

Goal Keeping

Overcome Obstacles, Master Motivation and Get Goals

Nazish S. Qazi



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CONTENTS

1	To Keep or Not to Keep	6
1.1	Purpose	7
1.2	Before You Begin	7
1.3	The Toolbox	8
2	Why Have Goals?	9
2.1	Do I Need A Goal?	10
2.2	My Goals	13
2.3	What do I want?	15
3	Goal Keeping Skills	18
3.1	In The Zone	18
3.2	Stretching Comfortably	20
3.3	Great Expectations	22
3.4	Day Dreaming	27



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4	Distinct Design	32
4.1	Analyse Your Notes	32
4.2	Choose the Right One	33
4.3	Write it Right	37
4.4	Kick-Off	39
5	Dealing With Dragons	42
5.1	About Dragons	42
5.2	External Dragons	43
5.3	Internal Dragons	46
5.4	Taming Dragons	47
5.5	Other Dragons	50
6	Motivating Momentum	55
6.1	Rhythm and Routine	56
6.2	Climbing the Mountain	58
6.3	Conquering the Mountain	59
6.4	Lazy Bones	60
6.5	Practice Makes Progress	62
6.6	Award and Appreciate	63
7	A Good Goal Keeper	65
7.1	Open Mind	66
7.2	Easy Focus	69
7.3	Taking Stock	71
7.4	It's a Goal!	72
7.5	Inner Confidence	73
8	Last Words	75
	About the author	77
	End Notes and References	80

1 TO KEEP OR NOT TO KEEP

"You can aim for the top of the trees, and if you are really lucky, that will be as far as you get. But if you aim for the moon, then perhaps you might at least reach half way."

– M.A.H. Qazi

Do you have a goal? Do have many goals? Are you able to accomplish most of your goals? Or, are you someone that never sets yourself a goal because you believe it is not important? After all, you manage to accomplish the things you need to do, most of the time. If so, is there a difference between the things you **need** to do, and the things you really **want** to do? For example, do you usually find yourself travelling home at the end of a work day with thoughts such as, "Another busy day! Today, I have done task X, tomorrow I must do Y, then there is still Z outstanding... When will it ever end? Will I ever get on top of this workload? Will I ever get time to start on that brilliant idea which I mentioned to the boss five months ago?"

Do you sometimes find yourself starting a project or plan with great enthusiasm, only to find that a few months later, the initial motivation and energy has since waned and you have wandered off track? For instance, a common goal is to lose weight. Most of my clients tell me that after the first few weeks of enthusiasm, they invariably have trouble sticking to the plan.

Or maybe, there is a long-held dream that you have been hankering after? That one thing that seems to elude you but keeps popping up and whispering at the back of your mind. Perhaps you have always longed for a chance to do or have this one particular objective but somehow there is never enough time or money or energy. So, what is it that gets in your way? What is it that stops you from getting past that particular point of low motivation or taking that first step forward?

If you find yourself relating to these questions, then this book is for you. Here you will find some easy to follow exercises and learn techniques which you can apply in your everyday life. Dreaming about a goal is all very easy. However, sticking to your goal or '**Goal Keeping**' as I like to call it, requires certain skills and abilities that we can all learn.

You will discover not only methods for to how to set goals, but how to gain the skills for staying on track and keep going, even when you hit barriers. These methods will help you to create realistic plans, remove unwanted road blocks, activate your deeper motivations and create the momentum you need to fulfil those goals that would otherwise be gathering dust on the shelf.

1.1 PURPOSE

When it comes to goals, our best intentions often go by the wayside when we face problems and challenges. Therefore, it is not my intention to re-write the countless books on goal setting, but to offer you an opportunity to go one step further, overcome the difficulties and achieve those goals that you might have previously failed at.

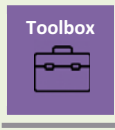
Having worked with many clients that encountered such roadblocks, and helped them find solutions to their challenges, I feel it is necessary to offer these methods to a greater audience. Hence, this book is written for those that wish to learn exactly **how to take action**, step-by-step, handle common problems and remain motivated. At the same time, the reader will gain valuable insight into their **own inner drives** and behaviours, which then usually bring about greater self-confidence.

1.2 BEFORE YOU BEGIN

This book can be used as a reference book and each individual chapter may be referred to, as and when you need. However, in order to gain maximum benefit, when you read it the first time, I would recommend that you read through the entire book from start to finish. This will allow your deeper desires and thoughts to arise spontaneously, as you do the exercises and give you the most effective results.

When you have read through it and followed the Toolbox guidelines at least once, you can then refer back as often as necessary to hone your skills and become an even better **Goal Keeper**.

1.3 THE TOOLBOX



Exercise

Throughout the book, you will find this icon which refers to the ‘Toolbox’. These are uniquely designed exercises which will guide you through your Goal Keeping journey. The step-by-step exercises are best done when you are alone and can allow yourself to think undisturbed. All you will need is a notebook to write in, some plain paper and a pen. Try to ensure that your notes are **kept private** and away from prying eyes.

You may like to use electronic writing devices but some of the exercises require that you do simple drawings or amend previous notes so you can see the changes. Therefore, it is better to use paper, and writing by hand will also help to actualize your goals.

2 WHY HAVE GOALS?

"Productive achievement is a consequence and an expression of health and self-esteem, not its cause."

