

*You've got to be very careful if you don't know where you're going, because you might not get there." Yogi Berra*

## 1. Definitions

- **Goals** are well-defined plans aimed at achieving specific results. Goals are your road map to become the person you want to be and to create the life you want to live. They reflect your values and priorities about what is truly important to you.

- **Time management** is the act or process of planning and exercising conscious control over the amount of time spent on specific activities, especially to increase effectiveness, efficiency or productivity. It is the way you regulate or schedule your time through the process of organizing and planning how to divide your time between daily activities.

**Time management and goal setting** go hand in hand as effective time management requires effective goal setting. That is, when you have a clear goal of what you want to accomplish during specific time and you have ample time allocated to work on the goals, you will be rewarded with a sense of pride and accomplishment, and you will feel more in control of your time, your choices, and your personal life.

## 2. Different Kinds of Goals

Goals can be defined and organized in a variety of ways, such as educational goals, financial goals, or organizational goals. Another way to define goals is according to the length of time established to reach the desired outcome.

a) An **immediate goal** is achievable within the range of a few hours to a few days. Tasks or assignments that must be done within a short time frame are examples of immediate goals.

b) A **short-term goal** is achievable within the range of a week to the length of an academic term. A short-term goal may be broken into smaller steps or goals. Completing specific courses, earning a specific number of credits and establishing an acceptable grade-point average are examples of short-term goals.

c) A **long-term goal** is achievable after a longer period of time, usually measured in years (e.g., to complete a four-year degree graduation from a university). Most long-term goals are achieved after the completion of a series of short-term goals. However, short-term goals need not be directly linked to a long-term goal. For example, you may want to create a goal to organize an effective study area, sort your boxes of photographs, change the oil in your car, or plant a vegetable garden. You can plan, implement, and achieve short-term goals such as these within a relatively short period of time without the goals being part of a larger long-term goal.

## 3. Achieving Goals

Many people have good intentions and a strong desire or motivation to succeed by achieving their goals; however, many of them fall short of making their goals reality. Frequently, the inability to achieve goals begins with the lack of a sound process or strategy to write effective goals. Try the **Four-Step Approach for Achieving Goals** which is a process to set and achieve goals by using these steps:

## Step 1: Write S.M.A.R.T Goals

- **Specific** Goals should be straight-forward and emphasize what you want to happen. Specifics help you to focus your efforts and clearly define what you are going to do. Determine ‘What’, ‘Why’, and ‘How’:
  - ✓ What do you want to ultimately accomplish?
  - ✓ Why is it important at this time?
  - ✓ How are you going to accomplish it?
- **Measurable:** Choose a goal with measurable progress, so that you can see the change occur. Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of each goal you set. When you measure your progress, you stay on track, reach your target dates, and experience feelings of achievement that gives motivation for the continued effort required to reach your goals.
- **Attainable (Achievable):** When you identify goals that are most important to you, you begin to figure out ways you can make them come true. You develop the attitudes, abilities, skills, and financial capacity to reach them. Be sure to set goals that you can attain with some effort! Too difficult and you set the stage for failure, but too low makes it hard to stay motivated. Set the bar high enough for a satisfying achievement!
- **Realistic:** The goal must be significant to your life at the moment in order for you to have the motivation to achieve it. Choose something that is important to you and reflects your values as a person.
- **Timely:** Set a timeframe for the goal; putting an end point to your goal gives you a clear target to work towards. If you don’t set a time, the commitment is too vague. Without a time limit, there’s no urgency to start taking action now. If you anchor your goal within a timeframe, “by May 1st”, then you’ve set your unconscious mind into motion to begin working on the goal.

### Examples:

To say, “I will do better” or “I want something new” results in vague and immeasurable goals.

To say, “I will be a millionaire tomorrow” is not realistic for most people.

To say, “I want to spend more time with my kids” is not a SMART goal. It is too vague, not measurable and has no time limit.

To say, “I will finish my lab report by 4:00 on Tuesday” is an example of a SMART goal.

Fortunately, by learning to write effective goals and to use strategies to achieve goals, you will find that many of your fears and reasons for avoiding goal setting vanish.

## Step 2: Set a Target Date and Time

Procrastinators (people who put off doing something) seldom achieve goals. You can reduce or eliminate procrastination by setting a *target date* (deadline). The target date and time work as a form of motivation to keep you moving forward and on time.

## Step 3: Identify Steps

On paper, list the individual steps you will need to do to achieve the goal. For goals with multiple steps, list specific target dates for completing each step. When you use this method of breaking one large goal into several smaller ones, you gain momentum each time you achieve a smaller goal by its targeted time.

