

LIVING SKILLS

Personal Growth

SETTING AND ATTAINING GOALS

PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK



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AN OVERVIEW OF SETTING AND ATTAINING GOALS

Setting goals makes a big difference in a person's ability to achieve and maintain a healthy life. Learning and practicing how to set and attain goals take time.

THIS WORKBOOK IS DIVIDED INTO FOUR SESSIONS

SESSION 1 defines what goals are, introduces the concept of setting goals, and discusses why they are important.

SESSION 2 encourages thinking about dreams and explores the concept of setting short-term and long-term goals to achieve a dream.

SESSION 3 teaches a goal-setting process.

SESSION 4 focuses on creating a plan to meet goals.



SESSION 1.

Introduction to Setting and Attaining Goals

When you were a child, were you ever asked what you wanted to be when you grew up? You may have answered “princess” or “president,” “cowboy” or “astronaut.” Kids know how to dream big. You can still dream big as a grown-up. You might think about your dreams in a different way now that you are an adult, but it is very important to honor them.

As adults we may call our dreams “goals,” and we can set out to make them come true. In fact, goal setting is a powerful process for thinking about what we want in our lives and how to make it a reality.

What Is a Goal?

Let’s start out by defining what a goal is. Put a check mark in front of each statement that you think is a good definition of a goal.

- Something you want to have and will work toward getting
- Something you want to do and will work toward being able to do
- Something you want to learn and will work toward learning
- Something you want to change about yourself and will work toward changing
- Something you want to give to someone else and will work toward making it happen
- All of the above

Long-Term and Short-Term Goals

Goals may be short-term or long-term. Long-term goals are the “big-picture” goals, goals that may take a year or more to achieve. Examples might be:

- Get a college degree
- Run a marathon
- Save enough money for retirement by a specific age
- Own a house
- Volunteer for a service organization in a different country

Short-term goals are those goals we can accomplish in the next day, week, month, or year. It is the short-term goals that will help you get to the big-picture, long-term goals.

Examples might be:

- Apply for community college
- Run two miles twice this week
- Talk with someone about saving for retirement
- Open up a savings account for a down payment on a house
- Research volunteer service organizations on the Internet and find one that interests you

Read the following goals and put **LT** in front of those that are long-term and **ST** for those that are short-term. The correct answers are at the end of this session.

_____ Graduate from college

_____ Look at a certain college’s website to find out about the application requirements

_____ Save money for my child’s college education

_____ Put away \$25 every week

_____ Read a book

_____ Publish a book

■ Write two examples of long-term goals here.

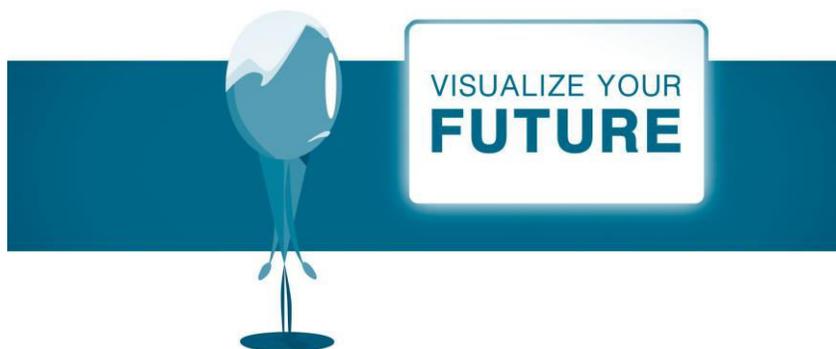
■ Write two examples of short-term goals here.

The Importance of Setting Goals

■ Do you think it is important to learn how to set goals? _____

■ If so, why?

We can attain more of what we want in our lives when we set goals and plan how to reach them. When we don't, we may not only fail to attain our goals, but we may feel aimless and lost. Read the following story. Then list the negative consequences that Jack experienced from not setting goals.





Jack did fine in elementary and middle school, but high school was a different story. He started hanging out with a group of guys who spent more time skipping school than attending class. Jack liked it that way. His parents bugged him about it and asked him what he planned to do with his life. The school counselor asked him what kind of job he wanted to get when he graduated from high school. His girlfriend asked him if he ever thought about college.

