

The chapter below (**Set Goals Definitive & Progressive Goals**) is from the book ***Just Get Serious[®] About Success***. To order the book, visit www.JGSBooks.com.



Chapter 6

Set Definitive and Progressive Goals

Written goals have a way of transforming wishes into wants; can'ts into cans; dreams into plans; and plans into reality.

Anonymous

Even if I don't reach all my goals, I've gone higher than I would have if I hadn't set any.

Danielle Fotopoulos
Soccer Player & Coach

Those who do not have definite goals they are working on are easily influenced by those who do.

Donna Satchell Kimble

During my years of reading personal development books and attending seminars, I have found that all the experts on success stress the importance of writing goals. Among them is Brian Tracy.

Today, Tracy is an internationally recognized business consultant, seminar leader, and achievement speaker. However, he dropped out of high school at 18 and, for several years, had menial jobs at factories, farms, and steamships. At 23, he got a commission-only

sales position where he not only led his team in sales but also became the vice president of sales in charge of 95 people within two years.

Tracy attributes his success to his decision to write an ambitious goal to earn \$1,000 a month at his job. When he actually accomplished that feat, he began to value goal setting, which led him to spend more than 40 years studying, researching, and practicing the concept.

Goals determine what you are going to be.

Julius Erving
Basketball Player

As a leading authority on success, Tracy has spoken to more than four million people through over 4,000 presentations, worked with 1,000 plus companies, and written 45 books. With his vast knowledge and experience, Tracy says if he had only five minutes to tell someone just one thing to do to be more successful it would be, “Write down your goals; make plans to achieve them, and work on your plans every single day.”

That is exactly what former Notre Dame football coach Lou Holtz did 30 years ago when he was let go from his assistant coaching job at the University of South Carolina. Depressed and in dire need of encouragement, his wife gave him *The Magic of Thinking Big* by David Schwartz. After reading it, Holtz decided to follow the author’s advice and wrote down the things he wanted to accomplish. He ended up with a list of 108 goals – many which were extremely ambitious. As of today, he has accomplished 102 of them, including dining at the White House, meeting the Pope, being a guest on *The Tonight Show*, and being inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame. At age 70, Holtz is still setting, writing, and achieving goals.

You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream.

C.S. Lewis
Novelist

Success through goal setting is not limited to the well known only. In an interview with me, Cindy Light explained how she wanted to move from China to the United States for the many opportunities this country offered. She relocated to Chicago having no job, knowing no one, and not being able to speak English. Once there, her first goals were securing housing and stable employment, learning the language, and acclimating herself to our culture. The latter two took quite some time, but she achieved them all. Then, having learned to sew as a child, Cindy's next goal was to start a business creating elaborate clothes and home fashions for high-end clients. With lots of hard work and commitment, she accomplished that as well. She then set her sights on working in the image-consulting field. Today, Light is a certified image coach, helping people enhance their appearance so they can become more successful. You can read more about Light's remarkable journey in Chapter 20 – Be Inspired.

My goals have included relocating to Atlanta, starting a part-time business doing art shows, winning analyst awards at work, becoming an achievement speaker and trainer, and writing this book. None of these were easy, but I accomplished each one (more on these later).

THE SMARTER FORMULA

I hope you are now inspired to set new goals or raise the bar for those you have already set. As you do, I suggest they reflect the aspirations you listed in your personal inventory on the last page of Part II of Chapter 2. In writing them, follow my SMARTER formula. It builds on the traditional SMART method used by others but includes what is necessary after writing your goals.

S – Specific

Goals should be as clear and precise as possible. A goal of “graduating with honors from New York University in 2014 with a Bachelors degree in Business Administration” is more definite and exact than “graduating from college in four years with a Bachelors degree.” Including a specific college, “with honors,” “business administration

degree,” and the year makes it very defined. We have a greater chance of accomplishing that type of specific goal than a vague one because our minds can focus better on targets with clear details. Make sure you have covered as many of them as possible.

People with clear, written goals accomplish far more in a shorter period of time than people without them could ever imagine.

Brian Tracy – Author

M – Measurable

Quantify your goals with definite numbers. A goal of making \$100,000 a year is far better than a goal of making lots of money. This way, you can make adjustments if you find you are not close to earning that amount. Having a goal to buy a house in three years is better than making plans to buy one in the near future because we will be better able to evaluate our progress.

