



"Give me a stock clerk with a goal and I'll give you a man who will make history. Give me a man with no goals and I'll give you a stock clerk."

J.C. Penney

The Art of the Goal

Goals – we all have them - or at least think about them. But do you have clearly defined, written goals? Research shows that those people who actually sit down and write out their goals not only end up achieving them, but have a dramatically higher quality of life and income.

So why is it that most people do not have written goals? There are four primary reasons:

1. *Realizing the importance of goals.* Most of us can very easily reach adulthood without knowing that our ability to set and achieve goals will have more of an effect on our lives than any other skill.
2. *Knowledge of how to set goals.* "Having a lot of money," "getting a great job," "having a nice family," "getting fit," are not goals, but dreams and wishes. A goal is different. It is based on your wishes and dreams, (your vision of the future), but a goal is specific, measurable and tied directly to action.
3. *Fear of failure.* Many people make the mistake of setting goals that are too low in order to avoid failing. This is self-sabotage. You will end up going through life functioning at a much lower level than what you are truly capable of achieving.
4. *Fear of rejection.* Criticism of not being capable or worthy, and fear of being seen as ridiculous if we do not achieve our goals, can be debilitating - a huge roadblock to setting and achieving goals.

"The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it."

Michelangelo

"Nothing happens unless first we dream."

Carl Sandburg

So, how do you start the goal setting process? Begin with dreaming – what is your vision? Make it BIG! Write down everything you have ever wanted in your personal and professional life. The more clearly you understand and visualize your dreams, the more likely you will turn these dreams into goals and will do what it takes to achieve them on a day-to-day basis.

Then, prioritize. Based on your vision, what are the three most important things you need to achieve in the next year to get closer to fulfilling your vision? *Write them down.*

Good thoughts are no better than good dreams, unless they be executed.

Ralph Waldo Emerson



As you write your goals, consider the following...

- Have you committed your mind *and* heart to this goal? Does it align with your values or is it something someone else thinks you should do, or, does it compete with other values you find more important?
- Is it specific, measurable, attainable (but makes you stretch), realistic and timely?
- What are the action steps you need to take to accomplish this goal? When will you take them?
- Who will hold you accountable? A Coach? Mentor?
- What is the reward of accomplishing this goal – what is the consequence if you do not?



To will is to select a goal, determine a course of action that will bring one to that goal, and then hold to that action till the goal is reached. The key is action.

Michael Hanson

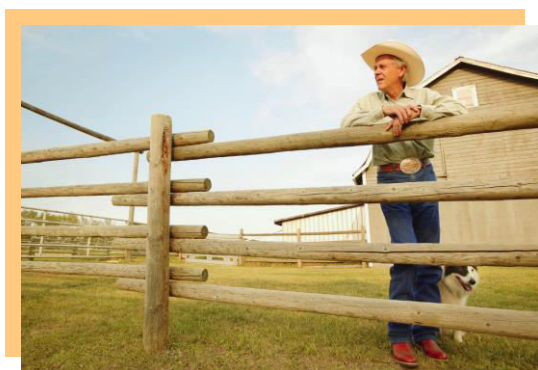
It is critical that you create goals that are meaningful to you – and then act upon them.

Once you have aligned your goals with your true identity, values and life purpose, you will find yourself motivated and energized to accomplish them. Your energy and purpose will flow, because the goals are an expression of your true self.

Then, action steps necessary to achieve your goals will become evident. And the accomplishment of the goal will drive you to do more!

“Thought is the sculptor who can create the person you want to be.”

Henry David Thoreau



Back in the old frontier days, there was a young man looking for a place to settle down.

As he approached the outskirts of a small western town, he came across an elderly rancher and asked, “What kind of people live here?” The old man replied, “What kind of people did you find in the last place you visited?”

“Oh, they were a selfish and unfriendly bunch”, replied the young man. “You’ll find the same here”, said the old timer.

A few days later, another young traveler passed near the ranch and, seeing the old man, put the same question to him: “What kind of people live in this town?”

Again, the old rancher replied with the same question, “What kind of people were in the town from which you came?” Answered the young man, “They were a good group of folks – honest, sincere and friendly. I was sorry to leave them.” “You’ll find the same here,” said the old man.

The rancher’s assistant, who had heard both conversations, questioned the old man: “How could you give two different answers to the same question to two different people?”

“Son,” the old man answered, “Everyone carries within himself the environment in which he lives. The one who found nothing good about his previous town will find the same here. The young man who found friends in his former town will find friends here.”

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