



# **FIVE THINGS ABOUT GOAL SETTING YOU NEED TO KNOW RIGHT NOW**

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# Five Things You Need to Know About Goal Setting Right Now

BY TIM "FRIC" JOHNSON

Thanks for reading this...

I really mean that. It's likely that we have never met, yet you have taken your time to read what I have put on this page. That means a lot to me. It means also that you are someone who is hungry for self-improvement. You are likely to read a lot of things in an attempt to find people whose philosophy and outlook you can subscribe to or already match.

So, if we already match, great! If you are searching, I hope that we end up on similar, if not the same, pages at the end.

Probably like you, I have read, listened to and tried out more goal setting programs than I can remember. There's a lot of similarity to all of them. We all know the basics, right? Set specific goals that you can measure. Set goals with a deadline. Set goals that are meaningful to you.

So why is it that most people who do set goals have such a hard time actually achieving them? I personally believe that's because we treat goals more like a to-do list rather than what they really are. Goals are the means you use to create the life you want. It's that simple and that complex. Goals that are things to check off a list are going to be one of two things for some people. Either the list will be something you come to avoid because it's work, or it's something you see as the end result.

Getting a new house, better job, more income, nice cars and vacations are all good things. But they shouldn't be what drives you in my opinion. What should drive you is the life you want to live. Where you live, work, play and how you do those things are a part of your goals of course. But the goals themselves should serve the life you create, not the other way around.

Let's look at the five things you need to know and see how you can create a life worthy of you without getting lost in the lists, to-dos and stuff you may accumulate. We want to create a quality of life that is independent of the things you have. That is a life worth pursuing. Having nice things and a lot of money can be a means to create that life, but those things are not required. NOT REQUIRED. Sometimes I think goal setting programs push that idea on you, as if not having a million dollars in the bank, a limo and driver and constant vacations automatically makes you a failure.

I categorically and flatly deny and repudiate that view. Again, you can have those things, but I don't believe in making those things the most important things in your life. Things like money, cars, homes and toys are nothing more than tools to create your ideal life. Not everyone's ideal life needs the same kind of tools. I might be happy with a 2000 square foot home and a small yard while someone else must have a 4000 square foot home with a carriage house, pool and servants' quarters.

Is either one of us wrong in our choice? Of course not.

Let's get started examining what goals really are and how they serve to create our ideal life.

Thanks and have an OUTSTANDING day!

Tim "Fric" Johnson

## 1. Why Do We Do It?

### *Why do some people set goals and others not?*

This question is probably one you don't think about very often. Our society is very goal oriented. There are so many books, CDs, DVDs, speakers, programs and methods on goal-setting that you could fill a small to medium bookstore with just one copy of each product! There are entire theories of business management built around the idea of MBO or Management By Objectives. Our lives are built around achieving one thing after another. Some are naturally occurring like learning things as a baby like rolling over, sitting, crawling, standing, walking, talking and so on. Others are things we all do as a society. We go to Kindergarten, then on to First Grade, Second, Third and so on. After High School the presumption is that you need to go to college to have a chance at success in life. Then come the career goals and marriage and family goals. We want to marry a specific kind of person and have so many kids and live in a certain kind of neighborhood and earn so much money.

For many, if not most, people life is governed by a never ending series of goals and milestones to be achieved. But the question is "Why?" What makes us give over to this paradigm that we must always seek to be bigger or better? I think it's part of our nature. We are hard-wired to seek out more than we have or to be more than we already are. The history of man is marked by strife and struggle of some kind or another. Much of it has been violent and brutal with one group conquering others until they are conquered themselves. Many ancient, and more recent as well, beliefs state that if you are blessed by God (or the gods), you will receive riches and rewards in this life and the next. A lack of these riches and rewards was seen as sin and failure.

As mankind coalesced into communities, states and alliances, we've seen scientific and philosophical advances beyond our ability to better kill each other. We've seen the development of tool making, crude labor saving devices, a notion of sanitation and cleanliness as well as the mastery of natural forces like electricity that has enabled ever greater advances in society. History shows that as soon as we achieve one level of knowledge or ability we immediately strive for the next. Most advances have been good and many have been catastrophic. We keep on striving though.

So we are hard wired to achieve and want more. We set actual goals because we are also prone to want to organize everything. That's almost a given. We like order over chaos and desire to master ourselves and our environment. Sometimes we have a greater reason for goal-setting than just wanting the next new and shiny thing. We often want a better life for our children and grandchildren. Some believe that we have something, some skill or ability, that we can offer society to help others. Sadly, some just want to accumulate as much wealth as they can, others be damned.

