

Potential to Performance



Where do you want to go?

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Setting and Achieving your Goals

Occasionally we become so single-minded that it seems nothing will get in the way of us achieving what we set out to do. I am sure you can think of examples; from the simple ones such as completing a training session when you felt half way through that you wouldn't make it to the end, through to far more complex goals that required planning and work for an extended period of time.

All of them provide an enormous sense of satisfaction; however the long-term goals which require persistence and where numerous obstacles need to be overcome are the ones which generate the greatest feelings of pride.

The mythical Harvard University study reported the power of writing down goals. Other studies have proven that written goals which have action plans and are then shared with a friend, who discusses their progress on a weekly basis, are much more likely to be achieved.

Setting goals can

- Provide clarity on the purpose and direction of our lives
- Stop procrastination
- Keep us on track when faced with distractions
- Create excitement with those around us who are supportive
- Allow us to recognise and act on opportunities that will move us in the direction of our goals.
- Build our sense of self-esteem as we achieve small goals and complete the steps towards accomplishing our big goals.

These are all good reasons for setting goals.

Filters

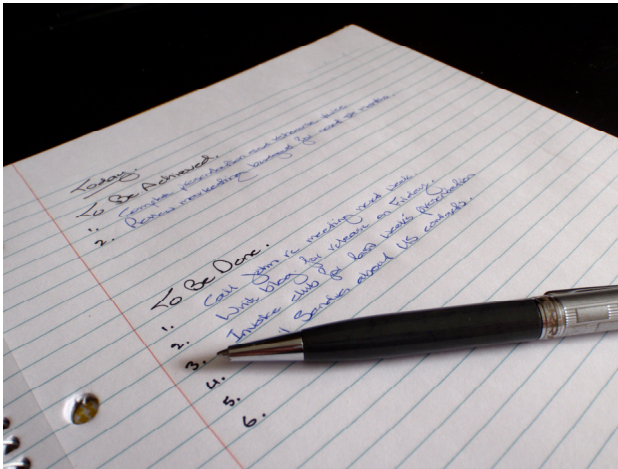
There is so much of what is occurring around us that we filter out, simply because we probably wouldn't be able to cope with all the information bombarding our senses at one time. So when we turn our attention to something we become more aware of it.



Everyday examples of this occur when you hear about a particular person on the radio; next day you read about them in the newspaper; the following week you see them somewhere or hear about them from someone else. Same thing occurs if you are thinking of buying a car; all of a sudden you begin seeing them on the road, when you weren't aware of them previously. If you are planning a holiday overseas; you begin to see articles about that place or hear of news from there.

We can use this filtering system to our advantage when we seek our goals. Let's say you want to find a new job in a particular industry. You are more likely to talk about it with friends, read the employment section of websites and newspapers and increase the likelihood that you will find out about the job you are seeking through a change in your habits. Not only that, but because you are attuned to it, you will pick up on conversations about that type of work. Words about the role or industry you are interested in will seem to jump off the pages of the newspaper when you are scanning them.

To-Be-Achieved Goals



Goal setting can be a little like writing a task or 'to do' list; you are alerted to what you would like to achieve and mark off the list.

Sometimes however these things can be dropped from the list or continually carried forward because of other priorities.

What if you had 'to-be-achieved' list? A 'to-be-achieved' list implies a sense of urgency to complete the task or achieve the goal. You wouldn't put something on the list unless you had a very strong intention of completing it.

In a daily setting, you might list only one or two 'to-be-achieved' tasks. There are likely to be others on a 'to-do' list, however the 'to-be-achieved' tasks will take priority; they are the ones you will begin working on at the start of the day and work through until they are completed.

For bigger 'to-be-achieved' goals which might take days, weeks or months to achieve, there is still a sense of being compelled to work toward their achievement. Often this is like a physical tension which keeps you thinking about the goal and doing something to move you closer to its attainment.

The great benefit of this is that it acts on your filtering system so that you notice things about your goal including things which might help you attain the goal more quickly or motivate you even more. This works exactly as in the example above about purchasing a car.

Ecology Check

Our motives for setting goals vary enormously. We would all like to think that the personal goals we set for ourselves are based purely on what we want to achieve and that are aligned with our self-image. Sometimes this isn't the case; we could set goals because they are popular, someone else has the same goal and it seems like a good idea to have the same goal to support them, it was set as a New Year's resolution after a few celebratory drinks or in some other way.

Usually with these types of goals, we are only inspired to achieve them for a short period of time. When we think about dropping them from our list, we might feel guilty. Don't feel guilty! This wasn't really your goal in the first place.

When you are set a task or project in the work environment, you usually have an obligation to your employer to complete it. When you are setting personal goals, you need to make sure you really want to achieve them and are committed to doing so. One way to check this is to imagine achieving the goal and also working toward its achievement.

If you have a hesitation, then you need to check the basis of that hesitation; it could be that you are daunted by the work to be done; by some doubts about your ability to achieve it or uncertainty about how to achieve the goal. These are legitimate and will occur with most big goals which stretch you.

If the feeling you have is that you aren't really interested in achieving the goal, then it may not fit with your self-image. If that is the case, then consider whether or not you really want that goal.

So now you are ready to consider some goals...where do you start? The next section introduces the Wheel of Life. The benefit of using this as a starting point is that you can set small goals in different areas of your life and when you achieve them, see the impact they have on other areas of your life.

