



Unit: Personal Vision and Goals

Skill 7: Establishing Goals and Objectives

Activity A: How to Establish a Goal

Activity Skills:

Writing, personal reflection.

Leadership Skills:

Understanding what makes a well-defined goal, how to write one and what you do with them.

Suggested Level:

Beginning

Time:

20-30 minutes

Supplies needed:

Paper or student journal and pens/pencils.

Do Ahead:

N/A

Source:

Developed by:
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Based on:
"How to write a goal" by
Elizabeth Gregory, Texas
Cooperative Extension, and
"Goal Setting" by Gene
Donohue

BACKGROUND:

What is the difference between a dream and a goal? Primarily it comes down to the written word (Donohue). Dreams are ideas, but goals are more defined, more concrete, because we have spent some time thinking about how to say them.

Goals are SMART

- S**pecific
- M**easurable
- A**chievable
- R**ealistic
- T**ime-bound.

Specific: Good goals are clear, precise, and definite. If your goals are too broad, too general or too fuzzy, they will be hard to achieve.

Measurable: The goal must be written so that you can measure your progress toward it, and, most importantly, so you'll know when you've achieved it!

Achievable: The goal should be something that can be accomplished, not just "pie in the sky."

Realistic: The goal should be appropriate for the people, circumstances, geographic area, etc., where you live.

Time-bound: The goal should have a definite deadline to aim for.

What else do we need to consider when writing a goal?

1. It is written.
2. It is stated in a positive way. (eg. "I will..." not, "I might" or "I hope...")
3. It is obtainable. (Be realistic, but don't sell yourself short.)
4. It involves your behavior and not someone else's.
5. It includes a way to measure successful completion.
6. It includes the specific date when you will begin working on the goal, and a projected date when you will reach the goal.
7. If it is a big goal, it is divided into manageable steps or sub-goals.

WHAT TO DO:

Once you have determined a general goal and you think you know why it appeals to you, you are ready to write it in a way that will help you make it happen.

The following are examples of goals containing the necessary components:

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Notes:

General Goal: I will be a better basketball player during this year.

Specific Goal: I will get 18 baskets in 20 tries by June 1, 2007.
I will begin working on this goal January 15, 2007.

General Goal: I will become an electrical engineer some day.

Specific Goal: I will have a job as an electrical engineer by May 1, 2010.
I will begin working on this goal August 16, 2006.

General Goal: I will go on a diet.

Specific Goal: I will lose 50 pounds by January 1, 2007.
I will begin dieting and exercising February 15, 2006.

Write your general goal. (Be sure to start with "I will.") Now make it more specific by adding the manner of measurement and projected completion date.

I will begin working on this goal on (date)

Considering how completing this goal will benefit you is quite important because this benefit will be the source of motivation for the work and sacrifice needed to complete your goal.

To remind yourself why this goal is important to you, complete the sentence below. Use as much detail as you can by imagining the goal completed. Begin with, "I will benefit by meeting this goal because..."

TALK IT OVER:

Reflect:

- Why is it important to write out our goals?
- Did the exercise of having to write out your goal make you think about the details more?

Apply:

- Why are clear goals important to leaders?
- Can you see circumstances where you would come back to review your goals? Use them to guide your actions?
- Next time you are thinking about leaders, how would this exercise change your perceptions?

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BEYOND THE BOX:

Optional Homework:

Have students practice writing goals for various situations. Ask them to develop action steps based on each goal.

Resources And Web Links:

How to write a goal by Elizabeth Gregory, Texas Cooperative Extension

Goal Setting by Gene Donohue (www.topachievement.com)

Writing Great Specific Goals (<http://712educators.about.com>)