Even noble goals can be measurable. Taylor Mali is a high school teacher, slam poet, and voiceover artist. His objective is to have a positive impact on the lives of people by inspiring them to become teachers through his engaging, powerful spoken word poetry. Rather than “many,” “several hundred,” or “thousands,” his goal is to inspire 1,000 people to become teachers. As of the writing of the book, 503 people have become teachers because of him since he undertook this project.

You have to measure what you want more of.

Charles Coonradt
President,
The Game of Work

A – Ambitious, Yet Achievable

I believe there is a huge difference between items on our “to do” list and real goals. The former are easily obtainable. The latter are challenging to reach and cause us to move outside of our comfort zones. A quote by Mary Kay Ash, founder of Mary Kay Cosmetics, reflects my feelings: “A good goal is like a strenuous exercise. It makes you stretch.”

In *The Welch Way*, author, Jeffrey Krames describes former G.E. CEO Jack Welch's philosophy about company goals. Welch feels it is important to "reach for more than you think is possible. Don't sell yourself short by thinking that you will fail. It is better to reach for the impossible than to settle for just another lackluster performance." We can apply this same thought to our personal goals to make them ambitious ones.

The German philosopher and author, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, wrote, "He who does not expect a million readers, should not write a line." His quote tells us if we are not planning to do something in a big way, we should not do it at all. This idea can be challenging for many of us because we've often been taught not to expect big successes. So we make comments like, "I'm going to write this little book" or "I'm going to start this little business." We apply for jobs we can easily get even though they are not the ones we truly want. We believe that if we lower our expectations, we can avoid the disappointment of failure and increase our chances of success. What we are really doing is setting a limit on what we will achieve.

*Have the courage to
dream great dreams.
Who wants a dream
that's near-fetched?*

Howard Schultz
Chairman of Starbucks

We should ask ourselves, "What is it that keeps us from thinking larger?" Is it fear? Is it lack of faith? Is it low self-esteem? It could be any one of these factors ... or a host of others. For instance, when we have low expectations, we often surround ourselves with like-minded people who support our limited thinking.

Do we think we deserve *millions* of readers, *millions* of customers, and/or *millions* of dollars? Do we think we deserve an exceptional relationship, a great job, a beautiful home, and truly supportive friends? If we believe we deserve all these things, then we need to expect to have them.

When we expect great things, we operate at a different level. And the effort you put into searching for an average job will be different than what you expend when you are looking for a highly coveted one. The energy and effort you put into a business that you think will eventually be worth thousands of dollars will be different than what you will do for one you believe will be worth millions. Likewise, the energy and effort you put into writing a book that will reach a few hundred readers is quite different than what you will do when you imagine your work will be a best seller and be read by millions.

*Think BIG. There are
unseen forces ready to
support your dreams.*

Cheryl Richardson
Life Coach

Truly, Sidney Poitier's goal to be an actor was an ambitious one. He had only been in the United States for a short time when he decided that was what he wanted to do. By his own admission, he spoke and read poorly (at about the fourth grade level), had a thick Caribbean accent, and had no acting experience whatsoever. Ambitious goals require ambitious effort.

Poitier spent endless hours teaching himself how to read better. He constantly listened to the radio to practice improving his speech. In addition to working as a dishwasher, he took an unpaid job as a janitor at the American Negro Theater in exchange for acting classes. Despite his teachers' feelings that he would fail at acting, Poitier continued with the course work. His efforts eventually paid off when he got the chance to replace another actor in a play. His performance caught the attention of a director who was in the audience. He offered Poitier a small part in one of his upcoming productions. There were still many years of struggle ahead, but Poitier was on the path to fulfilling his ambitious goal. He went from achieving it to excelling at the craft, becoming the first African American to receive an Academy Award for Best Actor. He has received other prestigious awards including the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

When you are setting goals, think big, think bold, and think brilliant. By doing so, you set the stage for high expectations. Expectations set the stage for action, and action sets the stage for results.

It is important to understand that what is ambitious for one person may not be for another. For example, is it an ambitious goal to buy a \$150,000 home? It depends on your income. If you are single, making \$85,000 per year and have little or no debt, it is not. However, if you are a man or woman making \$40,000 per year and have three children with no spouse to assist you, it would be ambitious.

Before you can make a dream come true, you must first have one.

Ronald E. McNair
Astronaut

To determine if your goals are ambitious, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Are they difficult to achieve?
2. Will they require additional learning?
3. Will I have to ask others for help or assistance?
4. Do I feel a sense of trepidation?
5. Will they stretch me beyond my comfort zone?
6. When I achieve them, will I have a tremendous sense of personal satisfaction and accomplishment?