Wheel of Life

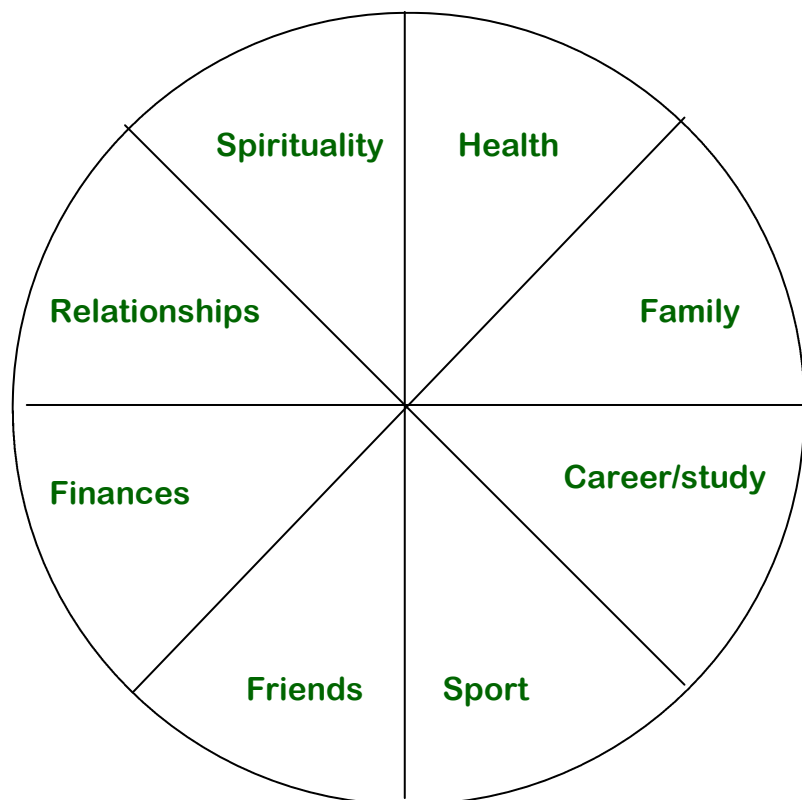
Each different area of our life impacts on all the other areas. We therefore require a balance in each of these different areas. There will be occasions where one area might become a priority; however it is necessary to give some attention to each of them.

The wheel below shows eight different areas of your life. In fact for each of these areas we could actually have a nominal eight more components, e.g. the health section could be subdivided into nutrition, hydration, sleep, fitness, strength, flexibility, relaxation and optimal weight.

Rate each of the different areas out of 10, with 10 being ideal. If you were to rate each area a 10/10, what would have to be true for you in that area?

If it is not a 10, then what is the most important thing you can do in each of those areas to bring the rating closer to a 10?

On the following page write one or two steps which you can control and take to bring your rating closer to a 10. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, just something to move you forward.



One Step Forwards

Write down one or two things for each of the areas which will move you closer to a rating of 10, with 10 being ideal. These must be things you can implement fairly quickly and ones which don't rely on other people.

They may only be small steps forward however even the smallest steps count.

Health

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Family

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Career/study

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Sport

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Friends

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Finances

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Hobbies

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Spirituality

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Review your Goals

Review each of the items you have listed and answer the following questions in regards to them.

1. What exactly do you want?
2. What will achieving this goal give you that's important to you?
3. How will you know when you have achieved this?
4. Is this within your control?
5. What resources do you require for support?
6. What is one step that I can take this week to bring me closer to achieving the goal?
7. What do you need to let go of?
8. What is currently in the way of achieving this goal?
9. What will achieving this goal give you?
10. What do you need to believe to achieve this goal effortlessly?

Answering each of these questions will provide greater clarity and motivation for achieving the goal. It might also result in you refining the goal, which is hugely beneficial as it will have developed into something which you are far more likely to be committed to.

Extra Motivation Required?

There are times when you might want to double-check if the goal is relevant or still relevant for you. By answering the following questions you will be more sure of where you stand in relation to the goal.

What happens if you achieve your goal?

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What happens if you don't achieve your goal?

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What won't happen if you achieve your goal?

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What won't happen if you don't achieve your goal?

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These may seem strange and similar questions when you read them, however they will provide very different responses when you answer them.

Action

It seems so obvious that action needs to be taken to achieve any goal, yet it is the step which is the sticking point with most people who don't achieve the goals they really desire. This is understandable if the goal is not really their own; it hasn't passed the ecology check.



If the goal has passed your ecology check, then do something to move you toward achieving the goal. This doesn't mean extra planning or discussion as this doesn't lead to results. Only action will lead to results.

For most goals there is a 'best time' to start. That time is now or at least as soon as possible. The feeling of satisfaction that can come from completing the first small step is likely to lead to an increased motivation to do something more. Next thing you know you are on the way, full of momentum and inspiration.

The most motivating force is results. Results affirm your capability to achieve; they build self-confidence and self-image; they are the platform for doing even more. They start with taking the first step and continuing until the final step has been completed.

The longer it will take to achieve a goal, the more your enthusiasm is likely vary from one day to the next. This is quite normal. In cases such as these you need to find ways of staying on track. Two great strategies are to find a way of measuring your progress and also being accountable to someone for the achievement of the goal.

Accountability

Sharing these goals with someone who will hold you accountable and reporting your progress is the most powerful way of ensuring that you achieve your goals. This is best done on a weekly basis.

Each week you should complete the following

What is my goal?

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What did I achieve last week in relation to this goal?

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What actions will I take toward achieving it this week?

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How will I measure my progress?

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What do I want to acknowledge myself for in this area of my life?

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