GOAL SETTING AND MOTIVATION

Why is goal setting important?

- It’s important to have a clear vision of what’s important to you and the direction you’re headed.
- A lack of clear goals can result in procrastination, poor concentration and lack of motivation.
- Having goals will help you stay focused on WHY you’re doing what you’re doing.

What are the basic steps in goal setting?

1. Start now
2. Write down all of your goals
3. Keep several lists according to time scale. Divide your goals into the following categories:
   - Long-term (5-10 years)
   - Intermediate (3-5 years)
   - Short-term (1-2 years)
   - Immediate (this month, this week or today)
4. Set priorities. It’s impossible to do everything, so prioritize and think about what’s most important.
5. Challenge yourself. Keep your goals high enough to inspire you, but still within your reach. Place them outside of your comfort zone.
6. Be specific. Goals are useless if they aren’t specific. Consider the difference between “I want to get good grades” and “I will achieve a 3.0 GPA this semester” or “I will get straight A’s in my science course.” The more precise you are, the easier it is to measure your progress.
7. Include actions. The actions necessary to achieve your long-term goals become the small goals you set yourself for this month/week/day.
8. Expect failure. Achieving truly challenging goals isn’t easy. Don’t give up just because you aren’t immediately successful.
9. Rewrite, revise, revisit, review – CHANGE. Your goals, once made, aren’t set in stone. As your life changes, your goals and priorities may change. Don’t be afraid to review and revise or completely change them as you go.
10. Link your goals. The actions you’re taking right now should relate to your longest-term dreams and goals.
11. Enjoy the journey. Use goal setting as a tool to keep you focused and motivated.

Immediate goals/To-do lists

Immediate goals lead to the fulfillment of short-term goals. Each short-term goal can seem daunting and can result in procrastination.

SMART goals

One idea is to use the SMART method. Make the goal specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and reasonable and timed.

Specific:

The more specifically you can identify or describe your goal, the more likely you can build a SMART plan. “Do some work on my essay” is less specific than “work on my essay for two hours each of the next five days”, or “have a complete rough draft by Wednesday.”

Measureable:
It should be easy to tell when you’re finished or what milestones will mark your progress. How much of your goal needs to be completed, by when?

Achievable:
Check that your goal is something that can actually be done and that the time, resources and supports are in place.

Relevant, reasonable and rewarded.
Make sure the goal fits in well with your values and priorities, and that the size and scope of your goal is do-able. Consider the rewards the goal will bring – intrinsic or extrinsic.

Timed:
Decide how long you have to complete the goal and the milestones.

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