



Don't Just Set Goals: Keep Them Going...10 Things to Follow Through and Achieve Your Goals

This information corresponds to the video of the same name: [CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO LINK](#)

Introduction: Setting goals can be easy and at times it is even fun. Dreaming about some of the things that we can achieve can be quite inspirational and imaginative. However, the actual work needed to attain our goals is often much more challenging and time consuming. For example, many people set the goal to get in good physical shape. They may even join a gym or buy exercise equipment and make a good diet plan. However, eating right and going to the gym over the next several months is a lot harder in practice. Often the “follow through” is a lot harder than just setting the initial goal. Therefore, the purpose of this exercise is to examine some things to keep in mind and try that will increase the chances of actually staying with our goals so that we can achieve them.

First: What are your goals?

What are three moderate to long term (several months to yearlong) goals you desire to achieve in the upcoming year or so? It is good to write **SMART** goals:

Specific

Measurable

Attainable

Realistic

Timely

My Goals:

1

2

3

“Success is the progressive realization of a worthy goal or ideal.”

— Earl Nightingale



10 Key Points for Moving Forward with Goals:

If You Can't Do a Lot – Do a Little – This is rule #1 when it comes to positive change goals in life. Change can be challenging and overwhelming, so it is okay to start small. If you can't quit smoking, start cutting back. If exercising for an hour seems impossible, do it for 10 minutes. If you can do a lot, then do a lot, but if you can't, do a lot then do what you can. *Every effort matters*. The key is to steadily increase over time. For example, if you exercised for 10 minutes, after a few days try 15. Keep moving forward and upward and don't give up.

Avoid the “Might as Well” Phenomenon – When we are working on our goals, we are bound to have some setbacks and make mistakes. However, just because we make a small mistake that does not mean we should give up and let it become a big one (if we can help it.) If you can “stop the bleeding” so to speak, by all means do that rather than saying “might as well” quit now that I made a mistake” - These examples below illustrate the “might as well” phenomenon:

- *“I was doing good on that diet until I had piece of that cake so I might as well have another one too, maybe three”*
- *“I had not had a drink in two months until last night I messed up and had a few too many. Might as well just start drinking again”*

(Again, when it comes to substance use disorders and addiction, sometimes stopping once started can be extremely difficult but at least try not to give permission to yourself to fully let go. Like the saying goes, “if you fall off the horse, get back on”. Any effort to minimize the damage makes a difference. Every effort to get back on track matters)

Go Public – If you are setting a goal to change a habit, the more people who know about it can help with some positive external motivation. For example, if you are trying to lose weight, consider telling some of your coworkers and family. Having eyes on you can be positive peer pressure. (Of course, be reasonable about this one, you may not want to tell your coworkers about quitting drug use or something that can jeopardize your employment however if you are fortunate to have that kind of open support use it to your advantage)

Write Your Goals Down and Keep Them Around – Writing things down can make it more real. It is good to keep your goals visible and in front of you as a form of motivation. It can be easy to forget without reminders. Visual reminders are powerful.

Consider Online Communities, Apps, YouTube Channels, etc. – Listening to and watching videos of others working on similar goals can be quite inspiring. There are many online applications that can help you track progress. Be cautious about your source but when you can get free expert advice it can be very helpful.



Keep a “Spiritual” or Meaningful Focus – Whatever you believe, try to connect your goals to a sense of deeper meaning in your life. For example, stopping using drugs can be an admirable and meaningful goal, but quitting drugs to be a better person so you can one day help others can make it even more meaningful. Consider how your goals fit into the “big picture” in your life’s long-term journey. This can help inspire and motivate.

Learn About It – Did you ever meet someone who changed their diet who wanted to preach to you about healthy foods? That is because that person did their research. The more you learn about your goals for a better life the more inspired you may get. There is so much to read these days about every topic, why not take advantage of that? (Again, check your sources first)

Keep Support and Encouragement Around You – We hear this over and over because it is so important. Having people in our lives to support us when we need a listening ear and encourage us when we feel like we are losing momentum is extremely valuable and helpful. Find people out there, if you look hard enough there are people who care enough to help.

Develop an Enjoyment Your Goal – People who sustain their goals develop the ability to enjoy the process even if it is difficult. For example, people who successfully lose weight learn to enjoy exercise and eating healthy. People who succeed in recovery learn to enjoy their new lives as a person in recovery. This can be a challenge, but it is so worth it. You can only “white knuckle” progress for so long. It needs to become a lifestyle you can feel good about

Visualize the Reward – It is good to make your goals real by imagining what it will be like to be where you want to be. For example, if substance use is what you are working on visualize a life where you have more money, less stress, no more legal problems, positive relationships, etc because of no longer misusing substances. Make it real in your minds eye and in your heart and you start to believe that you will get there

DISCUSS: How will I specifically use these points to achieve my goals in the next several months to a year?