If you answered “yes” to all or most of the questions, you have ambitious goals. If you did not, I challenge you to consider revising them to those that will demand more of you, force you to reach outside your comfort zone, and help you grow and develop your skills, abilities, and talents. Those types of goals require us to raise our expectations of ourselves.

For me, writing this book is such an endeavor. In my wildest dreams, I never thought this was something I could do. In fact, when I become a speaker and trainer, colleagues were always

suggesting that I do this, but I would not even consider the idea. At the time, it seemed like too big a project for me to handle on my own. Subsequently, I became one of the co-authors of various anthology books instead. Then a year and a half ago, I decided to take the plunge. As I look at the six questions above, I can answer “yes” to each of them. So this book is definitely an ambitious goal for me. How about you? Are your goals ambitious? If not, reconsider them.

You want to set a goal that is big enough that in the process of achieving it you become someone worth becoming.

Jim Rohn
Speaker & Author

R – Real Aspirations

Be sure your goals reflect your own desires. You may be saying to yourself, “Well, that seems obvious. Why wouldn’t they?” The answer is very simple. The impact of advertising, pressures from family and friends, as well as trying to keep up with the Joneses can cause us to want things we might not otherwise aspire to have. Just think about all the items you have purchased or things you have done that were not part of your original plans, did not satisfy you at all, or fulfill a significant purpose.

Several years ago, I was presenting a program at Clemson University’s Conference for Women. During lunch, I struck up a conversation with Vanessa, one of the attendees. I told her about my upcoming presentation in the afternoon segment. She said it sounded exciting, but she had to leave to go to class. I asked what her major was and Vanessa replied, “Law.” As we parted, I wished her well on her plans to be an attorney. Then she sighed and said something I found astounding: “Oh, I

A successful life is one that is lived through understanding and pursuing one’s own path, not chasing after the dreams of others.

Chin-Ning Chu – Author

don't really want to be a lawyer. It is something my family wants me to do. That's the only reason I'm in law school. I really dislike being there." Then she walked away. Now, how successful will Vanessa be doing something she does not like? How will she be able to serve her clients and withstand the demands of that profession when it is not her real aspiration?

Vanessa is certainly not alone in having family pressures to pursue a career that she does not want. Differences between people's dreams and the plans their parents have for them are not new.

- Maria Montessori's father strongly objected to her desire to be a physician. But, with her mother's help, she went to and excelled in medical school. She became the first woman doctor in Italy. Her work with children led to the Montessori teaching method widely used today.
- Gordon Parks' wife and mother-in-law were against him pursuing his interest in photography, but he persisted. By seriously committing himself to his endeavors, he became an award-winning photographer, filmmaker, writer and composer.
- Amy Tan's mother wanted her to become a doctor. Defying her wishes, Tan became writer. She wrote *The Joy Luck Club*, which became an international bestseller and was made into a movie.
- James Cameron's father strongly disapproved of his dreams to be a director. In fact, Cameron felt he was waiting for him to fail so he could say, "You should have been an engineer." Still, he pursued his dreams, eventually directing *Titanic*, which won 11 Academy Awards, and *Avatar*, which was a huge success.

Parents, teachers and others may have our best interests at heart; however, they do not know what really motivates and inspires us

to do our best work. The question of “real aspirations” doesn’t apply only to our career goals but to other goals as well.

Think ... do your goals reflect what you actually want to have, do, or be? Or are you being influenced to go after things that do not truly excite you? I suggest you carefully consider both questions. Be honest with yourself about the answers. And, if necessary, think about making changes to your goals.

*My parents wanted me
to be a lawyer. But I
don't think I would
have been very happy.
I'd be in front of the
jury singing.*

Jennifer Lopez – Singer

Last, it is important to include plans to pursue your passions or talents. If you are not sure what you are passionate about, then include activities that can help you discover them. See the list toward the end of Chapter 5 for suggestions.

T – Time Based

Successful goals have a strong element of time. Know when you are going to start working on your goal. When will you review your progress? When do you plan on completing it? The answers to these questions are major keys to getting started and making progress.

At age 27, I said to myself, “I am going to go to college. I should have gone when I graduated from high school like my friends did, but I am going to go someday.” Do you know what happens with “someday” goals? When I was 29, I was still thinking about college. At 32, I was upset and frustrated that I had not gotten started yet. When I was 33, I said, “I am going to be enrolled in college by the fall.” I did not know where I was going to go or how I was going to pay for

*A goal is a dream with a
deadline.*

Napoleon Hill
Author

it. However, I wrote it down as a goal with the start date being September. That's when I finally went to college. Six years later, I graduated with top honors. So I know from experience the importance of writing goals and having a time frame.