– Nathaniel Branden

What is the main purpose of having a goal? Do goals actually help you fulfil your work targets, personal plans or long held dreams? Or do they usually let you down?

Does your job demand that you regularly achieve goals? Does having these goals cause you more unnecessary stress? Could you work just as well without them? Are they designed simply to give your boss, partner or customer an opportunity to scrutinize your performance or put you under added pressure? On the other hand, perhaps you are used to setting goals for work projects but often find them unrewarding and difficult to manage.

Maybe you never set personal goals for yourself because you already lead a hectic life and having goals would mean more work. Some people dare not set a goal because they feel it is too risky, unrealistic or unnatural. When you ask them why, they will answer, "I usually manage to get things done anyway. I don't need to set goals." Or "What's the point of building up your hopes? Isn't it only dreaming?" You might even hear, "I don't like thinking about goals. It's not for me. I prefer to be spontaneous."

There are many reasons why people do not set themselves a goal¹. They may be afraid that their expectations will never be met or their long held dreams be crushed if they even attempted to pursue the goal. As one of my clients said, "I don't set any goals because it is just too big, like a mountain in front of me."

However, most of the excuses hide a deep down truth that no-one wants to face. Underneath most people's explanations for not setting a goal is a **negative belief or fear**. These can come in various shapes and sizes such as, if they don't achieve the goal, it would mean failure. For them, it is far worse to have failed than to have even tried in the first place.

2.1 DO I NEED A GOAL?

Of course, there are genuine reasons for such fears and this topic will be explored in more detail in the coming chapters. For now, let us start by looking at the question of whether you need a goal, from a **different angle**. You can begin with this short questionnaire which will help you to gauge your own way of thinking:



Exercise 2A. Self Esteem Check

In your notebook, write down your most spontaneous answer to the following questions. Try not to dwell on your answers for more than 30 seconds each. Your answers should be a simple YES or NO.

- a. Do you feel valued inside yourself and know that you are a worthwhile person?
- b. Do you appreciate and accept yourself, just as you are?
- c. Do you feel confident when making decisions and taking action on those decisions?
- d. Do you feel good when you look at yourself in the mirror?
- e. Are your work / personal plans going in the direction you want?

Now, give each answer a rating from 1–10, on how strongly you feel about it.

(1= No, not at all. 10 = Yes, very much)

Your answers will help you decide if setting and achieving goals, is important or beneficial for you.

If you answered yes to these questions and gave a high rating, then most likely, you will have a fairly high level of self-esteem. In this book, self-esteem is also referred to as **‘inner confidence’** or sense of ‘self-worth’.

In psychological studies, this inner confidence is also known as ‘self-efficacy’ and it describes the belief in your own ability to manage a course of action and carry it out as necessary. The research shows that a high level of self-efficacy is one of the factors that directly correlates with believing that you can be successful at accomplishing goals². It is an essential component of self-esteem and therefore, people who often manage to **accomplish** the things they set out to do, also gain a stronger sense of **self worth**.

In other words, if you have some positive accomplishments to look back on and feel good about, you will probably have a higher level of inner confidence. Your previously completed goals will make you feel assured enough to say, “I usually manage to reach the goals that I set out to accomplish”.

Of course, this does **not mean** that you must only achieve goals in order to gain higher self-esteem. Neither does this suggest that it is the only method of improving self-esteem as **there are various** other techniques and factors that can affect it. However, Goal Keeping is one of the most rewarding and tangible ways to increase inner confidence.

Also, be careful that you do not mistake having inner confidence for outward confidence. Being too outwardly confident can sometimes be a cover up for low self-esteem. For instance, you may know of someone who does most of the talking in a meeting, is always quick to give his/her opinion or be unnecessarily bossy whenever possible. These behaviours can seem egotistical, arrogant or overly confident but indicate that the person lacks self-esteem. Whereas, inner confidence is a quality that is based on genuinely knowing yourself and appreciating who you are, warts and all.

All this simply means is that **the more you set and achieve goals, the more your self-esteem increases**. If you are the kind of person that manages to achieve goals often, it will directly impact upon your own sense of self-worth, and vice versa. The more your self-worth increases, the more your capability in Goal Keeping develops.

On the other hand, if at this point you are thinking, ‘I usually don’t reach my goals because... (fill in the blank)’, then you probably have a low level of self-esteem. Your experiences in your personal life or at work have given you reasons to believe that goals are stressful, unrewarding or unachievable.

Hence, it is important to start by having a clear idea of the **underlying reason** for setting yourself a goal. The following questions are a continuation of Exercise 2A and will help you to define what your particular need or reason may be for starting out on the journey of Goal Keeping.



Exercise 2A. Self Esteem Check (continued)

In your notebook, ask yourself these questions and brainstorm everything that comes into your head. Again, do not dwell on your answers for too long and write down whatever comes to mind, as spontaneously as possible.

- f. If my inner confidence increased, how would it help me?
- g. What could I do if I had more inner confidence?
- h. How would this affect others in my life?

Try not to evaluate the reasons for your answers. If you have trouble trying to answer the questions, imagine someone you **admire** who already has high self-esteem, and think how they might answer.

