**The Importance Of Setting Goals**


*by Bruce Wares*

Recently, there was a young man who graduated from college and decided to seek employment. He hoped to find a job somewhere away from his home town. He walked into the local bus station, approached the ticket counter and asked the clerk for a bus ticket. What do you suppose the ticket clerk asked the young man? He said, "Where do you want to go?" The young man said, "I don't know. Just give me a ticket to somewhere." He didn't get a ticket! The moral of the story is that if you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there. Jim Cathcart, a noted professional speaker, once said, "Most people aim at nothing in life and hit it with amazing accuracy." If we don't specify exactly what we want, we have no reason to complain about what we get or where we find ourselves.

In her article "Success and the Goal Setter," Bettie B. Youngs tells us, "Goals represent expectations, hopes and dreams, and to the extent our goals are achieved, we are successful." The following ideas will help you define and establish realistic goals in your life. By setting and achieving worthwhile goals, you can give your life greater meaning and purpose. You will also find your work and personal life more exciting and fulfilling.

**Goal Setting Guidelines**

**1.Your goal must be conceivable.** You must be able to imagine, conceptualize and understand the goal or desired result. Top athletes practice visualizing step-by-step actual success in their sports competition. By visualizing your success in great detail, you are conditioning your mind and preparing yourself to achieve your desired success.

**2.Make your goal believable.** Your goal should be consistent with your personal values system, and you must believe you can reach the goal. It is critically important that you believe in yourself. You must see yourself with the goal in hand.

**3.Your goal must be achievable.** You must have the mental and physical capacity to reach the goal. It would, however, be important for your goal to cause you to stretch beyond normal self-imposed limits. You will find a goal that causes you to stretch and grow will be the goal that gives you the most satisfaction. Don't be afraid to challenge yourself to go beyond old limits!

**4.Make your goal measurable.** Deciding to do better than last year or to be happy gives you no standard by which you can measure progress. Be sure to relate your goal to quantity, percentage increases, dollar volume, time or distance. This will allow you to measure your progress.

**5.Your goal should be controllable.** This means you must be able to achieve the goal yourself, or gain the willing cooperation of others to reach the goal. This emphasizes the importance of building team spirit. If you can have no control over the outcome of an event, it's not realistic to set a goal in this area. It would be like gambling in Las Vegas. Without a proven system that beats the odds, lack of control will lead to frustration - and cost you a lot of money!

**6.Be sure you have singleness of purpose.** Make sure your goal is not in conflict with other areas of your life. For instance, if you decide to travel extensively in your business or work 80 to 90 hours per week, this will interfere with your personal or family relationships. The travel and long hours could lead to poor health or family discord. Some goals become mutually exclusive and create conflict with other goals.

To be a competitive tri-athlete you must train for four to six or more hours daily. That leaves little time from career and family. You must then decide what is most important. Be sure to set priorities so you can focus on what is truly important; not just urgent. Too often we spend our time putting out brush fires. We handle daily crises instead of dealing with top-priority activities, which will contribute to reaching the goal.

**1.Your goal must be truly desirable.** A goal that you really want, one that will be emotionally satisfying, will make you strive harder to achieve that goal. You will also feel better about yourself and the goal will be worth your time and effort. The emotional power of really wanting a new car, beautiful home or job promotion, will cause you to work harder to reach the goal.

**2.Make your goal growth facilitating.** Your goal should provide you with a real challenge. This will help you feel better about yourself when you actually reach your goal. Be sure your goal is beneficial, not destructive to yourself or others.

When you set a goal, does it satisfy all of the above guidelines? If it does, you will be more likely to achieve success and will be more satisfied with your accomplishments! How does your goal help you personally? Most people find that a goal generates enthusiasm, gives meaning and purpose, and provides direction. I believe that a goal accomplishes all of these objectives plus gives focus to your thoughts.

**Personally Paying The Price**

Why should you write down your goal? A written goal represents a real commitment. Without a commitment, a goal is only a dream. A dream is something we would like to have happen, but are unwilling to pay the price to make it happen. Any worthwhile goal has its price! That price may be confronting a personal fear or investing a certain amount of time and effort. Whatever the goal is, if it's worthwhile, you can bet there will be a price for achieving it.

One way to motivate yourself to pay the price is to create a reward for reaching your goal. That reward can be ice cream, seeing a movie, or time spent with friends. If you select a reward, you can focus on the reward rather than fear of failure in striving for the goal. If reaching the goal requires performing some tedious or boring tasks, having a reward in mind will give you something positive to focus on. Think about the fun just around the bend.

**Closing Thoughts**

How do these goal-setting guidelines relate to your goal and your performance? What does success mean to you? To some people, success means a great deal of money or financial independence. To others, it means recognition for a job well done. To others still, success may mean freedom from worry or strife. What does success mean to you?

Bettie B. Youngs offers **additional suggestions** when selecting and striving towards personal and corporate goals:

**1.Select a goal for the right reason.** Choose a goal that makes you happy, not because it makes your boss or your spouse happy. Be sure that reaching your goal will help satisfy your needs.

**2.Keep a copy of your goal plan in sight and refer to it often.** This will help you concentrate on results, rather than on activities. It will also provide a constant reminder and help motivate you to the goal.

**3.While approaching the completion of a major goal, begin formulating another important goal.** Goals are like foundation-building blocks. Each goal provides the strength and direction necessary to help you attain the next highest goal. Every time you attain a goal you gain personal pride and self esteem. This increased confidence and more positive attitude will enable you to more eagerly approach your next challenge or opportunity.

How do you see unexpected road blocks on the path to each of your goals? Do you perceive each road block as a problem? Do you see it as an opportunity to test your skills and to learn? My running experience taught me I must learn from each setback. It's usually easier to quit than it is to go on. By forcing yourself to persist until you reach your goal, you build greater character.

By building your character and adding in persistence, tenacity and determination, you can reach any worthwhile goal. Go for it!