

Why We Don't Set Goals

By

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Most thinking people know the power of goal-setting but only a tiny percentage of people actually set them.

After a decade of research, I now believe that I have isolated the main reason **why people do not set goals.**

It is not ignorance. Everybody now knows the importance of setting goals. Fifty years ago, this was a startling new idea. No longer. It has been proved beyond reasonable doubt that **people who set written goals lead richer, happier, more fulfilling lives than people who merely drift through life, rudderless.**

Everybody knows this, but still they don't do it.

Why?

It can't be the difficulty of the task. Writing out ten goals is not a particularly arduous job - in fact it is quite enjoyable and only takes ten or fifteen minutes. And yet **98% of people never write a goal in their entire lives**, and for ten years I have been wondering why, since the task of writing out your goals is so easy and the rewards so obvious.

It isn't even the difficulty of pondering what it is you ultimately want out of life - just ease yourself in with some simple goals, say to move up to the next biggest house and to earn an extra ten thousand pounds this year. Leave complex life-goals ("Who am I man? What's it all about?" Etc.) until you are happier with the whole goal-setting process.

No, there must be something else, **and I think I have identified it.**

For a person wilfully to miss out on the staggering advantages of setting goals, there must be some deep-seated psychological block somewhere. I believe the block is **the subconscious realisation that every goal has an associated price tag - that it doesn't come free.** It doesn't "flow freely from the wondrous bounty of the universe." There is a price to pay in order to achieve each goal. This knowledge evokes two responses in most people; fear and laziness (also called inertia).

To set yourself a goal means **to set yourself up for change.** Any goal that you can think of, large or small, basically reduces to the statement: "I hereby promise to change in the following way..." People fear change - it is the unknown. Fear immobilises. Fear stops you dead in your tracks. It is safer to stay well within your comfort zone.

Next comes our old enemy laziness, or inertia; and this, I believe, is the real reason people do not set goals.

Above everything else, **a goal is a written contract with yourself to do something.** To achieve even the smallest goal requires discipline, work, and focus; all three in some

measure. Despite all of that 'bounty from the infinite universe' rubbish, people know deep in their gut that you don't get something for nothing in this world. And since most people are bone-idle lazy, how do you think they react when faced with a contract containing the words discipline, work and focus? Why, they break out into a cold sweat. Their hands tremble and seem unable to grasp the pen. They go to sign, then draw back, then go to sign again. Suddenly, they feel faint. The pen slips from their numbed hand and clatters to the floor. They feel tired. Perhaps it's time for a lie down?

They'll sign that contract one-day real soon now - perhaps tomorrow...

I believe this is why people don't set goals.

They still want all of the rewards and goodies which *would* have come their way had they set goals and applied the discipline, work and focus. Oh yes, they want all of these things, but *they want them for free*. They seek to short circuit reality, and now embark upon a path which leaves them prey to the happy-clappy, "you can have it all" seminar snake-oil artist.

The packaging varies, but the message is essentially the same: "The universe has an infinite store of wealth, bounty and benevolence - there is more than enough for all. Just tune your mind into the pulsating rhythm of the universe using the following method (CD set £49.95, book £29.95, course £199.70) and claim your share of this infinite bounty." (There are at least 10 books on Amazon with the exact title 'You Can Have it All'.)

People *love* this message. They sign up for it *in their millions* in one form or another. They think: "*Why bother to sign that stuffy old contract with all those tedious 'work, discipline and focus' clauses? I could have it all for free!*"

And so a few more irreplaceable years slip by. They buy the books; their collection of boxed CD sets grows. Yet *strangely*, they remain as broke and powerless as ever. How odd! Seems like the 'mystic bounty of the universe show' is on 104.3MHz FM, and their brain is tuned to BBC Radio 4 - long wave! "*Hmm - perhaps another seminar will help me re-tune my cosmic receiver, man.*"

I cannot resist telling you a little true story which illustrates this perfectly. A couple of years ago I wrote a booklet entitled "How to Double Your Way to a Million Pounds Starting From Nothing." You've probably seen this, but basically it's a bit of fun with a serious message. The first step is to find a penny in the street. Then, you go through a process of just 28 steps, doubling your money each time.