Can you be successful without goals? Depends on how you understand that question, both the definition of successful and goals. I believe that we are all working toward some goal all of the time, whether we know it or not. The guy who gets up every day, goes to work on the garbage truck, comes home to an evening of TV and a beer has a goal, and he likely achieves it every day too. It could be that he just wants to get through the daily grind in order to come home to a family he loves and provides for. Or it could be that he just does this until he can get something better.

Goals don't have to be large, earth-shaking world impacting things. Some are so simple we don't realize we have them. But we do. Some people's goals are very detailed and specific. They know exactly what they should be doing each and every day to achieve them. Some are so simple that they achieve their goals on auto-pilot.

That's the goal side of the question of whether you can be successful without goals. What about success? Well, obviously the answer is no if we use the above definition of goals. If we use the more standard definition where we have a specific set of things we want to do, be or have then the answer is a qualified "yes." It's very qualified though. A very few individuals stumble into large success, fame, wealth and influence out of sheer luck or randomness. It's so rare though that we make a big deal out of it when it happens. It's the exception that proves the rule as they say. It's not something that we should count on happening though.

Another unspoken assumption is that we know how to define success too. It's different for everyone. For some it may mean a specific income, job, spouse, family size, weight, home, car, etc. For others it may be as simple as having a positive impact in the lives of others. The first is so specific that it almost guarantees thinking of yourself as a

failure because any one thing that is off likely means you are a failure. The other is so general that it can mean anything you want it to mean at any time which means you can be wildly successful or a massive failure depending on your mood.

The goals we set for ourselves should be the means to our success, not a checklist of things to determine if we are successful. What's the difference? Goals are how we get to or achieve the life we want to live. They are not a means of keeping score or measuring ourselves against others. If we focus on the life we want to live, we are far more likely to be happy in life than if we see our goals themselves as our purpose in life. That way leads to a materialistic and narcissistic way of life that is harmful to us and others. If all your goals are oriented around you and the things you want in life as opposed to how you want to live your life and interact with others, then you are absolutely on the wrong track.

## 2. Problems with Traditional Goal Setting?

### ***Being S.M.A.R.T. isn't always enough***

We've all probably encountered this one before, and let me say right now that S.M.A.R.T. is *great* acronym for how you set goals. These five letters describe *how* we are to structure our goals in a succinct and understandable way that Napoleon Hill could only have envied. Specific. Measurable. Attainable. Relatable (or Realistic). Timely. It's all there, right? These 5 points are all you need to know about setting goals, right?

Wrong.

A really good goal is going to meet all of those points. That's really a no-brainer. But like so many goal setting programs and so-called systems, it takes you so far and no farther. S.M.A.R.T. goals are just the beginning, but we too often treat it as the end. Just because we have set our goals according to these principles, we often think we have guaranteed our success. Our goals will be realized and we will achieve total joy and happiness.

That's simply not true.

For some it is, because they have that missing ingredient (sometimes plural) that others lack. Setting a good goal is actually the middle step in achieving your ultimate goals. Did you get that? S.M.A.R.T. is not the beginning, it's the middle step. Actually it's *one* of the middle steps. To set your goals you need to know or do several things first.

Can you guess what those things are?

Common guesses would be that you need a vision statement. That's not a bad thing to have, but it's not an absolute necessity. Some would say that you need a mission statement. Another good one, but again not an absolute necessity. Others will tell you that you need a purpose in life that is big, huge and awe-inspiring! Maybe. Again, not required. What about needing to set goals in certain categories? You need all of those before you have completed your goals don't you? Nope.

A basic, and admittedly limited, definition of a vision statement is a paragraph or more of why you want what you want to achieve. That's good, because you really should have an idea of why you want to achieve these goals. A mission statement is basically a description of how you will achieve your goals. It's your primary vehicle to do that. Your purpose that your goals revolve around don't have to be big. Not everyone is comfortable with big ideas, nor are they required for success. Not everyone is the same in this regard. What's big for you may be small for the next person. From that follows that not everyone will set goals in the 5 or 6 "required" categories. Sometimes that's just overload.

### **3. Goals are Not the Point, they are the Means to Achieve Your Vision**

#### ***Goals Measure Progress Toward Something Else***

I've already alluded to this, but remember that goals are not the ends. They are the means. Goals are tools that help you achieve something else. Goals help you create the life you want to live. As I mentioned above, a vision statement is not absolutely required, because when you set goals you already have some sort of a vision of what

your life should be like in your head. But having it written down is better than not. It's easier to refer to and it helps you visualize what you are moving toward.

If you think of your vision of your future life as your destination, then goals are the mile markers and signposts along the way. With every goal you achieve, you are that much closer to your destination. When you are travelling cross-country, especially by car, you will likely have a map with certain places marked out to measure your progress or places to stop briefly. Each stop will be a place you can assess your progress, refresh yourselves before moving and refueling.

