



# GOAL SETTING: *A Practical Guide*

## **How will you know if your goals are right for you?**

*You may tell yourself and others that you want to go on a holiday. You could spend months planning a trip and end up hating the experience. Why?*

*Goals should not be simply something you want but rather reflect what is most important to you.*

*It is easy to get into the trap of thinking "when \_\_\_\_\_ happens I will be happy/feel successful". Things don't fill you with joy. You can have moments of pleasure but the danger with this attitude is that you will always be looking for the next thing to happen.*

## **A better question is 'what am I doing' and 'why'?**

*It is important to define your core values. If value being a loving, caring, supportive partner that is an ongoing process. You need to regularly 'check in' and see if you are living in accordance with this value.*

## **Determining Your Core Values**

Values are not the same as goals. But they are interconnected. Values are what define you whereas goals are things you are working towards. Once achieved a goal can be crossed off. Your values are ongoing. They are the principles that guide and lead you through life.

Making more money or having more 'things' is what many people say will make them happy. But the truth is that unless you live according to your core values your achievements will not bring you sustained fulfilment and joy. This is because your values are like your inner compass.

We all want long-term happiness. The key is to identify what this would truly mean for you. What is the point of achieving all that you set out to do only to wake up one day and think 'So what'.

## **Goal setting and your core values**

If you set goals without consideration of your core values you may achieve them but still feel empty. We can all think of financially successful people who appear to have it all but who are not happy.

## **Begin by Imagining Your Funeral**

Stop for a few minutes and imagine yourself witnessing your own funeral. The room is filled with your relatives, friends and people who work with you. What is it you hope that they are saying about you?

Choose a representative from each group - a close family friend, a member of your immediate family and a work colleague.

Imagine real people you know and think of the specific comments each would make about you. What you would like each person to say about you is a direct reflection of your core values.

Taking this process one step further you can imagine what you think they would actually say about you right now (as opposed to what you hope they would say about you). Their response will give you a quick insight into whether you believe you are currently living in accordance with your core values.

**Tip:** If it helps identify key areas of your life and write them down on a piece of paper as headings. For example - health, wealth, relationships, personal and social values. Make notes under each heading.

If you find yourself making a list of negative comments how that make you feel. Take the time to rephrase another response. For example:

**Negative Comment:** 'They worked long hours and never had a day off'

**Positive Comment:** 'They were hard workers but always made family a priority. They planned trips away and made sure they stayed connected with their children'.

**Identified Core Value:** I believe being a hard work is a good character trait that can be balanced with maintaining healthy relationships.

## Prioritise Your Relationships

The next important step before you set goals is to consider your different roles. Below are some examples:

Son/Daughter, Wife/Husband, Mother/Father, Friend, Neighbour, Work Colleague, Brother/Sister, Investor, Occupation (Grazier, Farmer, Nurse, Teacher, Trainer etc), Mentor etc...

Once you have listed your different 'roles' take a moment to reflect on them and place them in order from most to least important.

## Get Your Rocks In Order

The Big Rocks of Life - by Dr Stephen Covey - Read this story.

*Big Rocks - what is most valuable and important to you eg time with your family,*

*Small Gravel, Sand and Water - miscellaneous everyday tasks*

**Summary -** Without prioritising and putting your big rocks into your life first they will never fit in. You can be busy dealing with the other items (gravel, sand and water) and leave your big rocks to one side. So you have to ask yourself where do I fit my big rocks in? Do I always put them in first knowing that if I don't they won't fit in? Or am I neglecting them?

You can always find space to fit the gravel, sand and water into your life. No matter where you are. But you cannot leave out the big rocks thinking that you will fit them in 'later' or 'next time'. They cannot fall in place by themselves.

**Take Home Message -** You must consciously plan and prioritise your big rocks. Otherwise you never get to them. You must deliberately choose to put them in first. Only then will you see the payoffs and feel fulfilled and happy with your life.

## Now Set Your Goals

Goals should be made with full consideration given to how they relate to your core values and roles you feel are the most significant in your life. Take the process seriously. This should then form the basis of your life plan. The images you then create in mind can be used for inspiration and reassurance.

Consider each value you identify as important to you. In terms of your relationships then think about the type of person you would want to be in that relationship. Picture other important areas you have identified.

What qualities would you want to bring to a situation?

If you are currently unable to bring those qualities, have those relationships or be the person you want to be work out what you need to do to change that.

By considering these perspectives you are more likely to set meaningful and more fulfilling goals. Keep these thoughts in mind when you reflect on your achievements. If your values, roles and goals are in alignment then you will score much higher when you measure your personal success and happiness.

Do you feel you are currently living the life you want? What small changes can you make to change that? Are there skills you would like to learn? How do you want to look after your health? What knowledge would you like to gain? What would make your job more rewarding? If you were living to your ideal standards what type of worker would you be? How would your interpersonal relationships be different if they were to be more meaningful? What qualities would you bring if were the 'ideal you' to your relationships.

Once you have your master life plan you must take action. Steady consistent action.

Remember, you cannot change someone else. But once you have clarity in your own life it is much easier to enter into discussions/negotiations with others and ensure you are working towards your goals and planning the life you want.

## **Start with the end in Mind**

Once you know these end results (or values) you can then set your short-term actions (goals).

***Funeral Comment:***

***Identified Value:***

***Long-term Goal:***

***Short-term Goal:***

Once you have clarity you are able to plan and reflect. Ask yourself "what action do I need to take today, this week, this month, this year etc to move me closer to my long-term goal?"

Life involves hard work to succeed. All meaningful projects require effort and challenges emerge. When faced with a challenge we can either decide 'it is too hard' and give up or avoid taking action. That is why is so important to connect with your values so that you know if the hard work is worth the effort.

Values are the direction we desire to keep moving in. It is an ongoing process with no end, as you seek to live life in accordance with your values.

Goals on the other hand state a desired outcome that can be achieved or completed. Goals, actions or to-do lists are only personally fulfilling if made and achieved in alignment with your values.

*Sources:*

*Mark Morgan Ford - <http://www.earlytorise.com/how-to-find-your-core-values/>*

*Mark Ford - 'The Pledge'*

*Paul Blackburn*

*The Happiness Trap*