

Life Goals

Self-Coaching Guide

Setting life goals

Life goals define what we want to achieve in order to be satisfied with our future and who we become. They help to give us a sense of meaning and purpose. Setting life goals allows us to guide the focus and direction of our life and assess whether we are actually being successful.

Setting life goals, whether big or small, comes out of a careful consideration of what we want to accomplish in life. [See SGC – ‘How can I find purpose in my life?’ for more about this topic.]

How can I set achievable life goals?

Setting achievable life goals requires several key elements:

- 1) **Decide on your goal.** First, make sure the goal is important to you personally. That will inspire and motivate you enough to stop you just thinking and start you doing something about it. It must be something you really want to achieve. Something that will result in you accomplishing a successful outcome. Aligning the goal with your strengths and values will increase the likelihood of success.
- 2) **Break out your goal.** If your goal is long term, decide what window of time you should initially focus on. Ask yourself, ‘What goal should I be setting for this season of my life?’ The goal should relate to a certain point in the future (e.g. graduation, next job, next 2 years) rather than looking too far ahead.
- 3) **Break down your goal.** If your goal is big, you should break it down into an *end goal* (which is seldom totally within your own control) with several smaller, more-specific *performance goals* (which are within your control). This makes the goal less daunting and more realisable. Another good reason for doing this is because the brain tends to resist change. Making a goal small and easily achievable, defeats this fear of change. You can then build new habits and weaken your resistance to change. Ask yourself, ‘What one small step would I be happy to take toward reaching my goal?’ Then start doing it. Don’t worry this step ‘isn’t big enough’. Small actions rewire your brain enabling larger changes to follow.
- 4) **Plan your goal.** It’s important you plan how you will reach your goal, including any individual steps needed on the way. This is best done by writing an action plan that (a) makes the goal tangible and memorable, and (b) allows you to cross off each step as you complete it. All actions should be SMART. (The meaning of the SMART acronym is described overleaf.)
- 5) **Publish and monitor your plan.** Post your plan in visible places to remind yourself what you intend to do and tell others about it. Both will remind and encourage you to act upon your plan. Also, track your progress. Seeing the progress you are making towards your goal is very motivating.
- 6) **Be willing to alter your plan.** Things will change – you, your circumstances, or your environment. So be ready to revisit your goal or alter your plan. Rethinking things and making adjustments, so they remain relevant to your vision, values and situation, is a strength not a weakness. Stay focused on the next step and be open to opportunities that could arise to make a better plan. And if you sometimes fail to keep to your plan, accept it, remind yourself it’s part of the process, learn from it, and try again.

“A goal properly set is halfway reached.” Zig Ziglar

More Information

M +44 (0)7711 856804 **E** hello@paulhollywell.com **L** www.linkedin.com/in/paulhollywell **W** www.paulhollywell.com

Life Goals

Self-Coaching Guide

Continued ...

SMART Goals

A SMART goal should be:

Specific – make it clear and well-defined. *What exactly do you aim to achieve?*

Measurable – include precise amounts, dates, etc. *How will you know when you have been successful?*

Achievable – ensure it is within your capabilities. *Is it really possible for you to achieve this goal?*

Realistic – ensure any obstacles are taken into account. *What could stop you achieving this goal?*

Timed – give it a deadline. *Have you given yourself sufficient time to achieve this goal?*

More Information

M +44 (0)7711 856804 **E** hello@paulhollywell.com **L** www.linkedin.com/in/paulhollywell **W** www.paulhollywell.com