Jack shrugged his shoulders at each of their questions. He didn't really want to think about the future. He was a live-for-the-moment kind of guy. By the time he was eighteen years old, he was still a sophomore and he decided to drop out of high school. His girlfriend broke up with him. He got a laborer job on a construction crew for minimum wage, but that ended in the winter and he couch-surfed for a couple of months before he moved back in with his parents.

When he was at the unemployment office, a counselor suggested he work on his GED so he could increase his opportunities for jobs that paid a living wage. Jack thought about it, but by this time he didn't know if he could do it. He decided not to decide.

Jack is now twenty-seven years old. He bought a car to get to his new job on a landscape crew, but when he got laid off, he couldn't find another job. He couldn't make his car payments and it got repossessed. He finally got a job at a fast-food restaurant, but the pay was so low he had to move into a one-bedroom apartment with two other guys. When the government cut back on food stamp aid, Jack found himself on a street corner asking for handouts.

What were the negative consequences Jack experienced from failing to set goals?

Roadblocks

There were at least two reasons Jack did not set goals for his life. When he was in high school, he didn't want to be bothered. Having fun was more important to him than anything else. Later on, his self-esteem had dropped; he had lost confidence.

There are many reasons people don't set goals. They may not want to bother. They may not know how. They may think they are not capable of achieving much anyway. They may get distracted by other things. They may feel like they don't deserve to attain certain things. They may feel like they are too busy just surviving.

■ What challenges have you had in setting goals?

Goals for This Program

■ Imagine you have learned how to be a goal-setting expert. Visualize yourself as having already set long-term and short-term goals. How do you think you would feel about that? How would you feel about yourself? Independent? Confident? Capable? Proud? Other feelings? Write them here.

■ Write below your goal for going through this program. Some examples might be: learn how to set goals, learn how to reach my goals, set a goal for how I want to spend the next month, set a goal for going back to school and make an action plan, set a goal for what kind of job I want to be doing in five years and how to get it.

SUMMARY

- People can make their dreams come true by setting goals.
- Long-term goals are the big-picture goals that take a year or more to achieve.
- Short-term goals are goals that can be accomplished in the next day, week, month, or year.
- Setting and attaining goals helps prevent people from feeling aimless and lost in life.

CHALLENGE

Identify one goal you have not achieved yet and reflect on why this goal is important to you.

ANSWER KEY

(page 4)

You were asked to read the following goals and put **LT** in front of those that are long-term and **ST** for those that are short-term. Here are the answers:

LT Graduate from college

ST Look at a certain college's website to find out about the application requirements

LT Save money for my child's college education

ST Put away \$25 every week

ST Read a book

LT Publish a book



SESSION 2.

What Are Your Dreams?

Lots of people talk about having dreams. Lots of songs are written about having dreams. One of the most famous speeches ever made was about dreams. The speaker was Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Here is an excerpt from his famous “I Have a Dream” speech:

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. . . .

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

The dreams he talked about were big dreams, beautiful dreams. He did not have a road map to make them happen, but he worked toward those dreams every day.

Different Kinds of Dreams

People have many different kinds of dreams. Jonas Salk had a dream that if he kept working hard on his experiments he could find a cure for polio. Wilbur and Orville Wright had a dream that they could fly. People may dream about earning a living with their music, or more simply, having time to be part of a band. People may dream about being in the Peace Corps, teaching kindergarten, competing in the Olympics, having a family, or learning to cook.

■ Think about your own dreams. Write some of your dreams in the lines below. Don't worry about whether they seem too big or out of reach. Include all kinds of dreams, both big and small. Include dreams for today and tomorrow, next year, and ten years from now.

Now take a good look at your list. Some of your dreams may be based on things that your family or friends want for you. It can be easy to get caught up in pleasing our family and friends, and this isn't necessarily a bad thing. In fact, it can be a very good thing when they are pleased with us. But that's not a good motivation for choosing what you want to do with your life. Maybe your friends think you have a beautiful voice and they want you to be a professional singer, but that's not the kind of life you want to live. Put a star by the dreams on your list that you believe will make you truly content.

What Gets in the Way?

Dreams can come true when we take them seriously. That means thinking hard about them, whether they are something we have any control over, and how we can work toward them. Take time now to think seriously about your dreams. Are some of them way out of reach? Are some of them dreams that you have no control over, such as winning the lottery? Cross those off the list.

