

Guidelines For Setting Goals

Goals

A goal is something you work to achieve. Your motivation — desire to change — will affect how well you reach your goal. The following guidelines can help you set and achieve a goal.

- **Set realistic goals.**
They should be challenging but possible.
- **Set a goal that is specific.**
Clearly define what you are trying to do.
- **Set a goal you can measure.**
You will know when you have succeeded by measuring your progress.
- **Make the goal yours so you “own” it.**
This is your goal, not anyone else’s goal.

There are two types of goals:

- **short-term:** This is a goal you can accomplish in a reasonably short time that contributes to a longer-range goal. Example: “I will read at least one chapter of a book I enjoy each day.”
- **long-term:** This is a series of many short-term goals. Example: “I will read at least 12 books this year.”

Goals are easier to accomplish when they are clear, specific and divided into steps you can manage.

How to Set Goals

Use the following steps to set your personal goals.

- **Understand yourself.**
Ask yourself: “What do I do well?”
“What do I enjoy doing?” “What are the most important things in my life?”
- **Make clear, specific goals.**
A goal should tell you exactly what you want and it should be measurable. For example, a clear and specific goal is “I want to be at work by 7:30 a.m. every day this month.”
- **Make your goal positive.**
Say “I will get a B in my college course” instead of “I don’t want to get a failing grade.”
- **Set time limits.**
Give yourself a reasonable deadline in which to accomplish your goal.
- **Write down your goals.**
Keep your written goals where you can see them. This will help keep you focused on reaching them.
- **Check your progress.**
Are you doing what needs to be done to meet your goals? If not, what can you do to get back on target?