

No Time to Set Goals? Think Again!

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Learning to effectively [manage your time](#) is paramount to your success; you will not be as successful (financially, emotionally, spiritually or in your family life) if you don't.

The good news is that there are some tools to make the job much easier. Keep in mind that each one of these tools can be, and in fact is the subject of books, tape sets and seminars. I encourage you to go into each one more deeply. My purpose here is to outline the tools that I have found most useful in my own life.

Some you've heard of already and you may benefit from a new perspective. Others will be new and you may want to add them to your existing tool belt. Goal Setting. The fact is that most people spend more time planning their wedding and vacations than they do their life. As a result most weddings and vacations are well orchestrated, fun and joyful events and most people's lives are in varying stages of disaster.

With a road map, you can find your way anywhere. Without one, you'll be lost before you know it. A well thought out properly organized set of goals is your road map. The cornerstone of [effective time management](#) is to understand clearly what you want to accomplish. Otherwise you can be very efficient with your time, but you won't be very effective.

In other words if you are completing unimportant tasks twice as fast as before, you are being more efficient, but you are not heading in the right direction. And going faster and faster in the wrong direction won't get you to where you ultimately want to be "right?"

Decades ago, a remarkable study was done involving one hundred Harvard graduates. Twenty five years after each one graduated, they interviewed each of the students in order to determine how much they had accomplished. Each had similar backgrounds and resources and had received a similar level of education.

The conclusion: the three people with written goals had accomplished more than the other 97 combined. That is the power of having well thought out, written goals. Learn to Visualize the starting point for effective goal setting is to spend some quiet time alone and in a comfortable setting.

Sometimes I'll use my office, close the door and shut off my phone while other times, I'll go to the beach or to a park. It is essential that you have at least 30 " 60 minutes of uninterrupted time, preferably more. When I lived in New York, I'd often go to my cabin on 40 acres of secluded land and sit overlooking the pond. Occasionally I'd get a visit from a humming bird or a family of deer.

Their input was always appreciated. Bring a pad and pen (or laptop computer) and get alone in a relaxing setting. Let your mind wander. Play comforting music or light a candle if that helps you. Just let the events of your day go and settle into a relaxed state. Here's how you can organize it.

Take one page for each of the major areas of your life including your business, relationships, spiritual life, health and fitness, education, fun and adventure, workshops and seminars, community service. Make that area the heading of the page. Then insert sub-headings on the page for 10 years, 5 years, 1 year, and each quarter.

Leave sufficient space between each section. Begin asking yourself questions like:

Where do I want to be in ten years?

Where will I live?

What will my house look like (a center hall colonial, Tudor or contemporary beachfront house)?

Who am I with? Am I married (with kids? if so, how many)?

Maybe you want to travel, or perhaps you like to stay home and throw parties.

What kind of car are you driving "a sports car or an SUV?

Is it air conditioned or do you have the convertible down?

Do you prefer a stick shift or an automatic transmission?

How much money are you making? One million? Ten Million? \$200 thousand?

What's your net worth?

How many employees do you have and what does your office look like?

Go through every major area of your life asking similar questions about your business, relationships, spiritual life, health and fitness, education, fun and adventure, workshops and seminars and community service. Spend five to ten minutes on each of these areas and write down what comes to you.

It's not important if it seems unlikely or impractical. The key at this stage is to just write it down. For those items that are more complicated or multi-step, you may want to list individual action steps that you'll need to take.

For example, if your goal is to sail the Caribbean in a 30 foot sloop within 12 months, you'll need to get a passport, locate the right travel company, set aside sufficient funds, ask some friends to join you (or not), etc. You can list each of the action steps in order of importance in the space provided.

Invariably, somewhere during this process Mr. or Mrs. Doubtfire will appear and beginning telling you why your dreams are unachievable, even ridiculous. I suggest that you smile at him/her, thank them for sharing their thoughts and go right back to what you were doing.

Don't get into a wrestling match with your internal naysayer. Don't evaluate or analyze. Just keep on dreaming and writing. There will be plenty of time for practicality later on. Continue with this process for each area of your life for each of the time frames listed.

You'll probably want to switch over to a word processor for the next step if you haven't already. Take each of the goals that you've listed and rearrange them in order of priority. Which is the most important goal in each category, the second most important goal in each category, the third, etc.?

Can you see that your life is starting to come together in a new and more powerful way?

Source: <http://www.ArticlePros.com/author.php?Drew Miles>