

An Emotional Fitness Training, Inc. E-book HOW TO SET SMART AND CLEAR GOALS

The reason most people never reach their goals is that they don't define them, learn about them, or even seriously consider them as believable or achievable. Winners can tell you where they are going, what they plan to do along the way, and who will be sharing the adventure with them.

Denis Waitley, Author and Olympic Coach

GOALS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

According to a number of studies, most people do not take the time to set goals. Drifting along can feel good, but it leaves one at the whim of the tide or the wind.

Think of planning a vacation. Sometimes unplanned vacations work well, but a little planning generally improves the odds the vacation will be all you want it to be. As most of us want to enjoy our vacations, we plan them carefully. We plan where we want to go, how we are going to get there, and what we will do when we arrive. Too often, we plan for 14 days, but just live the remaining ones. Not wise.

Setting the right goals keeps you in charge. The more carefully you set your goals the greater the possibility that at the end of your life you will be able to say, "I did it my way" as opposed to asking "Is that all there is?" This is just as true when applied to any aspects of your life: vacations, jobs, school, personal development, caring relationships, and what matters most—your life mission.

EFFECTIVE GOALS ARE BOTH SMART AND CLEAR

A SMART GOAL goal is:

- S = Specific
- M = Measurable
- A = Agreed upon and action oriented
- R = Realistic
- T = Timely

Specific means you can state exactly what is wanted. The following examples are not specific.

I want to do better at work.

I want better my grades.

I want to improve my physical fitness.

I want to get along better with my family.

I want my child to complete to do better at helping around the house.

Examples of specific goals would be:

My goal is to improve my work evaluation enough to qualify for a raise. My current evaluation was average in three areas, good in two, and excellent in one. In order to get a raise I have to be good in all areas.

My goal is to improve my grade point average from a B to a B+.

I want to exercise four days out of the week by speed walking for 20 minutes.

In order to improve the quality of my family relationships, I will compliment those I live with at least four times for every time I offer a complaint or criticism. (This ratio of good to bad has been shown in some studies to improve relationships.)

"I want my child to do his chores at least five days every week and to my satisfaction without being reminded." This is more specific. However "To my satisfaction" needs greater specifying.

When asking another to change behavior, it is particularly important to specify expectations. Doing a chore such as keeping a bedroom tidy would be spelled out as follows.

1. Putting things away every night
2. Making the bed every morning
3. Emptying the waste basket when full.
4. Dusting and sweeping or running the vacuum weekly
5. Putting all cleaning materials away as soon as finished.

Measurable means you can count something. This step often confuses people. One way is to break a long term goal into specific steps as illustrated above. Completing a step is measures progress. For another

example, think of improving a job rating. The steps probably involve something like these:

1. Find a progress partner other than my supervisor.
2. Figure out exactly I need to do to improve.
3. Specify each step I must take.
4. Turn each step into a SMART goal.
5. Present my supervisor with an improvement plan for her approval
6. Add supervisor's ideas to mine.
7. Take action on the steps.
8. Check with supervisor monthly to see if she feels I am improving.

It is also important to rate your over-all satisfaction with your efforts. Rating scales makes it possible to measure almost anything including overall progress toward a goal. Here is a rating scale measuring satisfaction with overall goal progress:

- 5 doing everything I must and a bit more
- 4 doing everything I must
- 3 doing most of what I need to do
- 2 not doing enough
- 1 not doing anything to my satisfaction.

To measure progress, a baseline must be established. A baseline is a starting point. The base line for job or school performance would be the previous evaluation or grade.

Baselines should cover a reasonable amount of time, a week is usually sufficient for measuring daily goals, Longer term goals need a longer time frame to establish a proper baseline unless a specific marker already exists.

Gathering a baseline for completing chores would mean rating how often the chores were done without reminding the child as well as how well each chore was done.

Gatherine a baseline for improving relationships might mean counting the number of times you complain about a something a person does as well as how often you say something affirming.