E – Energize Your Goals with Action and Enthusiasm

Until you act, your goals are just ideas waiting to happen. Acting requires you to make a detailed plan of the steps and actions you will undertake on a regular basis, ideally daily, to reach your goals. For example, if you want to start a business, your initial steps include researching the product or service you plan to offer, talking to others who are already in the same or similar endeavor, writing a marketing plan, getting a business license, and possibly meeting with bank officials to secure financing. If your goal is purchasing a home, the early steps are deciding on the type of house (including location and price range), saving money regularly, finding out about loans, and meeting with real estate agents. For getting a promotion at work, you need to find out the required experience and qualifications, and then decide how you will get it.

Take action. Develop a sense of urgency in your life.

Les Brown
Motivational Expert

Once you have your plan, take action. Do not allow doubts to delay you. Do not let others dissuade with their negative remarks. Do not let distractions take you off course. (More on that in upcoming chapters). Stay focused on what you want and move forward through your actions. As you do, be enthused. Norman Vincent Peale said, "There is real magic in enthusiasm. It spells the difference between mediocrity and accomplishment." Bill Gate's quote, "We were young, but we had good advice and good ideas and lots of enthusiasm," signals the role highly tuned positive emotions played in building Microsoft. So be excited

about your goals and they will keep you motivated. Enthusiasm will get people interested in helping you. And it will make others remember you.

Bear in mind you do not have to possess the outward zeal of Tony Robbins and many other high-energy motivational speakers to be excited. Having studied personality and behavior styles, I understand we have different levels of excitement and show it in different ways. You may have a quieter inward enthusiasm that propels you forward. So don't feel that you must be walking around shouting loudly, "Look at what I am planning to do!" Instead, be excited in your own way.

A mediocre idea that generates enthusiasm will go further than a great idea that inspires no one.

Mary Kay Ash – Founder,
Mary Kay Cosmetics

R – Review Your Progress and Decide on One of the Four R's

Periodically examine your progress to figure out what is working and what is not working. Then you can choose from four types of action:

- Repeat – We keep moving forward because things are going as we planned.
- Rearrange – Sometimes we have to reorganize certain aspects of our lives so we can make progress on our goals. For example, we may need to spend less time holding idle conversations with friends, watching TV, or going to the mall to shop. By cutting back on these types of activities, we can have more time and energy for our goals.
- Rewrite – Be willing to rewrite your goals if necessary. We might need to revise our goals because unforeseen circumstances have surfaced. Or maybe we need to re-evaluate our goals to

determine whether we set the bar too high or too low. Maybe your initial target should be increased or decreased. Maybe your time frames need adjusting. Maybe you can finish your endeavor sooner, or maybe it will take more time. It is alright to make changes after you have given the situation careful consideration.

When I decided to go to college, my initial goal was simply to graduate, but that quickly changed. During my first semester, I got a B+ and an A. The next semester, I got the same grades again. The following semester, I got two As. Then I started thinking maybe I could do better than “just graduate.” If I worked harder, maybe I could graduate with honors. So I raised the bar and set a new goal. I did everything possible to get only As in all my other classes. That meant many nights staying up late to do homework, using vacation time to study for finals, missing many social activities, and getting a tutor. As I mentioned earlier, six years later I graduated with honors (*summa cum laude*) and received a bachelor’s degree in Business Administration.

- **Release and Replace** – We may no longer choose to pursue our original goal. Maybe we have lost interest in it or perhaps circumstances in our lives have changed so dramatically that we must put the goal on hold indefinitely. Give yourself permission to let go of a goal once you have made a sincere and persistent effort to achieve it. If you find that you must do that, replace it with a new goal. Keep in mind the quote by Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, former President of Morehouse College, “The tragedy of life doesn’t lie in not reaching your goal. The tragedy lies in having no goal to reach.”

Over the years, I have pursued various endeavors and released some of them for legitimate reasons. With each one, I learned valuable lessons, gained great experiences, or developed incredible friendships because I undertook them. Deciding not to continue with a goal does not mean you have accomplished nothing.

In the past, I started a part-time art business, setting up shows in people's homes. I would invite local artists to participate, give presentations about collecting art and then sell the paintings and prints I had on display. I loved the business, but my workload as a category manager increased dramatically, and I found myself constantly exhausted. I eventually stopped the art show endeavor. However, because of it, I developed a friendship with Janet Saboor, one of the gallery owners I partnered with on several occasions. We have gone on vacations together to Japan, Brazil, and Jamaica. We are still the best of friends today.

