

Your Future: From dream to reality

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YOUR FUTURE

FROM DREAM TO REALITY

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The banner features a large photograph of the De Vere Beaumont Estate, a grand white building with a central fountain in the foreground. Below this, a collage of four smaller images shows conference activities: a panel discussion on a stage, a woman speaking into a microphone, a large audience seated in a hall, and a man presenting at a screen.

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1 THE WHY?

If you want to take responsibility for your life rather than letting life happen this book will give you a kick-start. Whether you are a business owner who feels that your business is not going in the direction you want, or you feel trapped in your current job simply because it pays the bills, if you feel that you lack the confidence to live your dream, be empowered to take control of your own future and read on.

We believe that success and happiness don't just happen. You need to take action to turn your dream into reality. Set yourself goals, think positively and strive to be the best you can be. And that is where this book works.

"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. And there's no telling what will happen when you act upon them."

– Jim Rohn

As with all coaching, you will only get out of it what you are prepared to put in. This is **not** just another personal development book; Your Future is a practical way to getting you back on track and leading the life you want.

We have designed this book so you can complete it in as little as one day, although you can choose to take longer if you wish. You will learn why it is important to set yourself goals and how to avoid the most common pitfalls. It shows you how to figure out exactly what it is you want to have in your life and then leads you step by step through the goal setting process, helping you learn to break your goal into simple steps, and keep motivated.

This book is packed full of practical exercises for you to do and, to inspire you further, we have included real life case studies (names have been changed to protect confidentiality). If others can reach their goals then so can you! By following the process outlined in this book you will soon see that it is possible to achieve your goals and live your dreams.

Take the time to complete the exercises as honestly as possible – we don't want you to have any constraints while you are writing and we encourage you to think outside of the box. Draw mind maps, use colored pens or pencils, use words or pictures. Whatever it is that works best for you.

If you are willing to take responsibility for what happens in your life then you will be in a position to change what happens. So read on and start to bring about the change you want.

2 THE IMPORTANCE OF GOALS

Many people feel as if they're adrift in the world. They work hard, but they don't seem to get anywhere worthwhile. This could be because they haven't spent enough time thinking about what they want from life, and haven't set themselves formal goals. Goal setting is a powerful process for thinking about your ideal future, and for motivating yourself to turn your vision of this future into reality.

The process of setting goals helps you choose where you want to go in life. By knowing precisely what you want to achieve, you know where you have to concentrate your efforts.

"People with clear written goals accomplish far more in a shorter period of time than people without them could ever imagine."

– Brian Tracy.

Research studies consistently show that having goals makes a significant difference in creating success and the biographies of high achievers throughout history bear out this research. In fact, you have probably heard it frequently said that goal setting is essential for success. So why is it that so few people actively set goals? Maybe it's a fear of failure, lack of time or know-how, or maybe you just think that it's too difficult.

The truth is that anyone can set themselves goals. It's not difficult and that is what we are going to show you how to do here.

So what exactly are goals?

According to Wikipedia,

"Goal-setting ideally involves establishing specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-targeted objectives."

But more than that, we believe that effective goal work includes recognizing and resolving all inner conflict or limiting beliefs that might unconsciously sabotage your efforts. Setting clearly-defined goals allows you to measure and take pride in the achievement of those goals. It is really helpful to see progress towards something that at first seemed a long, perhaps impossible, grind.

This is where goals essentially give you direction and focus so that you know exactly where you want to be and how you are going to get there. Maybe you have found yourself in the same position as this man – let's call him Andrew.

Andrew knew he wanted to change the direction his life had taken. Although holding a respected position with his current employer he failed to achieve promotion and believed this was because he felt no passion for his office-based job. He held a secret dream of retraining as a horticulturalist but going back to college would jeopardize his family's financial security. As well as his career dilemma, he and his wife were considering moving out of the city as the apartment they rented was too small for their growing family.

This tangle of wishes needed to be unravelled before Andrew's solution became clear. He began by moving to a town close to his parents. He used his existing skills to find work there in the short term, and his family's housing problem was solved. Living closer to his parents meant they could help with child care and his wife was able to find part-time work. Finally he was able to research retraining opportunities.

Setting the first goal meant Andrew was able to focus all his energy on preparing to move nearer his parents, and could visualize the benefits of this for both himself and his family. His longer term goals became clearer as the move became a reality.

You can carry on living from day to day and just letting things happen to you or like Andrew you can start to take control and exert some influence over what happens. If you don't want to look back on your life and say 'If only I'd...' then the only way forward is to start setting yourself goals.

In the beginning you don't need to set yourself big, scary goals just so long as they ignite your passion and inspire you to take action. Make sure that as you progress through this book you continue to focus on what it is you want. You will soon realize that you are capable of achieving whatever you want if you are prepared to work for it and once you see how simple it is to formulate your goals, you will feel more energized and everything you do in your day to day life will become easier.

If asked, most of us can come up with at least one specific goal that we have wanted to achieve for a long time. I'm sure you have that goal too.

Why do you think you still haven't accomplished it?

The reasons can be very different and can range from lack of motivation to limiting beliefs. However, whatever the reason is, you have created a wall that you keep hitting.