You may also have some dreams that seem like they aren't in your control, but they actually are. You just have to plan for them. By setting goals, you can make your dreams come true. Select two dreams from your list and write one goal you could set in order to achieve each of them. You probably need to set more than one goal to achieve any dream, but for now, just focus on one goal per dream.

■ Dream one

■ Goal

■ Dream two

■ Goal

Julie's dream was to be an electrician. However, she was not accepted to an electrician training program because she was missing an important math class from high school. When she got the news, her heart sank. She thought, I'll never amount to anything. She decided to apply for a waitressing job instead.



The barrier of Julie's dream was a math class. She responded to the barrier by feeling hopeless and giving up. What might she have done differently?



Mateo always dreamed of playing drums in a band. He got very excited when he met a man who said he was putting together a band. Mateo said he was a drummer, so the man suggested he stop by at the first practice. But the practice didn't go the way Mateo wanted. The other band members said they needed somebody who was more advanced. Mateo was really angry. He left, saying to them sarcastically, "Yeah, you guys aren't so hot. I wouldn't want to be in this band anyways."

Mateo responded to the barrier to his dream by getting angry. What might he have done differently?

■ Like Julie and Mateo, you have probably run into barriers in the past when you were trying to attain a dream. List below some barriers you have faced in the past.

■ How did you respond?

■ Looking back on those now, what would you do differently?

Now go back to the two dreams that you selected from your list that you believe will make you truly content. Are there any barriers to these dreams that you can see?

■ Dream one barriers

■ Dream two barriers

What might you do to overcome these barriers?

■ Dream one—Ways to overcome the barriers

- Dream two—Ways to overcome the barriers

Why Is Your Dream Important?

Julie wanted to be an electrician because she knew there were good jobs available and she could earn enough to support herself and her child. Mateo wanted to be in a band because he wanted to be famous. Why does your dream matter to you? Could it be as positive and inspirational as Martin Luther King’s dream? Or Jonas Salk’s dream? What kind of legacy could you leave by attaining your dream? A more peaceful world? A happy and well-adjusted child? Helping people get their own homes?

- Think about the dream that is most important to you. Why is it important to you?

What Does Living the Dream Mean to You?

Draw pictures or write words about what it means to you to be “living the dream” in the space below.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin blue border, intended for students to draw pictures or write words about what it means to them to be "living the dream".

SUMMARY

- People have many different kinds of dreams.
- People’s dreams should be their own and not what other people want for them.
- Dreams should be within their reach and ones that are in their control.
- Setting goals helps people achieve their dreams.
- People can overcome barriers by identifying them and then figuring out what they need to do to eliminate the barrier.

CHALLENGE

Share one of your dreams and your short-term or long-term goal to reach that dream with your significant other or friend. Ask that person to hold you accountable to begin to pursue that dream.



SESSION 3. A Goal-Setting Process

Do you feel uncertain about how to begin setting your goals? In this session, we are going to talk about how you can get started. An important key to setting goals is to think first about what goals you want to set for different areas of your life and decide what you want in each of those areas five years from now. The next step is to think about short-term goals that will help you get to those long-term goals.

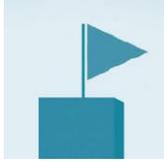
Here is a chart to help you visualize your goals. The areas of your life for which you can set goals are listed in the left-hand column. Begin by writing out your goals for five years from now for each area of your life in the far-right column. Then go back and write out short-term goals in the middle column that will help you reach the long-term goal.

	SHORT-TERM GOALS <i>(one year or less)</i> <i>You may write more than one short-term goal here.</i>	LONG-TERM GOALS <i>(five years)</i>
Career <i>(the kind of work you want to be doing five years from now)</i>		
Education <i>(a degree you wish to have, classes you want to take, or things you want to learn)</i>		
<i>(how much money you want to be earning and to have saved)</i>		

	SHORT-TERM GOALS <i>(one year or less)</i> <i>You may write more than one short-term goal here.</i>	LONG-TERM GOALS <i>(five years)</i>
Physical <i>(sports or fitness levels you want to have reached)</i>		
Pleasure <i>(fun activities you want to start doing)</i>		
Attitude <i>(behaviors, thoughts, or feelings that you want to change)</i>		
Giving Back <i>(Do you want to make the world a better place? If so, how?)</i>		
Spiritual <i>(practices, faith organizations, or groups that will nurture your spirit)</i>		

SMART Goals

Now we will fine-tune these goals using the SMART method. SMART stands for:



Specific: A goal is easier to achieve if it is specific and clear what the goal is. A general goal would be, “Improve my spiritual life.” A specific goal would be, “Take a class in meditation and practice every day.”