Surprisingly, if you were able to do this, you would end up with well over one million pounds. Anyway, I took out adverts in the press which described this system and offered my booklet *for free*. It really was free, and you didn't even pay the postage to send me your request. because we used freepost. Okay, so one time we had this guy on the telephone shouting and raving. He was going to take us to Trading Standards. He was going to get a crowd of mates together and personally pay us a visit. We were a bunch of conning b*****s and he was going to get us, whatever it took. The reason? He had received my free booklet (which cost him not one single penny) and he had had it for one week but **still not received a million pounds from out of thin air.**

This man (who was sane by the way) was virtually incoherent with rage; he was screaming and swearing, shouting and threatening. I thought this was an extremely good example of the *hopeless irrationality* exhibited by many people.

Okay, so down to business.

I know you've been 'too busy' to set your goals. No. Say nothing! Spare me your excuses. What? Oh, *you couldn't find a pen???*

What was that? Oh, *you couldn't find a nice clean sheet of paper on which to write your goals?* I knew that too. Come on! It's time to put those excuses to one side and get cracking.

Within the next hour, yes **I said the next hour**, you soldier, are going to get up off your idle butt, and write yourself a fistful of goals one onto each of several credit-card sized pieces of white card.

I also want you to buy yourself one of those natty little credit card wallets at some point in the near future. You know, they hold about 10 credit cards. When you have written out your goals, you should keep the cards in this wallet and carry them with you always. Normally, goals are written on a sheet of paper - fine if you live alone; you can leave it lying around to remind you of your goals. But if you have a family, or people coming to visit you regularly, then you don't want these people to see your private dreams. So you put that piece of paper away in the drawer - **and there it stays for several months!** I really like this card idea because it means that you always have your goals with you, and they remain private.

Here Are The Financial Goals You Should Write

Unusually, I am going to tell you the first four goals you should write. And these goals are concerned with money. You can have other non-financial goals too, but this is not the subject of this article.

The first goal should be something **which you cannot complete in your lifetime**. This makes you dream big. It makes you realise what is important to you, and what you are about as a person. As Charles Noble says: *"You must have long-range goals to keep you from being frustrated by short-term failures."*

You might be very surprised at what you eventually write down for this goal - it might bear no relationship to what you are doing at present.

As an example, if you are a writer, your goal might read: "One day, every educated adult, on the planet will have heard the name John Smith, and have some idea about his philosophy." By the way, that isn't one of my goals because I am not out to save the world - just *you*, you miserable sinner! But it is a good example of something I would be unlikely to achieve in my lifetime.

The next goal should state **an exact amount of money** which you will one day have. Again, this is a lifetime goal and should not carry a date. Example: "One day I will have a net worth of 50 million pounds". This goal quantifies your dreams of wealth and sets an ultimate target. **But before you write this particular goal, think very carefully about the price you will have to pay, and if you are willing to pay it.**

For example, to achieve a net worth of 50 million pounds will have the following consequences at least:

1. You will have very few, *if any*, close friends. You just will not have the time to nurture and sustain buddy-pal relationships.

2. You will be attacked, ridiculed, smeared, and hounded by the press and media. Their sworn mission will be to drag you down - to find some dirt in your background, some chink in your armour which they can then use to destroy you.

Why?

Because their readers *want you destroyed*.

Why?

You know! I've told you a hundred times. The masses *detest* successful people because they act like glittering beacons, lighting the steep, rocky pathway which leads from a life in the sheep pen, to a life of heroic excellence. A successful person, *by merely existing*, causes the average person to think: "*Ohmygod! This is terrible! If this ordinary guy can make a success of his life, that means..... that means..... perhaps I could improve my life too. Well I guess I now have two choices. I can apply the energy, discipline and focus required to follow him along the path to excellence. Or... I can scour the gutter press for evidence that this man is corrupt, that he is lower than me and really belongs in the sewer. Hmmm... now which is the EASY path...?*"

3. You will not be able to sustain a standard family. You might have children, but you will be a strange, remote, absent figure. Your family will not be able to rely upon you to attend weddings, funerals, birthday parties, concerts and plays. Sometimes you'll be there, **most times you won't**.

4. Most people you meet will be **consumed by cancerous jealousy and hatred**. They will also not know the price you paid. They will think, and sometimes even say to your face, that you were 'lucky'.

5. You will work 12 hour days, 360 days of the year. You will eat, live, sleep and breathe your project. Every second spent away from the office will seem like agonising torture. Read *Atlas Shrugged* and study the character of Hank Reardon. The company of others, even friends and family, will seem dull and you will be filled with an overwhelming craving to tear yourself away and return to your empire.