Pinpoint those negative beliefs and start replacing them with positive ones. For example, if you are afraid that you don't have enough willpower to follow through, create the following statement, "I am a strong person and I can achieve anything I will set my mind on".

3 THE MISTAKES PEOPLE MAKE

We have found that of the mistakes that can be made when setting goals, five appear to occur regularly among our clients and these have been addressed here.

1. Focusing on what you don't want

At the end of the last chapter we stressed how important it was to focus on what you **do** want. It is an interesting fact that you get what you focus on so be sure to make it positive.

Emma occasionally plays golf and previously whenever she saw a bunker or water feature amazingly enough her ball would always land in it. Why was that? The answer is that every time Emma saw a bunker or water she would concentrate very hard on not hitting the ball into it and of course that is exactly where it would go. What she was actually doing was programming her mind to do exactly what she didn't want. Once Emma began focusing on the green beyond the bunker or water, her golf game improved dramatically!

This highlights that when you are trying to decide on your goal you must remember to concentrate only on the things that you do want – you need to really want the goal and believe in it in order to be able to achieve it.

2. Not taking responsibility

Another mistake that people often make when thinking about a new goal is that they think of it in terms of what they want other people to do. The reality is, we cannot control anything that other people do, we can only control our own feelings, behavior and actions. You are the only one who can achieve your goal so you have to take responsibility for your actions, not give control to someone else.

Steven was a high achiever with a successful career in a large international organization. However, he did not see his success and achievements for what they were and was very critical of himself. Steven was in his dream job but was miserable and he had a list of people and reasons that he blamed for this – his father had been a very successful business man and in his eyes, nothing Steven ever did was good enough. In addition, Steven had a boss who never gave any encouragement to his staff, was always questioning Steven's methods (which Steven took as criticism) and constantly wanted things to be re-done, which meant that Steven had to work very long hours and this had a negative impact on his social life.

All this laying blame was very destructive and Steven started to look for another job but he couldn't find anything suitable. It was at that point that he suddenly realised he was allowing other people and circumstances to make him feel bad, that he had a choice, he had the freedom to choose and that it was time that he took responsibility for his feelings.

He began by taking the time to list everything that he had achieved in his life and was amazed by what he found – he no longer felt put down by his father's comments because he had documented evidence of his achievements. At work he realized that it was not his boss who was making him feel miserable but that he had chosen to be miserable and that it was time that he took control of his feelings. He soon realized that his boss had his own insecurities which led to his behavior and that he, Steven, had the ability to choose how he responded to this. Steven now has far more open discussions with his boss and a better relationship with his father because he has taken responsibility for his life and is no longer laying blame.

3. I'll start tomorrow...

Some people are great at setting themselves goals but then never follow through. They suddenly realize that they have a lot of work to do in order to reach their goal. They start making excuses, for example they are too busy, they are not clever enough or they couldn't afford it, and very quickly manage to convince themselves that the status quo is not so bad and a lot easier to stick with than taking the necessary action to achieve their goal. This sort of procrastination often comes from fear. Fear of the unknown, fear of change, fear of the amount of work required or even fear of failure or, worse, fear of success. It's a huge step forward when we acknowledge this fear and then make positive use of its energy.

If you believe that you are procrastinating and not taking steps to live your dream, try asking yourself the following questions:

- What is stopping me from doing this?
- Do I want this to run my life?
- What are the advantages of going after my dream now?

Susan had always wanted to have her own business but never did anything about it. Instead, she just moved from one boring job to another because ‘they paid the bills’. All she ever did was complain about it. It wasn’t until one of her friends told her that she was fed up hearing Susan moan about her work all the time – in the five years she had known Susan she had moaned about work and talked nonstop about this great business she was going to start but nothing ever happened.

“Why don’t you just do it?” her friend asked. Susan mumbled something about where would she get the money? What if it failed? Where would I start?

“You start right there by figuring it all out and coming up with a plan like you do with the monthly reports at work! Or just carry on moaning and we’ll never know if it could be a huge success!” was her friend’s reply.

It was just what Susan needed. She realized that she was the only thing between her and her business. Susan made a list of everything she had to do in order to get her business up and running, the people she needed to speak to, where she could get help with financing, etc. and before she realized it, she had drafted a detailed action plan which clearly showed how she could get her business up and running. This was a major step forward and she felt totally energized.

Susan carried on with her day job for another six months but even this was no longer a chore as she now had a clear plan in place to achieve her dream. Every time she completed one of the actions on her plan she saw she was one step closer and it wasn’t long before she handed in her notice so she could work full time on her business.

It had taken one small comment from a friend to get Susan to take action. She still admits that the fear of running her own business has never totally gone but she now sees it as an opportunity not to be missed.

Susan’s situation clearly shows that by first looking at what is stopping you from taking action towards having your goal and then breaking your goal down into smaller action steps, you can overcome your fear of taking action. You will quickly see that completing each small step takes you closer to your goal so it becomes much more easily achievable. ‘What’ and ‘if’ are two very small words that when put together stop a lot of people from ever even trying to succeed. Be confident in your success and if you remember that there is no such thing as failure – only feedback – nothing can stop you and you will always have the sense of achievement that at least you tried!