Gathering a baseline for rating scales means rating where you feel you are as you begin moving toward your goal.

Agreed to and action oriented When setting a goal with another person, the goal all parties must not only understand exactly what needs to be

done to meet the goal and who will do it, but must agree to carrying out their assigned part.

Part of negotiating goals involves figuring out what motivating factors are operating. When a goal is not met, it is often because the motivating factors were not fully explored. Establishing motivation should be one of your first action steps. Start by examining your own motivation. Motivation can be rated using a 1 to 10 rating scale.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Hate the idea			Yes and no feelings				Fully motivated		

Motivation must be above 5 for a goal to succeed. Motivation at a 5 or below is a strong message meaning either change the goal or do nothing but increase the motivation rating to a 6 or higher. Maybe an employee needs to look for another job or a student might need to shift to a different major.

Agreement also means when the goal involves others, knowing their motivation. You may want to meet more frequently with your supervisor, educational advisor or a teacher, but they might not want to increase their work load or might feel you are not taking enough responsibility for you own actions. You might want a child to complete his chores, he might prefer watching television or hanging out with friends.

Ask how motivated the person by using a three step rating scale: *Can't do or won't do, willing to try, and eager to help you.* *Can't or won't do* means what you want isn't going to work. Figuring out what to do with out the person's help is your best bet for meeting your goal.

A boss or parent wanting another to change might have to add additional incentives before the other person's motivation reaches a workable level.

Goals must also be action goals. You don't get to the end of a journey by sitting in a chair and thinking about what you will do. To get to where you want to go, you must get out of the chair and get walking. Goals must reflect this reality. Break down a long term goal into action steps by listing everything you need to do to reach your goal. Here are the action steps for a vacation.

1. Figure out when. This might mean submitting a request for vacation time to your supervisor. It might mean making sure you know when school vacations are planned. If you want someone

- else to share you vacation you need to find out if they want to and when their schedules permit them to go with you.
2. Make a want list. What is your dream vacation?
 3. Researching costs of transportation, places to stay, food expenses.
 4. Figuring out what will you need in terms of money to meet the costs. How much do you have now, how much will need to add to what you have; how can you add what you need to add.
 5. If traveling abroad, what will you need for documentation both to leave home and return home.
 6. Making the necessary reservations.
 7. Figuring out what to pack.
 8. Packing.
 9. Going.

Realistic involves asking if the necessary resources are available for meeting the goal. If taking your dream vacation depends on winning the lottery, you need to get a different dream vacation. An employee who is asked to do his work, and the work usually done by another when the company downsized might be able to do one job well, but not both jobs.

A student who works full time, is raising a child alone, might not have the time or energy to study harder.

A child with severe emotional problems, might not be able to keep his or her room clean.

Timely means setting time frames for meeting the both the long term goal and each action step. Too long time frames are less effective than shorter ones—except when the short goal is too easy to meet.

SMART GOALS MUST ALSO BE CLEAR GOALS

A clear goal is

- C = Challenging
- L = Legal
- E = Ethical
- A = Affirming
- R = Recorded

C = Challenging means you need to stretch a bit to get to your goal. Research has shown that people are more likely to reach goals that are realistic but slightly challenging. Again, a rating scale can be used to

figure out how challenging a goal is so the goal can be adjusted upward and downward if necessary.

L = Legal seems obvious, but is not always clear. For example, a couple bought airline tickets on-line from the friend of a friend. The friend of the friend had purchased them with a stolen credit card. The couple was arrested at the gate and charged with a felony. The friend of the friend had suddenly vanished.

Legal applies to every action step as well as the main goal.

E = Ethical Goals that go against your honor code will create internal conflict and are not likely to be met.

A = Affirming Goals need to be affirming and positively stated. "I will eat smaller portions." and not "I will not eat double size portions."