That's the same purpose goals have. Yes, you can and should celebrate when you achieve them, especially the big ones; but never take your eye off the ultimate destination. Stopping halfway to celebrate and take a break is good, but only if you get back in the car and get going again. Stopping and getting distracted from continuing just derails your progress.

Good planning will account for celebrating milestones along the way. You need to allow yourself to celebrate achievements. That keeps you motivated and lets you know you are on your way to ultimate success. You just have to remember to move on the next step on your journey, because that's what this is. A journey to vision of your future. The goals only matter in that they help you get there. Like money, they aren't really valuable in and of themselves, but rather their value comes from what they do for you and to you.

#### **4. Start Where You Are Now**

Continuing the road map metaphor, what's the most important thing you need to know when you plan out a trip? The destination? Nope. That's later. You can't get to where you are going if you don't know what your starting point is. If you think you are in New York and want to go to Atlanta, but are really in Seattle your directions to Atlanta won't get you there. You'll be thousands of miles away.

Goal setting is the same way. You have to know where you are right now in your life. You have to be totally and brutally frank with yourself about your knowledge,



abilities, skills and shortcomings. You also have to accurately assess who can help you and who can hurt you in achieving your goals.

So, why is this important besides the silly New York to Atlanta example? This is important because it totally affects everything you will do in pursuit of your goals. We often tend to overestimate our abilities, whether because we don't want to admit any weaknesses or because of an honest mistake. Either way will cause us to have to work harder and longer than we thought we would. Goals that we thought could be reached in 1 year might really need 2 because we might need to educate ourselves first or gain needed skills.

When we encounter unexpected delays and difficulties is when we begin to lose hope and to think we can't really do what we set out to do. That's when we scale back our goals. That's when we discard some goals. That's when we look at ourselves and say "You can't do that. Better not try." That's when we limit ourselves and take the first step down the path to failure. Dejection, disappointment and deluding ourselves are all part of what can happen when we don't take that honest self-inventory before we begin.

It's far better to take an honest look at yourself before you start and add some time in to your plans to account for knowledge, skill and abilities you need than to make plans based on a false self-image. That false self-image won't always cause failure, but it makes it awfully difficult to reassess and readjust our goals later.

This is one of the hardest things we will do in this process, bar none. It requires us to be honest with ourselves about what we are able to do, want to do and what we are willing to do in order to achieve our goals.

## **5. Do Your Goals Pass the Gut-Check?**

Since we have this idea down that goals are your checkpoints along the way to your ultimate vision, let's take that to the next step. I call this the "gut check." You really must check your goals in three ways on a regular basis. Just as in our cross-country trip example, we stop or check our map to make sure we are still on the right path; we should also check our goals.

1. The first way to check goals is simply to see if you are where you thought you would be at this time. Are you ahead? Behind? On-track? Are you even working the plan at all?
2. Goals should be checked against values constantly. It's so easy to let ourselves get sucked into doing things and pursuing activities that violate our values in some way. It starts small, because that's the hook. A small violation is easy to miss, justify or ignore. But they grow. If you let it go, you will eventually get away from your goals and your vision of your life. So make sure you keep these aligned.
3. Finally, goals should be checked against the reality of life regularly. Sometimes things change. Your life changes. Your family changes. There's marriages, births and even deaths. There's job changes. Sometimes your priorities in life simply change. What was important last year may be trivial this year. If so, change your goals! Don't pursue things that you may not immediately realize aren't important anymore. Life happens. Life is change. Keep your goals alive too.

One final point about doing the gut-check. This should be obvious, but I'll leave this with you as a final thought. It kind of ties these 5 things together too. At all points you have to make sure that your goals are compatible with each other. Can you have a goal to make a million dollars this month while simultaneously going on a 2 week vacation with your family?

Maybe.

But I doubt it. Oh, sure, this is possible. But it's the kind of thing that you could only do if you're already wealthy, already achieved your goals or are incredibly lucky in some way. Our goals build upon each other. Strengthening our family bonds are generally incompatible with spending all our waking hours working. Having a better marriage is generally incompatible with spending all your time hanging out with your friends trashing your spouse's bad habits. Being a better person in general is incompatible with succeeding "at any cost."

Those are extreme, sure. But that's the point about this gut-check. If the extreme examples don't work, then the basic goals are not likely to work together ultimately.

Thanks for reading this far. I believe that what I have given you so far is a great starting point to reassess how you set goals and even why. But as you can imagine, there's more to it than just this. If you've really been intrigued and helped out by this report, you will love the content you should be seeing in your inbox soon!

Please put these five points to good use in your life. That would be the best thing I think of to start our relationship off right! That would be the best thanks I could receive as well. Everyone has the ability to achieve great things in some area of life; and by setting great goals you will be on your way to achieving that big thing.

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