4. Not being able to visualize the end result

Related to the last mistake is creating a goal that is either too vague or too general. This makes it difficult to break the goal down into action steps and visualize the end result. A key to achieving your goals and dreams is to have a clear picture in your head of what it is you want and reading your goal daily helps you to do this and stay focused.

Theresa loved travelling, it was her great passion, but often her annual leave was taken up with visits back home and she felt frustrated that she could not fulfil her dream to travel. The only way to eliminate the frustration was to define her goal more clearly. Theresa discovered that her dream was not to roam the world aimlessly, but to plan each period of leave more thoroughly. She made a list of the places she wanted to visit, and scheduled her leave as and when she could afford each trip. Her passion as well as her planning allowed her to structure a travel blog which attracted attention, and she now generates a small additional income from her articles and photographs. She always visits her family back home at Christmas, and they are welcome to join her on one of her trips.

5. Not having a deadline

The fifth mistake that we find frequently occurring is when clients struggle to set themselves a deadline by which to achieve their goal. Having no clear deadline often leads to procrastination and in the worst case, the end goal is never reached. It is important to think carefully about the timing of your goal. Your deadline must also be realistic and achievable so that you do not get stressed by putting too much pressure on yourself.

Ruth was a business woman with the desire to expand her business. She had created a niche market for her product, and was very much in demand. She found herself working most evenings preparing quotes for potential new clients, whilst servicing her existing clients through the daytime. It's a great feeling to be so successful, but she had also taken on a franchise to supply a product which tied in perfectly with her existing market, and although she was paying franchise fees, she found she had no time to spend developing this side of the business.

Ruth could see her big problem was time, or the lack of it, she needed to discover where her true priorities lay. She focused on planning and deadlines. Her first step was to give herself a deadline of three months. Within the three months she promised herself she would not take on any new clients in her niche market – eliminating the need to work on quotes each night. She set aside one day a week to work on developing the franchise side of her business, and employed a freelancer to help manage the revenue stream from that.

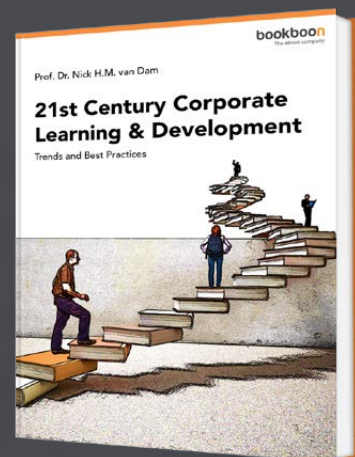
The short deadline Ruth set herself was realistic, it meant that her existing business did not suffer from her shift in focus, and as the franchise developed she was able to leave the increasing administration to her employee.

If you repeatedly find yourself up against any of the issues we have covered here then maybe it's time for you to seek the help of a coach to guide you through the process and help you become accountable to yourself. At times we could all benefit from having someone working directly with us who can help us to see the wood from the trees, to keep us focused and to keep challenging us to go beyond our perceived limitations. Successful athletes all use a coach to help them win medals so why shouldn't you.

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4 MY LIFE TODAY

The first stepping stone to creating your future is understanding what is happening in your life today and to do that we are going to look at your life as if it were a wheel. This will give you a vivid visual representation of the way you see your life so that you can clearly see areas which may be off balance and needing attention.

The wheel is split into eight sections which are designed to help you recognize the different areas of your life and reveal which aspects of your life are important to you. As you work with each area of the wheel ask yourself the following questions:

- **Personal Development**
Do you have enough time to spend on yourself and for yourself? It could be time spent learning a new skill, learning how to be more confident, going to the hair dresser, or the sport school but you can also classify here the time you are able to give yourself for self-reflection.
- **Career**
How much time and energy is spent focused on your work, or looking for work? Do you really enjoy your job or are you looking for opportunities to really develop or change your career?
- **Close relationships**
How important are close relationships to you; by close relationships we mean your partner, your children? If you don't have one or either, does that matter to you?
- **Family, Friendships**
How important, and how much time and energy have you to develop and nurture friendships, and family relationships?
- **Health**
How important is your health? Are you happy with your state of health at present or is there something you feel needs to be addressed?
- **Wealth**
Are you content with the amount of money you have to live on? Are you providing for the future? Do you need to address anything in this area of your life?

- **Spirituality / Community Contribution**

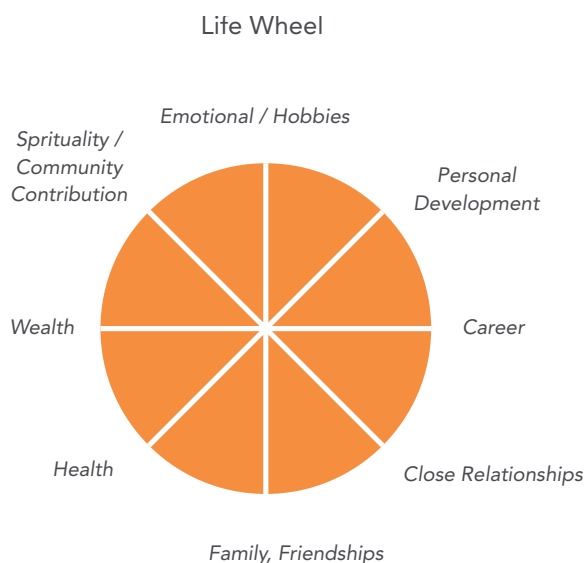
Many people today shy away from all things spiritual. If you practice a religion, think about how important this is to you, but think also about what you give back to society, in the form of volunteering, community work, helping others, helping the environment.