This is an exercise I use with my clients and here are some examples of their answers:

- f. Increased inner confidence would allow me to:
 - feel happier about myself
 - be able to talk to the boss about my ideas
 - say what I think, out loud
 - not be so angry/frustrated/sad/etc., all the time
 - not worry about what others think of me
 - not hate the way I look so much
 - not criticize my mistakes
 - be able to say NO when I want
- g. If I had more inner confidence, I could:
 - look for another job
 - ask for a promotion
 - be able to talk in public/give a presentation
 - not take on so much work
 - be more procrastinate less procrastinating
 - wear the clothes I really like
 - go swimming, dancing, socialising, etc.
 - help my children with their homework
 - work towards my dream goal

- h. How it would affect others in my life:
- my partner/children would be more proud of me
 - I might not give him/her such a hard time
 - I would delegate more effectively
 - I would be more assertive with my children/staff
 - I would be less critical of others
 - I would be able to give more affection
 - my manager/colleagues would respect me more

Once you have brainstormed your list, give yourself time to absorb and digest the answers. This can be a profound experience for some people so give yourself time. Eventually, you will realise what your deeper needs are and decide for yourself if setting a goal would help you to become more of the **person you wish to be**.

The next exercise will give you the foundation upon which to start identifying the goals that correspond to your genuine needs and desires. This will also help to **fuel your motivation** when taking the first step towards writing your goals.

2.2 MY GOALS

Now, you are ready to take the first step towards not only setting your goals, but actually achieving them. You may already have a list of goals in your head. If so, go ahead and start making the list in your notebook.



Exercise 2B. List of Goals

On a fresh page in your notebook, brainstorm a **list of everything** that you have ever wanted, big and small. It does not need to be in any order. Write down anything that comes to mind even if it feels silly or insignificant. Include any short term and long term goals, both at work and in your home life. These can be tangible, material, personal or self-improvement goals.

Again, do not dwell on or evaluate any of these yet. This process may take a couple of days because you may find that you keep adding more goals as they occur to you.

When I ask my clients about their short-term and long-term goals, their initial answers range from the most common, “I just want to be happy”, “I would like to win the lottery”, to the highly improbable, “I want to be a millionaire with lots of fast cars”, and down to the everyday things such as, “I wish my boss would get fired” and “I wish I could be taller, skinnier, prettier, etc.”

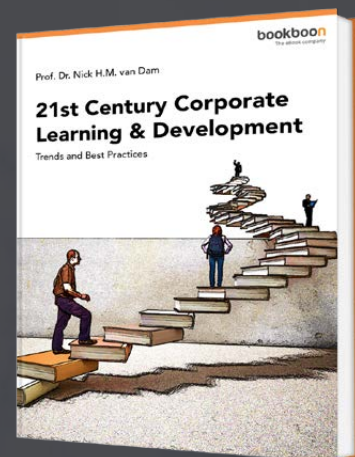
So, is there anything wrong with these answers? Are they actual goals or are they just dreamy wish lists which the person knows will never come true? Perhaps they are simply an amusing cover-up for avoiding the question and not really thinking about a realistic goal.

Now, if your goals are sounding like any of the above or you think your goals are completely absurd, don't worry! Start by doing Exercise 2B, writing down everything that comes to mind and then, we will unpack, evaluate and re-write these goals in the next chapter.

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2.3 WHAT DO I WANT?

Perhaps at this point you are still scratching your head and wondering where to begin? If so, it maybe because you are asking yourself too big a question such as, ‘What do I really want in life?’ This can be an overwhelming question for some people and too much to think about at this stage. If you lack confidence in reaching your goals or do not have many accomplishments behind you, it is better to start small. Once you have accomplished a few smaller goals, you will gain confidence to move up towards bigger and bigger goals.

To help you with writing your list of goals, let’s begin with asking some easier questions. Here is an exercise to help you **think around** the question of what you want:



Exercise 2B. List of Goals (continued)

Ask yourself any of these questions that may be relevant to you. Then, allow yourself a little time to quietly ‘chew’ on them. This is best done when you are alone, say travelling to work, taking a walk or relaxing at home. Allow your thoughts to come up naturally and follow the thought process without being too logical. Write down your answers as they come to mind:

- What problems do you regularly face at work?
- What changes would you like to see at work or at home?
- How do bosses/colleagues treat you with regard to work load?
- What would make your everyday life a little better/easier?
- What could you change about your appearance?
- Who do you admire? Which of their qualities would you like to have?
- What gives you the greatest pleasure?

The answers to these questions are not exactly goals but will lead you towards identifying your specific desires or changes you want to make happen.

For example, a problem at work could be that, ‘you are not always informed about the discussions or decisions made by the rest of your team’. Obviously, the problem is one of communication and your answers may then lead you to ask further questions such as, “Why am I always the last one to know?”

Allow yourself to follow your thoughts and eventually, you will come to an understanding and clearer idea of what you actually need or want. In this situation, the realization could be, 'I would like the team to include and involve me in their communications more often'. Now, consider what changes would make it better. Hence, your answer would become your goal, 'To create better working relationships with the team'.

Usually, when a client is still unclear about his or her goals, I ask them further questions which help them explore their own thought processes. You can do this for yourself, by simply asking the question, "**why?**" until you get to the root of the issue. Then ask the question, '**What changes would make it better?**'

For example, here is a typical conversation about goals:

Client:	I want to be rich.
Coach:	Why?
Client:	So I don't have to work anymore.
Coach:	Why?
Client:	Because I don't like working.
Coach:	Why?
Client:	I don't like the job. Well, actually, it's not that I am lazy. I just don't like the work situation.
Coach:	Why?
Client:	Because the hours are too long, my pay is terrible. And the boss doesn't care what I think.
Coach:	What changes would make it better?
Client:	Perhaps I could get a better paid job. Where I don't have to work such long hours. Maybe, even with a boss who does care and listen to my ideas.