Although I released the art show goal, I ended up with a great new friendship. So I gained something valuable in the process. As you think back on your previous goals, I am sure you will find the same is true for you. So even if you don't reach all your goals, they can still help you live a richer life.

Make sure you have goals for all areas that are important to you. For example, if one area is education, have written plans for going beyond your current level of learning or knowledge. For most of us, health is of major concern, so have goals for that area. In Chapter 2, you identified areas of importance on your Personal Inventory. If you have not completed the form, I suggest you do it now. Then, write your goals accordingly.

Plan to look at your goals several times a day to keep them in the forefront of your mind. I suggest writing them on index cards and carrying them with you. Not having our goals with us is like walking into a supermarket or grocery store without a shopping list. Without it, we purchase items we did not intend to buy and do not truly need. The same thing happens when we go into the "Mall of Life" without our written goals. We can spend time doing things and going places that are not connected with what we truly want in life. Don't let that happen to you. Regarding our goals, I feel we should follow the famous slogan from American Express, "Don't leave home without it."

The previous chapters (Knowing Yourself, Increasing Your Belief, Discovering Your Passions) and this one were all written to lead you to do one thing: take consistent action. To do that, you may need a Goal Achieving Partner (GAP). This is someone who also has goals. The two of you contact each other regularly to make sure each person is moving forward. A GAP can help you make progress because you have someone to whom you are accountable. This is particularly important if you are working by yourself and not in a group.

In selecting a GAP, find someone who is positive, motivated, and determined in addition to their having goals. Over the years, I have had several GAP arrangements. Some have been extremely valuable, and others worked marginally well. I suggest starting as a temporary arrangement to make sure your personalities are compatible and each person feels he or she is benefiting from the interaction. Before setting up anything definite, talk with each other about what you want to accomplish from the arrangement. If you decide to move forward, here are some guidelines to consider:

1. Plan to talk on a regular basis (weekly is best).
2. Schedule the conversations for the same time (i.e. every Monday at 9:00 a.m.; every Thursday at 8:00 p.m.). If one person needs to change the time because of an unexpected event or project, still speak sometime that week if possible (even if it needs to be for a shorter period of time).
3. Share the time. Make sure one person does not dominate the conversation. In the beginning, you may want to actually divide the time and keep track of it so no one feels he or she was short-changed.
4. Agree that all conversations are confidential. (I have found the trust factor develops over time.)
5. If the person is someone you do not know well, then act as you would with any new relationship. Do not immediately divulge confidential or personal information until you know the person extremely well.

6. Be as interested in hearing about the other person's progress as you are in talking about your own.
7. Be a good listener and be considerate. During the conversations, avoid taking other calls unless they are crucial (consider disabling "call waiting"). Also, do not engage in "side-line" activities (surfing the Internet, texting, watching TV). Act as if the person is in your physical presence.
8. See this arrangement as a valuable investment of your time and energy and that of the other person. Do not take it for granted.
9. Decide what would work well for both individuals, but be open to changing to a different format if it might be better.

For example, Dawn and I initially agreed to talk weekly for 30 minutes (15 minutes for each person). Then we changed to an hour with one of us getting 15 minutes to give her update and the other having 45 minutes so we could brainstorm on ways she could approach or solve any challenges she was having. We would alternate the 45-minute slot each week. We found that worked a lot better for us. Be creative so each person's needs are met.

10. Decide to hold the conversations on a trial basis for a set period (i.e. a month). At the end of that time, the two of you can decide if the calls are working well for both parties. If they are not, you can discuss changes that could make them better or you can discontinue the arrangement. Agree in advance that no one will take it personally if the latter is the case. That happened when I realized another individual and I had different life philosophies, which interfered with us being supportive partners. Since we did not take ending the endeavor personally, we are on good terms today.

Remember, a GAP is not necessary. It is an arrangement to consider if it makes sense and works for you and the other person. For information about other supportive relationships you can consider pursuing, see Chapter 11 – Build a Positive Network of Support.

The next chapters will show you ways to stay focused while moving forward; but first complete the exercise on the following page.



Just Get Serious® About Success

Chapter 6 Exercise

YOUR WRITTEN GOALS

Use the forms below and on the next page to write out your goals with the steps and actions necessary. Use one form for each goal.

Goal*	Steps (Optional)	Actions	Time Frames & Frequency
Write name of goal vertically			

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