- **Emotional / Hobbies**

Are you able to keep your emotional life healthy by maintaining a balance between work and leisure time? Are all your emotional needs met? Are you content within yourself?

Now it's time to work with the diagram on the following page. Consider each area in turn and decide whether all your needs in that area are met. Then rate each area on a scale of 0 (low), in the centre to 10 (high), on the circumference of the circle. Write down each score on the appropriate spoke of the wheel. Once you have a mark with a corresponding number between 0 and 10 on each spoke, join the dots on the spokes.

Before you begin this first exercise remember that this is all about you. Be honest with yourself. Consider each area in turn and take time to think about what it really means to you at this moment in time.



Mark your scores from 0, in center, to 10, on the circumference, on each spoke.

Once you have joined up your dots, take another look at your wheel. If you had a bike with a wheel like that, how far do you think you would go? Are there any obvious areas for improvement? These are usually represented by low scores which distort your wheel.

This exercise is a great way to begin to give you an idea of which areas you would like to focus on to put the balance back into your life. Initially you can choose just one area to work on. This does not need to be area with the lowest score but one that you know you really want to focus on. Then write down the answer:

The area I choose to work on is:

What you are very likely to find is that focusing on improving one area will actually have an impact on the other areas. For example, if you chose to work on your career and got a job that you loved, this would have a positive effect on your family and friends because you would be much happier, it may be that your health would also improve because you would be less tense about your work situation.

The next stage of the goal setting process is to begin to form the goal which will move you from your current position to a 9.5 or a 10 on the life wheel for the particular life area that you have chosen.

This is a great tool which is very worth coming back to and re-doing once you have achieved one goal and are ready to start on the next. In fact, don't be surprised to find yourself only momentarily at a 10 once you have reached your goal. That's because very soon after you reach that 10 you will want to achieve even more. So expect that 10 to drop back slightly and take it as a very positive sign of growth. Once you see that you can achieve one goal you will strive to achieve even more.

5 INSPIRATIONAL GOAL SETTING

How do you set yourself goals which will inspire you into taking action to improve your life?

At some point in your life you will have probably heard of SMART goal setting. Many large organizations use this technique for setting goals and objectives and you may yourself have had to use it in the past. This is a system for goal setting which really works and it is not our intention to change it here. However, we would like to add what we believe is a key factor and that is the 'I' for 'inspirational'. In this Chapter we will show you how to create SMARTI goals.

We have found including that feeling of "inspiration" into the goal setting system virtually guarantees success. We have used it successfully ourselves and with clients in private one to one coaching. When we have presented SMARTI goals in our workshops the feedback we have received has always been extremely positive. This is a system that works, you just need to believe in yourself and go for it 100%.

Now we are going to find ways of getting you inspired and this is where we use SMARTI goals. As a reminder, SMART stands for:

- S = specific.

In order to increase the chance of achieving a goal, it must be specific so that it clearly defines what it is that is being sought. When you try to be specific about something, you have to really think about it and imagine it. If you can visualize it then with some effort, you can achieve it. Think about exactly what it is you want to accomplish, where will it be accomplished, by when and who is involved.

If your goal is to become rich, this is not specific enough. You need to clearly define how much money you want to make and from where. A more specific goal would be 'I want to earn 40k per year, 20k from my business, 10k from property rentals and 10k from passive income.'

- M = measurable.

It's important to have solid criteria for measuring your progress toward achieving your goal. When you can clearly see that there is a plan you can follow that will automatically get you to your goal, your confidence that the goal is achievable will increase. When trying to make your goal measurable, think about how you will know when you have achieved it. Procrastination comes from fear which is created from not having a clear plan of what to do to get a goal. Start with the end in mind and break the goal down into smaller action steps.

A goal that just states that you want to lose weight is not measurable. State how much weight you want to lose each week and what you consider to be your target weight.

- A = Attainable.

We want you to have practical evidence that you have reached your goal. By focusing on this, you will see that you have a finish line to aim for. This will then focus your mind to figure out ways to achieve your goal. You will start to grow and develop the traits required to achieve your goal. You need to believe that you can attain it.

If your goal is to get fit, decide what that means for you. If for you being fit is competing in the London Marathon – then make that your goal. If for you being fit is competing in a five mile fun run then this is your attainable goal.

- R = responsible.

The purpose of coaching is to help people take responsibility for their lives. The degree that you become successful is directly proportionate to the amount of responsibility you accept fully within your life – and accept the consequences of your decisions and actions. It is up to you to do everything in your power to achieve your goals. This is essentially the wakeup call – you are responsible for what happens in your life – that might sound a bit scary but by following this system you will get results.

A goal which states “I want my boss to stop shouting at me” is not achievable. Making the goal “I will command more respect at work” puts the ball in your court and you will achieve respect at work. If your boss continues to shout at you, his behavior is beyond your responsibility; it is incredibly liberating to know where your responsibility ends!

