

Goal Setting

Academic Success Center
Iowa State University



What are Goals?

Goals are things we consciously want to attain, accomplish or achieve. Setting goals is a powerful thing to do because we give our energy a specific focus, and we enable ourselves to sort out what is important and what is irrelevant in our lives.

Goals, however, are not monuments cast in bronze like War Memorial statues, visited once a year on Memorial Day. Goals are evolving and changing things that need to be revisited and revised constantly.

Why Set Goals?

- ◆ **When you set yourself goals, you put yourself in control.** You give yourself a sense of purpose and you provide yourself with a focus. By concentrating your energies and thoughts on your goals, you are better able to use time-management strategies and this in turn enables you to achieve more.
- ◆ **Research has shown that goal-setting enhances performance in all areas of life.** By setting goals, you are able to move beyond your self-doubts, you are able to overcome your fears and to think '*successful*' which leads directly to being successful, and this in turn raises your self-esteem and confidence.
- ◆ **By setting goals, you increase your level of motivation.** By clarifying your expectations and by challenging yourself, you become more intrinsically motivated.

Goals Must Be:

Long term: To provide you with a long-term vision of what you want to do in your life time.

Short term: To provide you with short-term motivation, to keep you going on a day-to-day basis.

Realistic, achievable and challenging: You must be able to balance the need to provide yourself with challenges and the need for success. You will be building on your past success to meet new challenges therefore it is very important that your goals are achievable and realistic.

Flexible: You will revise your goals constantly as your life changes, your priorities change, and new opportunities arise.

Precise and measurable: You must set out precisely what you want to do, with amounts, and with deadlines.

Your goals: Not your mother's goals for you. Your goals must reflect your learning style and the way you like to operate. They must meet your needs.

In writing: Goals are not goals until they are written down. Do not be afraid to put your dreams and aspirations in writing.

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