As you dig a little deeper, you will find your own specific needs and your goals will soon become clear. To help you with ideas, here are some common goals that people have:

“I want to...

- have more money
- be fitter and healthier, go to the gym more
- have a better relationship with my colleague/partner/husband/wife
- give up smoking/drinking/eating too much
- have more time with my children
- get more clients/business/sales
- work less and have more free time
- travel and go on holiday more
- find a better job
- change career direction
- get better results from my staff
- manage my workload better and have less stress

You may already have some of these goals on your list and probably, once you start writing you will find more to add. This is the preliminary step towards creating a manageable and realistic goal that you will now take the steps to achieve.

3 GOAL KEEPING SKILLS

*"Start a huge, foolish project, like Noah...
It makes absolutely no difference what people think of you."*

– Rumi

There are some people that always seem to sail through life with great successes and achievements, which to the rest of us seem like a dream, far out of reach. 'They were born lucky', we say to ourselves or they come from a rich family. Or perhaps, we consider them to be obsessed workaholics or over-confident risk takers. Maybe, it is pure 'positive thinking' and dogged stubbornness that gets them results? And how is it that even when these people face hindrances, they manage to get passed their problems without much effort?

At least, this is how it seems from an outsider's point of view. When you take a closer look, you will probably find that they do have some of these characteristics. Then, if you dig a little deeper you will also find certain **attitudes** and **abilities** which they all have in common. They operate with a different frame of mind or way of thinking, which is not always apparent on the surface but are the **foundations** for achieving goals successfully.

The good news is that these skills are not exclusive to those lucky few but available to all of us who wish to become good at Goal Keeping. Before we take the next step towards refining your goals, it is important to understand some of these key attitudes and abilities which you should take onboard first. In this chapter, you will uncover these skills and learn how to adopt them.

3.1 IN THE ZONE

The first ability is to understand your 'Comfort Zone' and knowing how and when to step outside of it. Recently, the Comfort Zone has become a commonly used term but it is not always understood. You could say the Comfort Zone is being in a comfortable situation or doing something that is easy for you. Therefore, there are also situations which are not so easy and lie outside of your Comfort Zone.

As you begin learning and developing your skills for Goal Keeping, you will no doubt find yourself feeling uncomfortable, unsure or even lost at times. The key point to remember is that you are now on a **learning curve**.

Do you remember when you first started a new job, a new training course or went to a completely foreign country for the first time? Do you remember feeling anxious or ambivalent? This is because anything that requires learning or experiencing something new will inevitably push you **out of your Comfort Zone**³.

Learning a new task or doing something out of the norm will usually make you feel uncomfortable to some degree. You have less control over the situation, less certainty of the outcome and sometimes it means treading on completely unknown territory. For us mere mortals, this can be enough to put us off even trying something new.

There are of course some brave souls who thrive on this sense of the unknown and enjoy taking risks. But most people are quite the opposite and will shrink away from anything unpredictable or unusual. So what quality do those fearless people have that helps them step out of their Comfort Zone?

Usually, successful Goal Keepers are those that have slightly different ways of thinking. They have a willingness or an **attitude of trust** that allows them to step out of the Comfort Zone every so often. You too can learn how to do this, and as with learning any new skill, once you have practiced it over time, it will become much easier.



Exercise 3C. Recognising Your Zones of Comfort

Start by asking yourself a few questions. Write down your answers in your notebook without thinking too much:

1. When I feel completely comfortable, what am I doing?

Make a list of all the activities that you love, find very easy, relaxing or enjoyable. For example, watching TV, eating dinner, walking the dog, shopping, reading a book, browsing the internet, driving to work, etc. Label this list, 'My Comfort Zone'.

2. Which activities make me feel a little uncomfortable but good afterwards?

These are activities and situations that make you feel a bit nervous and are a little difficult but rewarding at the same time. For example, learning a new language, visiting a new country, approaching a new person at a party, using a new computer programme, cooking for guests, playing sports, etc. Label this list, 'My Stretch Zone'. These should be your own, individual preferences that help you stretch out of your Comfort Zone but not so much that you feel frightened, angry or helpless.

3. What kind of activities would make me feel extremely uncomfortable?

These could be situations or activities that you would hate or not want to try. If you did, you would probably give up very quickly. You would probably have the '**fight or flight** response' which is associated with highly stressful situations⁴. These situations would push you beyond your Stretch Zone and make you want to run away or even get defensive. Examples are; giving a presentation, working with a difficult person, going to a job interview, bungee jumping, performing on stage, etc. Label this list, 'My Discomfort Zone'.

Please note, I have only given common examples. Things that are comfortable for one person may be extremely difficult for another. It is important to recognise your own individual feelings of comfort and discomfort. Your zones will be completely unique so do not be tempted to compare your list with anyone else.

3.2 STRETCHING COMFORTABLY

You now have an understanding of your own individual preferences for activities or situations within each of the zones of comfort. Figure 3 illustrates these three zones of comfort. When we are in the most comfortable place at the centre, we feel most secure and usually do not want to step out of it.