- T = timed.

The goals you set must have a time by which you have to get them. This makes a goal real. It shows your subconscious that you are serious and will create impetus and drive. The time to achieve your goal should not be too far into the future. Some goals are long-term, but these can be broken down into sub-goals, with shorter time scales. As you reach each sub goal, your long-term goal becomes more achievable.

Perhaps your long-term goal is to become a doctor, something that takes years of training. Set sub goals, acknowledge each examination you pass, each work placement you complete, and the end goal moves ever closer to you.

We would like to add a sixth category:

- I = inspirational.

When your goal is something that you really want to do and you are inspired by it, then nothing will stop you. So consider why it is you want to achieve this goal. An inspirational goal benefits yourself, your close relationships, and your wider network of work and family relationships. It's the motivation that will keep you on track.

Now that you know the general rules behind goal setting, the next step is to brainstorm just what it is you want to achieve.

6 MY WISH LIST

A good way to begin to define your goal is to draw up a wish list. It can be easier to name your wishes because you are not limited by practical considerations. It is easy to say; “I wish I was on a tropical island, swimming in the ocean” because you don’t have to work out how to get there, and how much annual vacation time you have left.

Our method of generating your wish list is to brainstorm, using the questions at the end of this chapter. Maybe you have tried brainstorming before; we use it as a way of generating a large number of potential solutions to a specific problem.

When you start brainstorming, you have the freedom to list anything you want. It helps to use positive words so try to include lots of, “I love doing”, “I am”, “I have”. Try to avoid words such as: should, must, don’t want. In other words, think of what you want, not what you don’t want. Remember how Emma’s golf game improved when she started to focus on the green and not the bunker! The latter point is very important. If we were to ask you *not* to think about elephants, we can guarantee that 99% of you will immediately start thinking about elephants and maybe even picturing one in your mind!

Look back at the spoke of the wheel of life you want to change. What number did you give yourself? Where do you want to be? (*Hint: the answer is 10!*)

Before you start brainstorming its best to feel relaxed but alert, so have a big stretch and then sit up straight and believe that you can have what you want. Imagine that you have no money worries and all the skills you need to do whatever you want. This is the genie in the bottle time. What can you do in order to become a 10 on your chosen life area?

It’s time to start brainstorming and thinking about everything that you want in your life. Do not think ‘I wish I could but...’ ignore the ‘but’ and just write down what you wish you could do. Write down your thoughts as they come into your head. Try not to analyze what you are writing, just keep the words flowing for at least 5 minutes.

The next page has a list of questions to help you brainstorm. Each question is designed to help you look at this area of your life from a different aspect. Read each question and write down what comes into your head, – remember don’t analyze what you are writing, just write.

Questions to help you brainstorm:

- If you could do anything at all, what would you do?
- Where would you go?
- Who would you be?
- If you had no fear what would you do?
- What were your childhood aspirations?
- What do you really love doing?
- What would you really like to go for?
- What character traits do you want to develop?
- What would you really like to learn?
- What skills do you want to master?
- What's most important to you?
- What really inspires you?
- Are you willing to go for that as a goal?
- How will you know that you have got the goal?
- How does the idea of having this goal make you feel?
- If you got this goal, how would it improve your life?"

When 5 minutes are up or you have run out of things to write, put down your pen and continue reading.

7 WHEN I ONLY KNOW WHAT I DON'T WANT!

Some people find it extremely difficult to focus on the things that they want in life. Clients often tell us that this brainstorming exercise is all well and good for those who know what they want but what about those of us who know we want something to change in our lives but can't specifically define what it is? What is interesting is that these people usually have little problem in telling us a long list of things that they don't want in their life.

If this is you, and you found that you struggled to write anything in the last exercise, don't panic, you are not alone! Pick up your pen and try answering the questions on the following page.

If you found the brainstorming exercise easy and now have a long wish list to work with, the following exercise is still a useful tool and well worth taking the time to complete.

Questions to help you find what you don't want:

- What things in your life would you like to change or eliminate?
- What personal traits would you like to get rid of?
- What do you currently have in your life that you don't want?
- What problems and pitfalls would you like to prevent?
- What bad habits or personal traits would you like to avoid developing?
- Is there anything else that you know you do not want in your life?

We find that by reviewing the answers to the last six questions, you are able to identify the things that you do want. If that does not work, then turn each answer into a positive: for instance;

"I want to eliminate working as a wage slave in a nine to five office job."

Could be turned into more than one positive statement:

"I would like flexible working hours" or,

"I would like an independent income"

Now take the time to develop a positive statement for each of the things you identified in the last 6 questions.

Now answer one positive question:

What do I have in my life which I like and want more of?

Hopefully you are now in a better position to re-try to brainstorm what it is you do want.

If you had no problem with the initial brainstorming exercise, take time now to pull your ideas together and answer the following question referring back to the life area you chose to work on in the diagram on page 16.

What can I do in order to be a 10 on my chosen life area?



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8 VISUALIZE THE GOAL

In order to achieve any goal you have to adopt a new way of thinking and take conscious action toward accomplishing your dream.

The best way to achieve your goal is to start thinking and acting like a winner. Close your eyes and visualize yourself after accomplishing everything you wanted.