#### **Step 4: Plan a Reward**

You can celebrate the completion of a goal with a reward. You can use that reward as an incentive—a motivation—to achieve your goal. You can use two kinds of rewards in your goal-setting plan: extrinsic rewards and intrinsic rewards.

#### **4. Methods/ Tools for Setting Goals**

##### **a) Goal Organizers**

A **goal organizer** is a chart that consists of six questions to help you plan a course of action in order to achieve a specific goal. Using a goal organizer helps you think seriously about the benefits, consequences, obstacles, and resources related to a specific goal. Six important questions can assist you in organizing your goals and planning a course of action:

1. What is your goal?
2. What benefits will you gain by achieving this goal?
3. What consequences will you experience by *not* achieving this goal?
4. What obstacles might you encounter while working on this goal?
5. How can you deal with the obstacles effectively if they occur?
6. What people or resources could help you with achieving this goal?

##### **b) The ABC Method**

If you try to achieve too many goals at one time, you may feel overwhelmed and frustrated. Use the ABC Method. The **ABC Method** is a goal-setting strategy to prioritize your goals according to rank of importance. Use the following steps for the ABC Method:

1. **List all the goals you want to achieve.** Limit your list to a specific time period.
2. **Assign a priority letter A, B, or C** to the goals on your list.

**“A” Goals:** the most important to you or the ones you want or need to achieve first.

**“B” Goals:** not as high a priority as the “A” goals.

**“C” Goals:** not of such immediate importance.

3. **Begin working on the “A” goals.** After achieving the “A” high-priority goals, move on to the “B” goals. Once those are achieved, work on achieving the lower-priority goals.

#### **5. Self-Management**

Self-management involves managing and monitoring your progress for achieving your goals. Goal setting is an art that requires practice and refinement. Strive to strengthen your goal-setting skills by using the following strategies to increase your success with each goal that you set.

##### **✓ Break Larger Goals into Smaller Goals**

If you break a large task or goal into smaller steps or a series of steps (subgoals), achieving your goal feels more possible, realistic, and manageable.

##### **✓ Evaluate the Importance of a Goal**

Goals, especially long-term goals, can become outdated. Life circumstances and your personal values change. If a goal is no longer of value to you, abandon it; replace it with a new, more significant goal or a goal that is higher on your priority list.

##### **✓ Analyze Your Goal-Setting Strategies**

Learning to set and achieve goals is a process that improves with practice. On occasion, if you do not achieve a goal by a specific target date, or you do not achieve the desired outcome, you can use the

following questions to analyze each situation and adjust your approach the next time you create a similar goal:

- Was the goal that I set unrealistically high? Did I really believe I could achieve the goal?
- Was the goal I set too low? Did I feel a lack of purpose or unchallenged?
- Was the goal high on my priority list of importance?
- Did I think through the steps carefully when I planned the goal?
- Did I allot sufficient time on my weekly schedule to work on the goal?
- Was I motivated? Did I really apply effort and follow my plan of action?
- What would I do differently if I were to set this goal again?

✓ **Keep Your Goals in the Forefront**

If on occasion you find yourself struggling with your goal-setting plans, your motivation dwindle or you find yourself ignoring your goals, try writing your goals on index cards that you can place around your house and in your notebook as a constant reminder to spend time each day working toward the outcome.

## **6. Why Set Goals?**

- Goal Setting is a powerful process to clarify what you want.
- Goals motivate you to turn your vision into a reality.
- Goals help you focus your time and energy on your dreams and objectives.
- Goals make you accountable.
- Goals are very important in college because they help motivate you to do your work, attend classes, and study for exams.

- *Goal setting is a way for me to actively plan my future. Having goals in my life gives me something to aim for. “Dreaming and doing go hand in hand”.*

**Task one** : *From the list below, what seems more important to you (tick three choices)? Add any other choices in the space that follows.*

- Doing well in school
- Making money
- Being healthy
- Learning new things
- Having fun: travel, games, books, hobbies...
- Being creative: music, drawing, experiments...

**Others:**.....  
 .....

**Task Two**: *Review the following goals. How would you rewrite them into S.M.A.R.T goals?*

<i>My Goals</i>	<i>What’s Missing?</i>	<i>Final Version</i>
<b>1. Doing well in exams</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Specific?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Measurable?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Achievable?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Realistic?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Time-bound?</i>	
<b>2. Making money</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Specific?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Measurable?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Achievable?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Realistic?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Time-bound?</i>	
<b>3. Be healthy</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Specific?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Measurable?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Achievable?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Realistic?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Time-bound?</i>	

- **N.B.** When you know what is most important to you, you are more likely to set S.M.A.R.T goals.