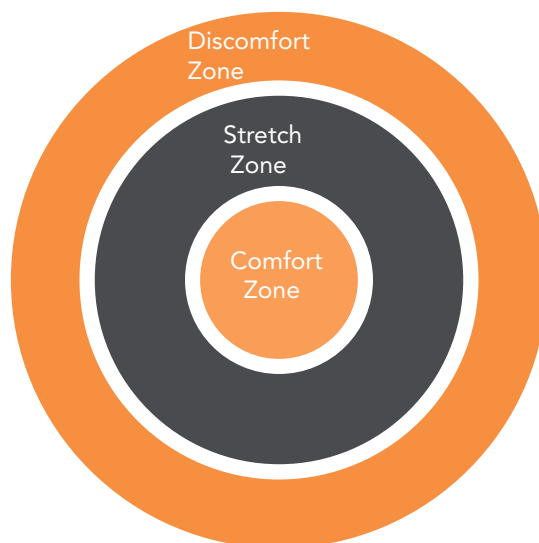


Figure 3. Zones of Comfort

As you wrote your list, you may have noticed that there are activities in your Comfort Zone which you currently find highly enjoyable, but at one time these same activities were extremely challenging, such as learning to read, swim or drive a car.

With this in mind, pick one activity from your Comfort Zone list which took some time to learn. Can you remember how difficult it was when you were first learning it? In the beginning, this activity was in your Stretch Zone or even perhaps in your Discomfort Zone. I remember when I was a child and first learned how to ride a bicycle. It was the scariest thing I had ever done!

The first step towards learning anything new is always the most challenging. Once you have taken those first few steps, you begin to realise that you are still safe and can continue. Then, you begin to grow a little more confident with each step and the rest gets easier and easier.

Stretching outside of your Comfort Zone is something we all do naturally, from an early age. However, some of us learn to become afraid as we get older due to various life experiences. You can overcome this fear by cultivating the **attitude that you can** stretch yourself because **you did it before** and you can **do it again**.

Be careful however, that you do not step out of the Stretch Zone and into your Discomfort Zone too often as this could be contradictory to your learning process.

Hence, if you can accept that you are now on a learning curve, which may be steep at first but will eventually even out, then you will understand that this is the natural process for taking on any new endeavour, as shown in Figure 4. Therefore, simply remember that **all learning takes place in the Stretch Zone** and you will get past the initial challenges.

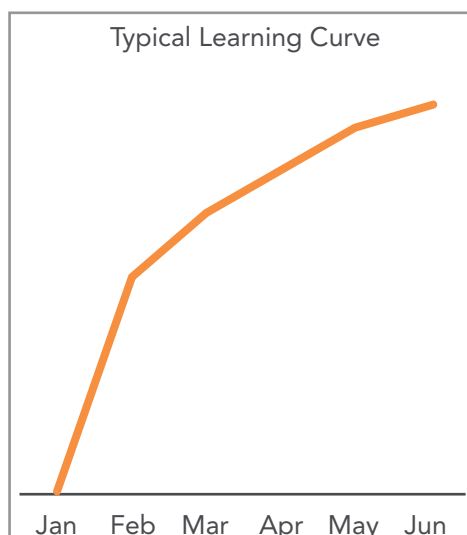


Fig 4. Typical Learning Process

Whilst you are learning these new techniques and doing the exercises, you will usually be in your Stretch Zone. After a while you will get used to this feeling of being stretched every time you start a new goal. As you accomplish more goals, you will notice that with every new goal, there is a learning curve but you will not feel ‘as stretched’ as before. As such, you will learn to trust the process every time you step out of your Comfort Zone. Eventually, you will become so good at this that you won’t need to even think about it anymore.

3.3 GREAT EXPECTATIONS

At the outset of any new project or venture we often feel full of positive energy and our expectations are high. For instance, we feel a rush of excitement as we go out to buy some new sports shoes to start our new fitness routine.

Then, after the first few weeks, somehow the enthusiasm always seems to diminish. Perhaps we find it more and more difficult to keep that fitness routine going if our workload increases or we suffer a bout of flu. Our expectations of reaching the goal start to drop along with our energy levels. Then, we start to tell ourselves we have failed to stick to the plan and think, “What’s the point of only going to the gym once a week? If I can’t make it three times a week, why even bother?” And so begins our slow descent back to the old norm and believing that the goal is unachievable.

The learning point here is to realise that sometimes we set the bar too high. Our expectations of ourselves are often so high that the real failure is not understanding our own limitations. It is important therefore to adopt the attitude of having **realistic expectations** of ourselves at each step of the Goal Keeping journey.

One of my clients who enjoyed running had set himself the lofty goal of running a half-marathon in May of the following year. It was September then and he decided he would like to challenge himself by training for the race. At the same time, he had just launched a new business venture, with new offices and a new partner. The adrenaline was flowing and his motivation was flying high!

However, over the coming months there were various setbacks and difficulties with managing the new business, as is often the case at the outset of any new start-up. Unfortunately, both partners had set themselves rather unrealistic expectations of their new venture and their workloads became overwhelming. Needless to say that the goal of running a half-marathon was completely pushed aside and by January my client had to opt out of the competition altogether.