R = Recorded Goals need to be written. Two templates are attached to this E-book to aid efforts to record goals and on-going progress.

ADDITIONAL GOAL SETTING ADVICE

Examine possible loses, fears or threats involved in meeting the goal. For example:

- Trying to get rid of all test anxiety might eliminate motivation to study.
- Doing better at work or school often means being expected to do even better.
- Doing well at work or school can create jealousy in friends or lovers. Woman in particular who do too well might find themselves involved in nasty office gossip.
- Meeting a goal, might put pressure on you to do even more.
- Often youth settle for passing grades fearing that going for higher grades won't work.

Examine the sacrifices needed to pursue the goal. Think about what must be spent to get to the goal:

- Time
- Energy
- Money
- The impact on important relationships

THE GOAL SETTING PROCESS

Use the SMART Goal template to help answer and record your goal and action plan.

1. State the goal specifically and positively.
2. Evaluate motivation.
3. Figure out what will be measured.
4. Establish the base line.
5. List all the steps needed to meet the goal .
6. Assign responsibility for each step.
7. Establish time lines for each step.
8. Write scripts and rehearse each step.
9. Find a partner. Very few people reach goals without help from at least one other person. Start by looking for a friend who wants to pursue the same goal and will meet with you regularly to discuss both your efforts to get where you want to go.
10. Establish an accountability system for working with your goal partner. When and where will you meet. Use the Goal Progress template to track forward progress.
11. Expect relapse. It is common for people to be highly motivated when first working on a goal. There is a satisfaction in proving you can do something; once that has been proved, motivation flags. Often the hardest part of reaching a goal is moving forward after the initial burst of success. When relapse happens problem solve the why of relapse; re-check motivation and reset the goal if necessary.

MORE MAY BE NEEDED

*If you only have a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail.
Abraham Maslow, American Psychologist*

Many people find following the directions above is all they want or need. Others might want or need more. The following additional tools ease the negative feelings needed to overcome in reaching for a goal.

1. Add a Poster Coach to your efforts. We suggest the Remember What Matters Poster Coach; it is free to those who subscribe to our Blog.
2. The EFTI Workbook How to Live a Life That Matters. .
3. Ask an outsider to help. Try an EFTI email coaching session as a first step toward asking for outside help.
4. Create your own Added Care and Support Group. Oru How to Create An Added Care Team and Support Group lays out the necessary steps.

5. Get a face-to-face coach—ask that coach to do use the EFT approach.
6. Develop some cheerleaders
7. Talk to a therapist—and yes, talk with him or her about how you have been using EFTI as a self-help too.
8. Own your choices. Much of life is in our control, the more we own our choices, the more we move forward. Meeting a goal requires some luck, but hard work helps you capitalize when luck comes calling.

FINAL WORDS

If all of the above seems like too much, then you are not ready for the goal you are trying to reach. As the saying goes “It works if you work it.” At the same time, life is too short to waste energy and time pursuing the wrong goal. Better to deal with some sadness at giving up a dream than holding on too long.

Good luck.

When a goal is not met; the wrong goal was set.

Katherine Levine

Everyone has inside of him a piece of good news. The good news is that you don't know how great you can be! How much you can love! What you can accomplish! And what your potential is!

Anne Frank

God gives every bird his worm, but he does not throw it into the nest.

Swedish Proverb

Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do.

Johann Wolfgang Van Goethe

INITIAL SMART GOAL SHEET

MY LONG TERM GOAL IS:

I will know I have reached this goal when:

The date I will reach this goal:

THE STEPS I WILL TAKE TO REACH MY GOAL

Use more paper if needed. Include measurements and time frames for each step.

Date _____
:_____

Progress Review _____

GOAL PROGRESS REVIEW

1. I am satisfied with my efforts to meet my goal.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all			Somewhat				Totally		

2. What helped me move forward:

3. What held me back:

4. Next steps:

Date _____ **Next Progress Review** _____