6. You will be sued, attacked, spat upon, and will receive death threats, many of which will be credible (Bill Gates gets a dozen a week!). You will require several full-time office staff to reply to the sacks full of whining, begging letters you will receive, and to field the hundreds of weekly calls from charities. To sum up, the world **will simultaneously be trying to destroy you and beg from you**.

That is just a tiny example of the price you will have to pay in order to get £100 million. Too high a price? Don't write the goal down. You learned something. You *don't* want £100 million because **you're not prepared to pay the price**.

Do not commit the gross error of writing this goal (or any goal) in the hope that you will attain it by mystical methods; that somehow God, or the 'bountiful universe' will cause this money to 'flow' to you. **It won't, so don't be so pathetic. Stop dreaming!**

Think £10million will be easier?

Yes it will, but still you **have a huge price to pay and you must decide now if you are willing to pay it.**

You will suffer a milder form of all of the consequences 1-7 above. *You will lose every single one of your current friends* - trust me on this one. You will work 10 hour days, 340 days of the year. You will be a driven man or woman. Most if not *all* of your other hobbies and interests will be sacrificed to this goal. You enjoy sailing, skiing, flying? **Forget it!** You won't have time. You always wanted to write a play, learn jazz piano, study water-colour painting? These will have to wait. All of your energy, talent, and time will be devoted to achieving your goal of £10million.

Don't want to pay the price? Don't write the goal.

Save yourself some heartache. You've learned something important. You don't want £10million, leastways, you're **not prepared to pay the price for it** and that leaves you **fresh out of trump cards.** You only hold the four jokers - 'prayer', 'luck', 'bountiful flow of the universe' and 'hope'. On the basis of my sneaky peek at that load of junk, *I'll definitely raise you a hundred....*

So before you write a figure on card two, **spend a few moments considering if you are willing to pay the price.** If not, then you are deciding right now on a life of poverty. *At least you decided.* That's far better than drifting into it and then wondering what went wrong.

The rest of the cards are for specific time-dated goals. On card 3, I want you to write a goal to improve the house in which you live - in other words, to move to a better house (assuming you would like this, of course). Visualise this new house as clearly as possible and then write a goal as follows: "By January 1st 2012, I will have moved into a four-bedroom, detached house in large grounds located in the Snobury area of Richville." Obviously you can add, change or embellish this goal and date to suit yourself.

Card four is special. Thinking about the goal you wrote on card two for the moment, on card four I want you to answer the question: "What one thing can I do right now, today, which will take me a step closer to this goal?" It could be a simple thing like a telephone call, but write it down as a goal: "By the end of today I will have..... which will advance me one step closer to my financial dream." When you have completed the goal on card four, you write yourself out another card four which answers the question: "What is the *next* thing I need to do in order to take the next step towards my financial goal?"

On the remaining cards, write out your other goals (non financial). Just ask yourself what you want out of life, and write it down. If you need further guidance on this, then reread my book *The Midas Method* (£12.95 from the office, 01189 461246 if you don't have a copy).

Keep these cards with you at all times in one of those snappy little wallets I mentioned. Read your goals every day - the results will astound you.

I first heard about goal setting twenty years ago, and I vividly remember writing my first goal. It said: “By..... I will have a net worth of a quarter of a million pounds.”

That's the equivalent of setting a goal to achieve one million pounds, in today's money.

When I wrote that goal I can still recall how I felt. *It was a sick joke.* **There was not one chance in hell that I could achieve that goal.** I was completely, utterly flat broke and owed thousands and thousands of pounds. From memory I was earning £4000 a year working as a studio engineer grade 4 for the BBC. No promotion prospects. No clue about how to make big money. I used to rewire people's houses at the weekend in order to make a few extra quid - that was the full extent of my vision in those days. But I wrote the goal anyway, and thought “what the hell?” I had nothing to lose. It took me five-years to achieve that goal, and I passed it without really noticing.

I am firmly convinced that had I not discovered the awesome power of goal setting twenty years ago, I would now be a studio engineer grade six, working in television on twenty grand a year.

So now you don't have any excuses. You've got yer pen, you've got yer cards, you've got yer goal-instructions, so get to it!

If you have not written your goals within one hour of putting this article down, then it is almost certain that you will **never write a goal in your life.** The consequences of this are too awful to contemplate. You will live your life to about one tenth of your ability and potential. That would be a terrible waste of your talent.

Do not let this happen to you.

I'll leave the final word with Jim Rohn: “Goals. There's no telling what you can do when you get inspired by them. There's no telling what you can do when you believe in them. There's no telling what you can do when you act upon them.”

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