Realistic Expectations

So how do we set realistic expectations about reaching our goals, especially when faced with stumbling blocks and unexpected hold-ups? Firstly, let's take a closer look at the learning curve. Figure 5 shows that in reality, the actual learning curve is never a straight line. It is quite often a jagged line with many ups and downs. For example, in a new job you may need to do a task several times before you get it right. However, the important point to notice is that the **overall direction** is a **gradual increase** in learning.

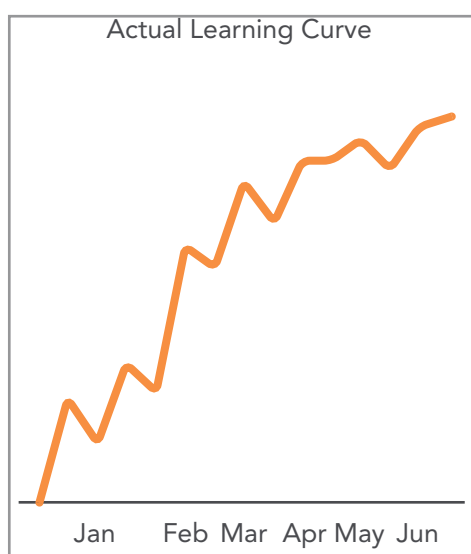


Figure 5. Actual Learning Curve

Therefore, at the beginning of any new project, plan or venture, we might often make many mistakes and experience drawbacks but this will decrease over time. This is why it is so important when taking on a new member of staff, that the line manager supports the new person closely at the start, and then slowly releases the reins as he or she gains more confidence.

The key point here is to accept that it is **natural and human to make mistakes**. However, if you find yourself wanting to give up at the very first hurdle, then there may be some deeper reasons which need to be addressed. We will explore this further in Chapter 5.

The ability to accept that you are learning something new and allow yourself to make mistakes may take some time before you fully acknowledge it. Do not expect that you will change or learn this overnight. Learning and mastering anything new will take time and you must be **patient with yourself**.

This does not mean however, that you should have low expectations of yourself or your goals. It simply means allowing yourself time and patience to make mistakes and learn from them. Every time you take a wrong turn or slip up, simply stop and ask yourself, “What can I learn from this?”



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Expectations of Others

Another unnecessary stress we often put upon ourselves is to take onboard too many of other people's expectations. This can come from our well-meaning friends and family or from the society and culture we live in.

For instance, perhaps you know people that have tried to give up smoking or other bad habits. One of the first things they do is announce their intention to everyone around them. Then, their friends and family unload their considered judgements and doubts upon the person's precious hopes and plans. This puts even greater pressure upon the individual, which in turn causes unnecessary stress on their loved ones. Eventually, it can influence the individual's enthusiasm, motivation and likelihood of success.

Instead, it is far better to practice the skill of **smiling and staying quiet**. To be able to play your **cards close to your chest** during your Goal Keeping journey is a useful ability which you can learn to cultivate with a little practice.

Until you become confident in your Goal Keeping skills, it is much easier to create a realistic plan of action, follow the steps set out in this book and slowly **announce your accomplishments after** you attain them. You will thereby gain far greater inner confidence in your ability to achieve whatever your endeavour is. If you must share your goals with someone, it is better to only **inform one or two pertinent individuals**. Make sure that they are people who will support you 100% and will not taint your wonderful new plan with any doubtful thoughts and negative talk.

Expectations of Myself

At the outset of your Goal Keeping project, it is necessary to manage own expectations about the **final outcome** and how you think it should turn out. In real life, there are often bumps on the road, unforeseen circumstances and sometimes the goal posts get moved. We **cannot always control the results** of our endeavours and so the final outcome may look different to our original plan. And occasionally, when we allow a natural course of action to take place, the outcome can be **even better** than expected.

For example, one of my clients came to me with a request to improve his negotiation skills for talking with his foreign customers. After the first few coaching sessions, it turned out that there was a deeper issue which needed to be addressed. He was lacking self-confidence for talking with people in general and would prefer to hide away in his workshop rather than face any new colleague or customer. Therefore, his coaching plan had to be changed accordingly and he is now also working on developing his confidence.

At the start of your Goal Keeping journey, it is best to acknowledge that the long sought after dream, aspiration or objective you are hoping to gain may well show up in the end wearing a different guise. It is therefore necessary to **keep an open mind** as to the final outcome. It may be equally pleasing and fulfilling but somehow not quite appear the way you first imagined.

When setting and working towards your goals you need to adopt the **attitude of patience with yourself** and manage your own expectations. Here is a simple exercise which you can do that will help you keep your thoughts on track.



Exercise 3D. Managing My Expectations

Using positive affirmations is a simple yet powerful technique. With regular use you can change your doubts and worries into more positive expectations and confident thinking.⁵

In your notebook, write down the following statements. Then say them to yourself, in your head, at least once every day for the first 3–4 weeks:

- I am always patient and kind with myself
- I allow myself to be human and make mistakes
- I always learn and grow from my mistakes
- I can easily handle any changes or issues that come along
- No matter what others say, I know I am on track
- Whatever the outcome is, it will be right for me.

At first it may seem a little strange to ‘talk to yourself’ but it is something we all do. It is probably the talking to yourself positively which you are not used to. The best time for saying these affirmations is first thing in the morning, after you wake up and whilst getting ready for your day. You can write them on ‘sticky notes’ and put them on the inside your wardrobe door, beside your mirror in the bathroom or anywhere where **only you** will see them.

