

Goal Setting That Gets Results

Setting goals is the best way to get what you really want. There are two ways to get results in goal setting.

One is the traditional way—the way you are probably most familiar with. The other is what I call the natural way. There are pros and cons to both.

Steps To Traditional Goal Setting—A Make-It-Happen Approach

1. Decide exactly what you want—a red convertible, a two story house, a college education, etc. Make sure it is something that is specific and realistic, and that you will be able to measure your progress. Write a detailed description of it, and post it where you will see it every day.
2. Make a list of what you will have to do to reach this goal—such as what tasks need to be done, what tools you will need, and what training would help you.
3. Break your task list into bite size tasks that you can accomplish in a week's time.
4. Set deadlines appropriate to the goal. For example, decide your one month, three month, six month, one year, two year, and five year goals.
5. Make yourself a schedule to accomplish these tasks.
6. Keep a graph of your progress to see if you are on track.
7. Reward yourself for each step of progress along the way

What's right about this approach? It's structured. You know exactly what you're going to have to do and when. You also know exactly what results you want and when you can expect to get them. You know that if you put in the time and effort, you will meet your deadline and reach your goal.

Natural Goal Setting—A Let-It-Happen Approach

I call it the “natural” approach because it takes into account the laws of nature. When you have a garden and plant seeds, you know approximately what you will get, but exactly when the flowers will bloom or exactly what they will look like remains a mystery. Instead you plant the seeds, nurture them with water and fertilizer, keep the weeds out, and trust the plants to grow and blossom when the time is right for them. It works the same way with the natural approach to goal setting.

First you have to know what you want to get. In natural goal setting there are two types of goals—object goals and feelings goals. In this way, the natural approach goes beyond wanting a red convertible, a two story house, or a college education. Those are the objects or the symbols for your real goals, which are the feelings you will have after you get these objects.

Therefore if you want a college education, maybe your feeling goal is security, or prestige. You might want the red convertible for excitement. You may want the house for a feeling of success or accomplishment. Your feelings goal could be security, respect, social acceptance, love, fun, happiness,

adventure, power, or any of a multitude of other feelings.

Steps to Natural Goal Setting

1. First decide exactly what feelings goal you want—such as security, respect, social acceptance, love, fun, happiness, adventure, power, etc.
2. Next choose an object goal that will give you those feelings—a red convertible, a two story house, or a college education, etc. Write a description of both your feelings goal and your object goal and then add “or something better” at the end. You want to be flexible if something different or better comes along. Draw a picture of your object goal, adding symbols for the feelings it will give you, such as a heart for love, etc. Look at your description every day. Visualize your goals every night.
3. Now start doing simple little things to get the feelings you want from your goal. For example, if your goal is an exciting vacation, find something to do at home that is exciting. When you get comfortable having these feelings in your life, you will not sabotage your success, or be disappointed when you attain your goal.
4. Decide what you will have to do to reach this goal—such as what tasks need to be done, what tools you will need, and what training will help you. Make a list of these tasks.
5. Although it is not necessary to set deadlines or plan exactly what you are going to do, it is necessary to make the effort to nurture your goal. Each morning simply ask yourself, “What can I do today to get closer to my goal?” At the end of each day write down what you accomplished in a journal or on your calendar. This is much less stressful than writing out what you are going to do in advance. You have to trust that you will get your goal, or something more suited to you, when the time is ready for it to blossom.

In short, the natural goal setting approach heads you in the direction of your goal but eliminates a time limit and factors in flexibility for the results. This reduces stress and adds joy to the effort you are making.

Remember that you are still responsible for the effort—the watering and fertilizing, but you must be detached from the results. When you do that, you are factoring in what Deepak Chopra in his book, *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success*, calls “the wisdom of uncertainty.” Now for the surprise—when you factor in uncertainty you are leaving yourself open to receive something far more wonderful than you ever imagined in your vision, and it will come when the time is right.

Which Goal Setting Approach Should You Choose—

Traditional or Natural?

You need to take the approach that will work for you.

- If your goal already has a built-in deadline, such as a business meeting, a holiday party or a special occasion, you will need to go with traditional goal setting and find other ways to handle the stress of time constraint.
- On the other hand, if you want a new career, a new boyfriend, or to get in shape physically, then

the natural approach will be less stressful and more effective in the long run.

- Still another way is to combine the two approaches—if you are planning a vacation, you still have a time constraint, but may be flexible in the type of vacation that will give you the feeling of relaxation, excitement or whatever you decide the purpose of your vacation is.
- The best part is that you now have two goal setting approaches to choose from. Select the one that is most appropriate for your needs or a combination of the two.

And remember, the purpose of goals is to give you something that you want, to enhance your life in some way, so the most important thing you need to know about goals is that you ought to have some!

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