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## OFF-THE-CHART GOAL SETTING

### *4 Steps to Achieving Extraordinary Results*

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*"You will become as small as your controlling desire;  
as great as your dominant aspiration."*

James Allen

Everyone has the same amount of time each day, yet some people accomplish several lifetimes of achievements in the same time others waste wondering what to do. Some people spend more time planning a party than they do their own lives. Successful people control their time by setting goals.

Goals have been called, "a dream with a deadline." A goal is any result towards which effort is directed. A well-formed goal however, states *any* desired result with a time-defined end point. Without a date for completion, it's still only a good idea.

Opportunities for setting goals abound everywhere. To achieve meaningful results, goals need to support a larger mission and vision. You may have one mission with numerous goals, or one mission with only one goal needed to complete the mission. Simple or complex, goals keep you focused when the going gets tough. They develop from gaps between where you are and where you want to be. These gaps create tension, which leads to desire, which fuels motivation. Gaps create "seed" goals. These are the germs of thought that stimulate fully formed ideas about what you want to accomplish. Dissatisfaction, pain, anger, or imagined possibilities, are all examples of gaps (opportunities) waiting for closure.

Well-defined goal statements are the foundation for achieving meaningful results. They clarify:

1. what results will be accomplished
2. when the result is to be completed
3. who is involved
4. types of resources needed
5. where or location (if appropriate) results take place

## Steps for Goal Setting

### STEP 1 — Identify Goals

With a mission and vision in mind, identify "gaps" between where you are and where you want to be. These imagined results become "seed goals." On a separate sheet of paper, list all of the "seed" goals needed to achieve your mission and vision. These will be short, undeveloped lists of activities needed to complete the mission. You will prioritize them later. Then assign roles of "who will do what."

### STEP 2 — Write Goal Statements

Writing goals down on paper makes them tangible. Otherwise, they tend to remain in the daydream arena. The old saying, "What gets written gets done," is a powerful motivator. Written goals clarify thinking, make an idea "real," and stimulate the drive to accomplish a bite-sized portion of activity. It's also satisfying to cross off completed activities.

Effective goal setting means being SMART. Using the acronym, SMART, write the components of well-defined goal statements for each gap or seed goal.

S = Be specific. State *what* you aim to achieve or the desired outcomes from your efforts. The more specific in pinpointing what you want, the greater the likelihood for success.

Example: *Reduce absenteeism.*

M = Add a measurement if possible. The accomplishment could include criteria (i.e. numbers or standards) that can be used to determine if you've reached a more precise goal. You may also include cost and resource constraints. This places a

financial value on the outcome and is useful in determining the need to rewrite the goal if the effort fails to produce results. A failed attempt however, is really a learning opportunity revealing the way *not* to proceed next time.

Example: *Reduce absenteeism by 10%.*

A = include an action verb (increase, eliminate, acquire, build, partner, solve etc.)

Example: *Reduce*

R = Be realistic. Don't set an impossible goal, but also don't underestimate what people can do when asked to *s t r e t c h!* Nothing's more frustrating than going for something that seems impossible, yet many people have achieved remarkable achievements going against all odds. Studies shows that goals tend to be reached if the end result is seemingly slightly out of reach, rather than too easy or ridiculously difficult. If it's too easy, people will lose interest. If it's too difficult, people will lose confidence and stop.

T = Make it time sensitive. Give your goal a deadline.

Example: *Reduce absenteeism by 10% within 6 months.*

By the time you've satisfied all the criteria for a SMART goal, you will have a complete goal statement. SMART goals reduce misunderstandings by being clear, measurable, realistic, and time-driven.

### **STEP 3 — Develop Goals**

Prioritize goals. Decide which goals are most urgent and important. Estimate how much time you (or others) will need to complete the goal(s). Use the 80-20 formula for assistance in time allocation--invest 20% of your time on your top priority to be 80% effective. Look for roadblocks and factor them into your plans. Set additional goals to resolve or work around them. Obstacles are those frightening things you see when you take your eyes *off* your goals.

### **STEP 4 — Create an Action Plan**

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Schedule goal activities in your calendar planner. What gets written is more *likely* to get done if seen as a thing “to do.” Items not completed today get moved to the next day. Instead of the goal being a “BIG DEAL,” a small, bite-sized activity appears as a line item in your daily calendar. Do at least one thing each day to help advance your goal.

Contact Lorna Riley for a complete list of training programs and speeches:

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