

Elements of a Goal

Your goals must be precise and have a date you plan to achieve them otherwise they are not goals, they're just wishes. You have to take the action and realize it for yourself. There are elements that should be evident in your goals. You want your goals to be useful, or there really is not much point in making them.

Your goal should be:

- **Realistic** – If your goal is not realistic, you will most likely have no chance of achieving it and will set yourself up for failure.
- **Calculable** – You should be able to tell whether or not you have achieved your goal. Do not make it vague or you will not know if you have achieved it or not.
- **Specific** – You want your goal to be something specific rather than vague. Describing it in detail helps you visualize it and helps you strive toward it.
- **Ambitious** – Make sure your goal challenges you. Do not set your goals too high that they become realistic and avoid setting low goals (i.e. easy, unchallenging goals).
- **Written in a Positive, Determined Way** – Write your goal so that it says you are going to do something. Avoid using the words not, never, don't, etc. as they bring a negative tone to your goal.
- **Timed** – Anyone can have a goal, but without a date on when you want to achieve your goal, it will be difficult to stay focused on achieving it. The time frame in which you want to achieve your goal must be stated.
- **Divided into Smaller Manageable Goals** (if the goal is large) – Big goals are great, however they can be overwhelming. If you find yourself becoming overwhelmed with your goal and unsure of where to start, your goal might be very broad and in need of smaller component goals.
- **Set for Your Own Reasons and Meaningful** – Your goal should be personal. It will be difficult to stay focused on a goal that is set for you by someone else. You have to make the decision to put your effort into doing the tasks to achieve the goal, and if it is not a goal that means something to you, you'll have a hard time staying focused on achieving it.
- **Flexible** – Give yourself permission to amend your goal if the need arises. If you realize you're not meeting your deadline, examine what you have accomplished so far and extend the deadline to a new date. Remember that you're taking steps closer and you are further along towards reaching your goal than if you never took the time to create one in the first place. As your needs change, be flexible with your goals that they can also be changed.
- **Action Oriented** – A goal should be followed up with an action plan. An action plan is your daily or weekly tasks that are tailored to help you achieve your goal. The purpose of goal setting is that you will active in undertaking specific actions that, over your time frame, will produce results – your goal.