Measurable: If you establish a way to measure your progress, it helps you to stay on track toward reaching your goal. This might be, “Take one class and practice fifteen minutes every day.”



Attainable: When you are setting goals, you want to make sure you set goals that you can achieve. As you set more and more achievable goals, you may eventually find that you can actually achieve more than you ever thought was possible.



Relevant: You will be much more motivated to meet your goal if it is relevant to your life and if it is something you care about and will invest time and effort in.



Time-bound: Make sure your goal is tied to a time frame. If your timeline is simply “someday,” it is easy to let it slip away.

HERE IS AN EXAMPLE OF USING THE SMART METHOD	
Patrick's goal:	I will own my own house in five years.
Is this goal Specific?	Yes
Is this goal Measurable?	Yes, it will be clear whether he has reached this goal. He can also establish some short-term measurable goals, such as setting dates by which to have money saved for a down payment and exploring neighborhoods where he wants to live.
Is this goal Attainable?	Probably, because Patrick has a secure job and his living expenses are low enough that he can save for a down payment if the house doesn't cost too much.
Is this goal Relevant?	Yes. Patrick has always wanted to own a house and he is very motivated to make it happen.
Is this goal Time-bound?	Yes. Patrick can devise an action plan for steps to take toward meeting his goal at certain times during the next five years.

Review the long-term goals you listed in the chart at the beginning of this session, then list one below and apply the SMART method to fine-tune this goal.

■ My Long-Term Goal

■ Is it **S**pecific?

■ Is it **M**easurable? (How will you measure it?)

■ Is it **A**ttainable? (Why do you think so?)

■ Is it **R**elevant? (Why do you think so?)

■ Is it **T**ime-bound? (What time mileposts will you use?)

Being an Inspiration

■ Have you ever imagined yourself as a positive role model? When you achieve your goals, you can be an inspiration for other people. Who do you think could benefit from seeing you achieve your goals?

SUMMARY

- There are eight different areas of a person’s life: career, education, finances, physical, pleasure, attitude, giving back, and spiritual.
- Set long-term goals then short-term goals for each area.
- Refine these goals using the SMART method (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound).
- By achieving one’s goals, people can become a role model for others.

CHALLENGE

Create another SMART goal for one of your long-term goals.



SESSION 4. Planning

In the last session, you learned about setting long-term goals in different areas of your life. You also learned about setting short-term goals that will create a path toward reaching those long-term goals.

Tips for Working toward Goals

In this session we will look at some tips on working toward your goals.



Start with an easy goal. If setting goals and planning to meet them is new to you, it helps to start out with a pretty easy goal. Maybe something as easy as “Get up by 7:30 a.m. every day.”



Post the goal where you will see it every day. It’s always helpful to be reminded. Where might you post your goal? On the refrigerator door? On the bathroom mirror?



Celebrate when you accomplish your goal or steps along the way to the goal. If you did not accomplish your goal, then celebrate the effort you put in and the lessons you learned.



Monitor your progress. Check in with your goal chart on a regular basis (maybe every day, maybe every week) to help you notice the progress you are making.



Revise your plan if you need to. Things change. Life changes. People change. And sometimes your plans have to change too.

Making a Concrete Plan

Planning is a very important part of reaching goals. The plan should be very specific, with even the smallest tasks written down. First, let's look at an example of how Trinity planned to meet her goal. She used a form to write everything down. She knew it would help her stay on track. She could look at her list of tasks at the end of each day and monitor her progress.



Trinity wanted to learn to play the piano. She had always dreamed of this, but she didn't have access to a piano when she was growing up. Her aunt recently bought a piano and told Trinity she could use it if she wished. So Trinity set a goal and made a plan how to reach it.