In this way you can learn to manage your own and others’ expectations by being realistic and kind to yourself, conservative with whom you share your goals and cultivating the mind-set that you are on a learning journey.

3.4 DAY DREAMING

One of the most valuable skills you can learn for becoming a good Goal Keeper is to use your mental abilities to **create an image in your mind** of what you really want.

Perhaps you have heard the theory that the left side of our brain is responsible for logical thinking and the right side is for creative thinking. This is a rather simplistic explanation of the human brain but it helps us understand that, whilst we have these two functions, most of us do not use them equally.

When we are small children we spend much of our time using this creative thinking ability and our **imagination is boundless**. As we get older however, we are taught to focus on using our logical thinking abilities, to be problem solvers, think in linear terms and the emphasis is on being ‘rational’. At the same time, traditional education and most modern societies help to ‘dumb down’ our creative thinking abilities. To day dream and be imaginative is considered childish, wasteful or only reserved for those few who are artistically inclined.

However, it would be more logical to say that, as we have these two different types of brain function, we should **use both these faculties**. After all, we have two eyes and use them both. We do not close our right eye and only use only our left, saying that we’ll save the right eye only for recreational use! It therefore makes more sense to suggest that our creative thinking also has a very important purpose which we should be making more use of.

In fact, there have been numerous studies showing how top athletes, successful leaders and business professionals utilise a specific kind of creative thinking called **visualisation**⁶. They use this method to think about their goal, not only in a positive way, but using a special method that makes them feel as though they have **already achieved** it.

In the next exercise, you will learn this technique for using your creative thinking abilities. It is widely known nowadays as visualising and will help you in recognising, clarifying and establishing your goal as it will be in reality. All you have to do is simply close your eyes and **allow your mind to day dream**, just as you did when you were a child. Don't worry if it feels childish or irrational at first.

Now, if you are thinking, "I don't need to do this, it's silly" or "I already know exactly what I want in my mind and I can skip this", then you may be missing a key element which is vital in the process of goal achieving. I have found that the **state** you were in when you initially thought of your goal idea is very significant. In other words, if you were filled with dread, desperation or doubt about the future, it will not help you in creating the ideal scenario for your goal. If you were stressed, exhausted or not able to relax, then your day dreaming skills will also be affected by negative thoughts and thus become **fear** based goals.

Below is a step-by-step guide to a visualisation technique which will help you to first relax, take your mind off the everyday stressors and focus on your true goal which lies deep in your mind. Obviously, before you can begin, you will note that it is difficult to read the steps if you have your eyes closed! So, I recommend that you first read through and **understand the steps**. Then, if you can memorize the five steps in general, you can do the exercise without trying to say the words exactly as they are written. This will suffice for the first attempt.

Otherwise, you could try to get someone who is supportive and understanding to read through the steps for you, as you do the exercise. An even better suggestion would be to record the entire exercise onto **a voice recorder**. You will probably have such a facility on your mobile phone. Then, you can simply listen to it whilst you relax.

Choose a time and place where you will not be disturbed. It is necessary to be **relaxed and calm** when you do this exercise. There are certain times of the day when you are naturally relaxed such as before you go to sleep at night, after lunch or when you wake in the morning, if you are not rushing to work. These are the best times to do this exercise as you will easily relax and be able to visualise.



Exercise 3E. Goal Visualisation

Step 1: Relax your body	a. First, sit back on your bed or sofa and make yourself comfortable. Support your head but do not lie down as you might fall asleep. b. Take a deep breath and as you exhale, close your eyes. Allow your whole body to relax. Let go your shoulders, your eyelids and relax your jaw. c. Take a few more slow, deep breaths and feel your body gradually relax from the top of your head, all the way down to bottom of your feet. And then feel the relaxation come up again, from your toes up to the top of your head. Take your time to do this.
Step 2: Relax your mind	d. Continue to breathe slowly and naturally. Allow your mind to leave behind all other thoughts. e. Now imagine you are taking a walk in a nice place where you feel most comfortable such as a beach, in the countryside or along a quiet path by a river. Enjoy this walk for a short time and take in your surroundings. f. Then, imagine there is an escalator appearing in front of you. As you look at it, you notice that it is an extraordinary escalator and seems very inviting. You now take a step onto the escalator as it slowly moves upwards. g. Count from 10 to 1 slowly in your mind, as you climb higher and higher, leaving behind the scenery. Feel yourself becoming lighter and more and more relaxed. h. As the escalator moves higher, you feel all your cares and concerns falling away below you. You are now leaving behind everything of today and your mind is free and relaxed.
Step 3: Going through the door	i. As you reach the count of 1 you find yourself at the top of the escalator. In front of you is another door and on the other side of the door is your future. j. The future could be 1, 2, 5 or as many years into the future as you want. Decide how many years into the future you want it to be. Just take the year that comes into your head first. k. Open the door and step through, saying to yourself, 'I am now in the year 2....'