How does it make you feel?

Did your life change for the better?

What benefits did you get from achieving this goal?

If you can't visualize the final outcome of your goal, you probably won't achieve it.

Take a few moments to create a detailed picture in your head of yourself having achieved the goal, and add to that picture as many benefits to yourself as you can think of. This is what is known as creative visualization.

If you want to you can make notes or draw pictures of the things that come into your mind. The questions that follow are designed to help you expand on this visualization.

- How do you feel?
- What specifically is happening in this area of your life?
- What does living this way inspire you to do?
- How does this affect other people in your life?
- What else does this let you do in your life?
- What is the reward that you are getting?

Congratulations! You now know how you want your life to be. You can visualize it and feel positive about your future. It is time to decide when you want to achieve all this and actually start writing your goal.

Positive thinking is a very important aspect of any accomplishment. Positive thoughts create positive beliefs, which in turn lead to amazing results.

9 WRITE THAT GOAL

How to write your goal:

1. Identify the **OUTCOME** first – what do you really want to achieve e.g. project completed successfully and on time.
2. What is the desired **EFFECT** – what you want in the long term e.g. to set up a process that ensure projects are always completed on time in the future.
3. What is the **SYMPTOM** – what is stopping you complete the task. Think about any barriers that are interfering with your goal e.g. missed deadlines, customer complaints.
4. What is the **CAUSE** – e.g. is lack of experience preventing the project being completed on time.
5. Take a step back for a moment and write down your findings from the above – this will help you to identify the actions that are required.
6. What are the **RESOURCES** you need to achieve the desired outcome – e.g. training, people that can help you, etc?
7. Now make a list of your personal strengths in relation to your goal. For instance, if you have a healthy eating goal you might want to consider strengths such as your level of commitment to eating healthily, or the fact that you enjoy cooking and experimenting with new recipes or even that you are an excellent cook.

The next stage in the goal setting process is to set a date by which you intend to have all the things you have included on your wish list. It's best to begin with short term goals and set a date within the next six months or possibly one year. Once you have used this technique to successfully achieve short term goals, you can go on to use it to set longer term goals.

I aim to achieve my goal by:

Setting a date for the achievement of your goal is that it makes the goal more real and ensures that you are following the SMARTI goal setting criteria.

Before you can embark on actually writing your goal, take the time to review everything you wrote in chapters 5, 6 and 7. This helps to get your thoughts organized. You are about to write down your goal using the SMARTI structure explained in chapter 5.

To help you, the following is Rachel's goal which is an example of a well written goal that meets with the SMARTI criteria.

'It is the 30th of April. I feel so empowered. All my hard work and effort spent studying has been worthwhile. I am now earning 60k per year and I have achieved an excellent work life balance working 20 hours per week during term time which still leaves me time to take my children to their favorite after school activities. I spend every other weekend enjoying time with family and friends. My website is up and running smoothly and I am making 30 software sales per week in addition to my consultancy income. All my friends have commented on how much energy and enthusiasm I have. I am now looking forward to writing my first consultancy manual.'

Rachel's goal clearly shows exactly what is to be achieved and by when and ends by setting the scene for her next goal. It highlights the benefits she will get from her goal and the effect it will have both on her as well as the people closest to her.

Now it is your turn! You are going to write your goal using only positive words. It is most useful if you use words like 'I feel...', 'I have...' so you condense all the great information that you gathered during your brainstorming sessions and can begin to put it into a short statement.

First a few words of advice:

Write your goal in the present tense. Start with the date you have set yourself and imagine that you have achieved everything on your wish list. Think about:-

- How you feel?
- What are you most excited about?
- What is most important to you?
- What do you really love doing?

We hope you are now feeling really positive as you have completed the first draft of your goal. Before you go on to finalize it, jot down you answers to the following:-

- Why will you achieve your goal?
- What results will you see?
- What feedback will you hear?
- What feelings will you have?
- What are the benefits of going after this?
- When you accomplish it what will you gain?

- How will your family and friends benefit if you achieve your goal?
- Will the confidence you gain from achieving this goal affect other areas of your life?
- When you have your goal, what will it be worth to you?
- Do the benefits outweigh the perceived costs?

Very often the ‘why’ you do something is much more powerful than ‘how’ – if you can get a big enough ‘why’, you can always figure out the ‘how’.

After answering these questions review your original draft goal and re-write it incorporating as many of your answers to the previous questions as possible.

You should now be feeling really inspired!

Take the time to read your goal out loud. Read it with enthusiasm. Stand up if it makes you feel more energized!

How does it sound? How do you feel when you read it?

Double check that it meets the SMARTI rules:

- Specific – what will you have achieved in the time frame you stipulated?
- Measurable – how will you be able to measure your achievements?
- Attainable – What evidence is there that you have got your goal?
- Responsible – Can you initiate each step? What skills and characteristics will you need to do that?
- Timed – when do you want to achieve this goal?
- Inspirational – what is most important to you about achieving this goal and how will you feel when you complete it?

If you are happy with what you have written and feel really inspired to get it then congratulations, this is your first goal!