■ Trinity's long-term SMART goal: Learn to play the piano

SHORT-TERM SMART GOAL 1	SHORT-TERM SMART GOAL 2	SHORT-TERM SMART GOAL 3
<i>Find a piano teacher</i>	<i>Play the piano daily</i>	<i>Find music I love</i>
<p>Tasks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask church music director for a recommendation 2. Look at billboard at community center 3. Call a teacher 4. Ask about rates and time 5. Look at my budget to figure out how I can pay for the lessons 	<p>Tasks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask aunt if I may come over every day after work for a half hour 2. Put a reminder on my refrigerator door to play at 5:30 p.m. every day 	<p>Tasks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make a list of songs I want to learn how to play 2. Go to the music store on Saturday morning 3. Ask clerk to show me music that a beginner can play (and be willing to start with exercises instead of whole songs)

■ How will I celebrate when I have achieved my goal, or tried and learned?

Trinity's Example: I will buy myself a new music CD.

Like Trinity, use the form that follows to make a plan for yourself.

1. Either set a new long-term SMART goal, or select a long-term SMART goal that you listed in the last session.
2. Set the short-term SMART goals that you will need in order to reach that long-term goal. Maybe you just need one short-term goal; maybe you will need several.
3. Create a daily task list that will help you reach each of those short-term goals. Make sure you can fit the items on this list into your normal life routines. Otherwise you could be setting yourself up for failure.

■ Long-term SMART goal: _____

SHORT-TERM SMART GOAL 1	SHORT-TERM SMART GOAL 2	SHORT-TERM SMART GOAL 3
Tasks	Tasks	Tasks

- How will I celebrate when I have achieved my goal, or tried and learned?

Just a word of caution: Nobody achieves every goal they set out to reach. Sometimes life interferes with our best intentions and we have to revise our goals. For instance, Trinity may discover piano lessons cost more than she imagined and she will need to add a short-term goal to save money for the lessons. Or she may decide to move and will no longer have easy access to her aunt’s piano. Or she may feel defeated by how difficult it is and how long it takes and will need to find some emotional support to try again. Planning is important, but you will need to be ready to accept whatever the outcome is.

Reviewing Your Goal for This Program

- Look at the goal you set for this program in session 1. Have you reached that goal?

Has anything changed since you started this program? If you have experienced any of the following changes, put a check mark in front of them. Then describe what has changed.

- Attitude

- Understanding of what goals are

- Knowing how to set goals
-

- Increased belief in yourself and your ability to reach goals
-

- Other
-

- What key skills will you take away from this program? List them here.
-
-

The famous poet Langston Hughes wrote this poem about dreams:

*Hold fast to dreams,
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird,
That cannot fly.*

Our dreams are very important; they are what fuel our lives. How do we make them come true? By setting goals and making specific plans for how we are going to reach those goals. Believe in yourself. You will find that as you learn to set goals and practice working toward them, you will be able to do even more than you imagined.

SUMMARY

- There are five tips to help people work toward their goals: start with an easy goal, post the goal, celebrate each step, monitor progress, and revise the plan if needed.
- Making a specific plan is a critical part of reaching goals.
- Daily tasks help people reach their short-term goals.

CHALLENGE

Create an action plan for one of your SMART goals.



RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Websites/Articles

How to Set Goals

www.wikihow.com/Set-Goals

This article gives step-by-step guidance on setting goals.

How to Set SMART Goals

www.wikihow.com/Set-SMART-Goals

This article provides the steps to set SMART goals.

How to Write a Life Plan

www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Life-Plan

This article guides people through establishing life plans.

Resources Available through Hazelden Publishing (800-328-9000, hazelden.org/bookstore)

Feeling Better: Nurturing Self-Esteem

Amy E. Dean (Order No. 5272)

Discussing goal-setting, risk-taking, opening up, choice-making, and healing, this pamphlet clearly defines the components of self-esteem and its influence on our lives.

The Next Happy: Let Go of the Life You Planned and Find a New Way Forward

Tracey Cleantis (Order No. 7768)

When the best option is to let go of the life you planned for yourself and find a new path, a world of possibilities can surprisingly open up. Learn whether it is time to let go and, if so, how to move through your grief and find your way forward.

