relevant:** Check if your goal fits with your values and life plans. Ask yourself how it might affect other areas of your life, such as family or friendships.
- **Time-Based:** Always set a deadline for your goal. Having a time frame keeps you motivated and helps you plan the steps you need to take.

Make sure your goals meet all five criteria. Writing your goals down and reviewing them can help you see how to adjust them to meet these standards.

2. Set Aim and End Goals

I teach my students the difference between Aim goals and End goals. An End goal is what you want to achieve at the finish line. Picture yourself there: What do you have? How do you feel? Write this in the first person, as if it's already happening. This helps you see what life looks like once you reach your goals.

An Aim goal gives you direction. For example, you can aim to improve in your job or maintain a healthy lifestyle. Aim goals guide you as you work toward your End goals, which are the specific steps you take along the way.

Combining both Aim and End goals helps you see the path to success and understand how to measure your progress.

3. Take Daily Action, Little Steps Every Day

A great book I recommend is *The Slight Edge* by Jeff Olson. He talks about making small, positive changes every day. By taking tiny steps toward your goals, you build momentum that helps you move forward. Each daily action builds up over time and leads to big results. For example, if you start taking a short walk every evening, you might not see changes right away. But after a few months, you'll notice improvements in your health!

4. Maintain Focus and Hold Yourself Accountable

Distractions will happen, but staying focused on your goals is key. Create strategies to overcome challenges, like setting a specific time to work on your goals or using tools to help you stay organized. Share your goals with someone you trust, like a friend or family member, who can encourage you and keep you accountable.

If you stumble or don't meet a goal, don't be too hard on yourself. Learn from it and adjust your plan. Remember, failures are just steps on your journey. Thomas Edison once said, "I didn't fail 1,000 times. The light bulb was an invention with 1,000 steps." Each setback is part of reaching your dreams.

5. Celebrate at 90%

While reaching your final goal is important, celebrating your progress along the way is also vital. Recognizing your achievements keeps you motivated. I teach my students to celebrate when they reach 90% of their goal, as the last part can be the hardest. For example, if your goal is to earn an extra \$10,000, celebrate when you hit \$9,000! This way, you'll feel accomplished and ready to tackle your next goal.

By celebrating your progress, you create a cycle of improvement and motivation, reminding yourself that you can achieve anything you set your mind to.

Questions

If you can answer these questions, you understand the gist of the article

1. What does the acronym S.M.A.R.T. stand for in goal setting, and why is each component important?
2. Describe the difference between Aim goals and End goals. How do they work together to help you achieve your objectives?
3. Explain how taking small daily actions can lead to significant results over time. Provide an example from your own life or a hypothetical situation.
4. Discuss the importance of accountability in achieving your goals. How can sharing your goals with someone else help you stay on track?
5. Why is it beneficial to celebrate your progress at 90% of your goal? How can this practice impact your motivation for future goals?