10 WHAT IF I DON'T GET MY GOAL?

What happens if you don't get this goal? You have just written a really inspirational goal so why are we asking this question? It is important to take the time to think about what your life will be like if you do nothing to change it. You could carry on just letting life happen, you may achieve some of the things you want or you may not, but you certainly won't feel empowered and you won't feel in control of your life. You won't experience the feeling of achievement that comes from working towards and accomplishing your goal and leading the life you want.

The following questions are aimed to get you thinking about 'what if nothing changes?' Please take the time to really think about how you will feel if you do not take steps towards achieving your goal and note your answers.

- What are the things that are currently going on in your life that you don't like?
- How does the fact that these things are happening make you feel?
- What do you think/believe is holding you back?
- Has this held you back in the past?
- If you do nothing and these things continue in the future, how will you feel?
- Now re-read your goal. How will it be if you reach your goal instead?

Now that you know how fantastic your life will be once you have reached your goal you will be feeling really motivated to take action but how **do** you take action to turn your dream into reality?

11 MAKE MY DREAM REALITY

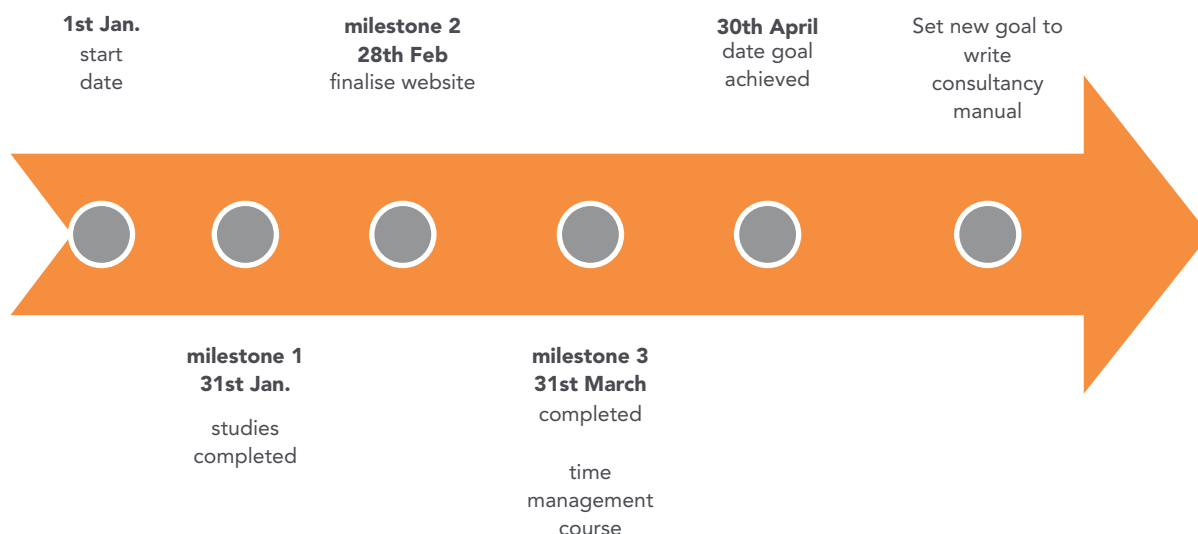
The easiest way to achieve your goal and make your dream reality is to break it down into bite size pieces or achievable milestones. Set a date for each milestone so that you can clearly see that by completing each milestone, you are moving towards reaching your entire goal. As you reach each milestone give yourself a reward. This can be anything you want, from coffee with friends or a massage to buying a book or a bottle of champagne. It is this recognition of your achievements that will encourage you to keep working toward your goal.

Let's think about the first steps you can take to move towards the goal, and when you will take action. We talked about procrastination in Chapter 3 and we can all be experts at it however there is no time like the present to identify those first milestones – the ones that you will be able to reach in the next week.

They can be anything from making the first phone call, writing the first email asking for information, finding a coach or mentor to work with you or just reading your goal every day. At this point it is important to make sure that these first milestones are easily achievable.

Write down your first three milestones towards this goal.

Once you have done this, it is time to draw up a time line for your goal. This gives you an overview of the milestones towards your goal and helps you to see that you are on track. We have given an example time line on the next page which uses Rachel's goal described in Chapter 9.



Draw a horizontal time line similar to the one on the previous page. The left end represents now, and the right end represents the date in the future by which you want to have achieved your goal (This is the ‘T’ you identified when you wrote your SMARTI goal). Specify what you want to happen and when, from now until then.

Using this example, create a timeline for your own goal taking account of the ideas you brainstormed earlier. This timeline becomes a set of instructions to achieving your goal. If you plan on achieving your goal within the next 6 months, you will usually set yourself 6 milestones, one for each month.

Each milestone then needs to be broken down into a list of 5–10 weekly action steps, or small achievable tasks that you need to take in order to reach that milestone. As you begin to work on your milestones, your list of action steps can be modified as required.

As a general rule try not to do more than two tasks a day. It's true that not every action step will be equally easy, and if you are beginning something new and scary you may feel resistance which has the potential to slow you down. To minimize the effect of this, try to pair simple action steps with harder ones, so that you can be confident of completing on action step, and move forward with confidence to the more difficult one.

