

Tips for Setting Effective Goals

Setting clear and attainable goals helps facilitate us making changes. Setting goals focuses attention and action, and prevents aimless behavior. They mobilize energy and effort, arousing a need to act. Setting goals increases persistence, while reducing resistance. We become energized to do something. Setting goals motivates us to search for strategies to accomplish them.

To help you identify your goals, ask yourself the following questions:

- What would this problem situation look like if I were managing it better?
- What patterns of behavior would be in place that is not currently in place?
- What current patterns of behavior would be eliminated?
- What would be happening that is not happening now?
- What would I have that I don't have now?

Tips for setting goals

1. Identify general goals first. Write down the changes you feel are most important for you to make at this point in time.
2. Translate the general goal into some kind of action or behavior. Ensure that this represents a change in you behavior and not in others behavior. Make sure the goal is within your control.
3. Restate your behavioral goal in such a way that it would be observable to yourself and to others. Establish outcomes that can be measured or verified. "How will you know you have accomplished the goal?"
4. Set goals that are clear and specific and concrete. Limit the scope of the behavior. Specify the time, place, person, or context of the behavior.
5. Identify how this behavior is different from your current behavior.
6. Look at the specific, observable behavioral goal you have set and examine it in terms of realism. Is it realistic for you to reach this goal based on current capabilities and circumstances? Make sure that necessary resources are available. It is best to start with goals for which the resources are available and then move on to those where resources are questionable. Is the cost of accomplishing this goal too high? Some goals that can be accomplished carry too high a cost in relation to the payoff.

7. Then identify what you think might get in your way of obtaining this goal. Can you deal with these obstacles in advance or do you need to revise your goal. Setting interim goals may be a way around some obstacles.
8. Is this goal behavior relevant and worthwhile? Does it meet the needs that are in the forefront right now? Make goals consistent with your values. Make the goal substantive - not too high or too low. Stretch yourself but not to the breaking point. To help prioritize goals, explore the consequences of your choice of goals.
9. What would life be like if this goal were to be accomplished? What satisfactions would accomplishing this goal involve for me?
10. To what degree would it take care of the concerns I'm feeling now?
11. To what degree does this goal match values I hold dear?
12. What would life be like if this goal were not to be accomplished?
13. Establish a realistic and specific time frame for accomplishment of the goal. Ensure your time frame is realistic. Rather than saying next month – pick a specific day and time.