The importance of rewards

Rewards are very important as you will keep doing things that your brains believes will bring you pleasure i.e. we are all attracted to pleasure and repelled from pain. Rewards depend on what is important to you, everyone is different and it doesn't need to be huge things. It is the celebration of attainment that makes goals motivating.

Re-write your time line in the following table and fill in the column for rewards – this can be anything from a cup of coffee with friends, buying a new book/dress to having a big party – anything that will help to keep you motivated to keep taking action toward achieving your goal.

My timeline:

Date	Milestone	Reward

While working on your milestones, remember to take time out to re-read your answers to the questions in Chapter 9 and don't forget to visualize yourself having achieved your goal – your unconscious brain will then think you already have it making it easier to achieve in reality and is *exactly* what medal winning athletes do before every race.

When you have almost completed one goal, keep yourself motivated by setting yourself a new one – by always learning, and always growing you will have endless motivation to do more, be more and have more.

What happens if you reach the date you have set and you haven't quite achieved your goal?

Many people set goals and wonder why they never achieve them. Often it is because they have focused on what they cannot do rather than on the positive steps needed to achieve their aim. Always believe that you will achieve your goal. As soon as you stop believing, you have already failed but what happens if you reach the date you have set and you haven't quite achieved your goal?

Despite everything we say about always being positive, this is a key question that needs careful consideration.

First, it is very important that you are not hard on yourself. Sometimes events can happen which are out of your control. The only control you have is how you react to these events. If you have been working hard towards your goal and have reached certain milestones but something happens which means you cannot complete the entire process by your time limit, please don't see this as failure.

You need to remember that there is no such thing as failure; only feedback. What you *can* do is review what has caused the delay, learn from it and move forward. Recognize that it is OK to change the end date so long as you can honestly say to yourself that the delay was out with your control.

On the other hand, if you have been procrastinating you need to take a close look at why you have not been taking action – is this because you are scared that you will fail to achieve your goal or are you actually afraid that you might be a success? If fear or procrastination is holding you back then this is where we would recommend you enroll the help of a coach to get you over this hurdle.

Second, keep a vision of the goal you have set yourself before you, remind yourself of what you have already achieved, then set a new date and amend the milestones still to be reached. Start taking action again to achieve the remaining milestones. With continued effort you will get there.

To help you with this, start keeping a log of all your past achievements, particularly those that are relevant to your goal. List 3 now:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

No matter how small you perceive these achievements, list them anyway – you will be amazed at how those small achievements soon add up and how much you are capable of doing. This will greatly boost your confidence and help motivate you to get you back on track to working toward achieving your goal.

It is important to know that achieving your goal isn't half as important as the person you become in the pursuit of it.

However, be aware that a lot of people will not understand what you are doing or why. What is important is that you know for yourself that what you are doing is worthwhile.

Believe in yourself no matter what others think. The key to your success is to believe in yourself and know that you *can* and *will* do it.

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12 WHAT TO DO ON ACHIEVING YOUR GOAL

First of all, congratulate yourself on a job well done. It doesn't matter how big or small your goal was, take the time to enjoy the satisfaction of having done so. The completion of a goal represents a step in the right direction towards your life success!

Absorb the implications of the goal achievement, and observe the progress that you've made towards other goals.

If the goal was a significant one, reward yourself appropriately. All of this helps you build the self-confidence you deserve.

With the experience of having achieved this goal, review the rest of your goal plans:

- If you achieved the goal too easily, make your next goal harder.
- If the goal took a dispiriting length of time to achieve, make the next goal a little easier.
- If you learned something that would lead you to change other goals, do so.
- If you noticed a deficit in your skills despite achieving the goal, decide whether to set goals to fix this.

But don't stop here – set a new goal. Does your available effort and resources allow you to work on another couple of goals?

Goal setting is a life-long process – your goals will change along the way, but you should always have some. As you become more experienced in the goal setting process, you will feel a lot more confident in setting and working towards multiple and more complex goals. Build on your experiences both good and bad and be the best that you can be and SUCCEED!

7 BONUS TIPS TO HELP YOU ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS

1. **Revisit, evaluate, and if necessary, adjust your goals.** Keep a written record of your goals in a place where you'll remember to read them every day. They'll change and adjust over time as your life does, so keep them up-to-date.
2. **Make contingency plans.** Never forget about the problems that might come up on the way, and prepare for them.
3. **Be open to new opportunities and options** that come your way. Sometimes, things have a way of unintentionally leading you exactly where you want to go.
4. **Persevere.** Now that you have the momentum going, don't let it stop! Avoid distractions and stay focused.
5. **Imitating successful people** is a technique used in so many other facets of our lives, but one you rarely practice when it comes to goal setting but it really works here too. Ask yourself: What can I learn from others who have gone before?
6. Old habits often die hard, and **new habits take time to form.** Take a tip from the sports world, and realize that doing anything well comes from doing it over and over and over. The more you practice a different way of doing something the more it becomes part of who you are. Remind yourself that it won't come easy at first, but that's no reason to give up. Give it time. Keep trying.
7. When working on making changes to your life, it's very important to **surround yourself with positive people** who support what you are doing, and who will be ready to encourage you when you fall.

There is a Japanese saying which means that every improvement, no matter how small, is valuable:

'Many raindrops make an ocean.'