Step 4: Enjoy completed Goal	l. You are now on the other side of the door and you are feeling very content with your life. Life is good. You have achieved much. Allow your mind to dwell on this. Let the scene appear. m. Notice everything around you. See, hear, touch and take it all in. You may find yourself in a room or doing an activity. Or, perhaps there are other people around you. Perhaps you are in another country or you might even perceive something completely abstract. Allow your imagination to wander and let in whatever comes. n. Now, bring your attention to one goal from your Goal List. Any goal that comes to mind first. Imagine that the goal has already been accomplished and finished. You are feeling very satisfied and pleased with all that you have done. o. Let your imagination create the sights, sounds and smells which come with the completion of this goal. Allow yourself to enjoy the sensation of having reached your goal. See or feel it as though it is a reality taking place in front of you. p. Say to yourself, "This is exactly what I wanted. I am so very happy that I have now completed it. And I am feeling very grateful." Let yourself enjoy these emotions.
Step 5: Back to the present	q. Stay in this wonderful place and allow yourself to enjoy it for as long as you feel comfortable. However, do not allow yourself to start analysing, questioning or trying to make sense of anything whilst you are here. If this happens, simply tell yourself that you will handle this later. r. When you are ready to return to the present, feel yourself stepping back from the scene. Put the scene in a frame, imagine it as a still picture or photo and hang it on the wall. s. Say to the scene, "I'll see you later" and return to the door. Step through the door and say, "I am now back in the present year and all is well". t. Step back onto the escalator and slowly descend. Breathe deeply again and let go of it all. Count yourself back from 1 to 10 slowly and feel yourself coming back to the here and now. u. Feel yourself naturally coming back to the present and becoming more aware of your physical body and surroundings. Enjoy a good stretch. v. Tell yourself you feel fine and refreshed. Open your eyes when you are ready.

Immediately after the exercise write down everything in your notebook that came into your mind during Step 4. Try not to chat with anyone but stay quiet, relaxed whilst writing your notes.

Whatever came into your perception during the visualisation is okay: do not try to figure out why these thoughts appeared in your head. Simply jot down the scene, what you saw or heard and all the feelings that you experienced in your mind's eye.

Most importantly, whilst you are doing the exercise do not put any limitations on yourself. Whatever comes into your mind is fine. The first time you do this, your logical brain will no doubt automatically try to question or rationalise your imagination. The trick here is **not to try** and not to take it too seriously but just **allow yourself to enjoy** the experience. Do not do this exercise more than once or twice at this stage.

Once you have written down everything, let it go and try not to dwell on it until the next day. If you remember certain parts later on, you can add them to your notes but do not try to decipher what it all means. Then, once you have given yourself at least a day to digest the experience, you can move on to the next chapter and begin the analysis.

4 DISTINCT DESIGN

"Those who dream by day are cognizant of many things which escape those who dream only by night."

– Edgar Allan Poe

Now, it is time to really get going on a specific goal! Most probably, you have already gained more insight and a better idea about which goal you will focus on. In this chapter, you will distinguish, define and design the direction of your chosen goal and then get started.

4.1 ANALYSE YOUR NOTES

Firstly, let's take a closer look at your experiences during the visualisation exercise. During the first part, when you initially stepped through the door into the future, was there anything significant that you would consider to be a goal or desire that became apparent? Were there any other thoughts, which you had not yet expected, that came up at this point? For example, you may have seen yourself living in a different house which could indicate that you wish to move one day. Or you could have imagined having fun with your friends or family which could mean that you want more free time. Ask yourself, **'what is the significance of these thoughts and feelings?'**

In the second part of the visualisation, you chose one particular goal from your Goal List. Was this different in any way during your visualisation? How did the goal look or feel like after you had achieved it? Did it become more realistic or did you notice other details? For instance, if your goal was to find a new job, perhaps you imagined actually being in the new position and enjoying the work and company of your co-workers.

You will now begin to understand that doing the visualisation exercise allows you to **crystallise your goal**, giving it greater depth and clarity whilst making it **realistic** in your mind. There are no hard and fast rules to this part of the Goal Keeping process. You may find that thoughts pop into your head later, after doing the visualisation or even as you re-check your notes now. Keep a note of any thoughts regarding your future goals that arise. This exercise also helps you to **stay relaxed, motivated** and not get anxious as you start to move towards your goal.

Having done the exercise, most of my clients report that they feel more convinced about their goal and realise that it is actually possible. Instead of having just a vague idea, their thoughts become tangible and three-dimensional. Sometimes details become more distinct and they can see, feel and ‘almost smell’ their goal. Very often during the exercise, people tend to smile as they enjoy the sensations and emotions of already having attained the thing that they have always wanted.

However, be assured, this is not just whimsical imagination but an important stepping stone towards creating your desired goal. As well as a wonderful, peaceful experience in itself, it will help you to develop a more **positive sense of your own potential**.

You may have noticed that you wrote the first Goal List using mostly logical and rational thinking. You were focusing on all that you have ever wanted in your personal life as well as the goals or targets you need to achieve at work. However, the visualisation exercise may have brought up deeper desires which could have been lying dormant in the back of your mind.

When you relax your mind and body and go ‘inside’ your mind, you will often find some hidden treasures. Thoughts, desires and wishes may come to the surface which you might otherwise never have been aware of. Therefore, it may reveal your subconscious thoughts about **what you really, truly want** in life.

The next step is to compare the Goal List to the visualisation to see if there are any differences or similarities. Also note, there may be points that you did not expect or some that seem completely unreasonable. Are there any goals which you think are absolutely unrealistic for you? For example, you might want to race in Formula 1 but have no training, no contacts and no extra money for such a venture. Or, you may wish that your boss would stop being so critical and demanding but your logical mind says, ‘there is no way I can make this happen’. Don’t worry! In the following exercise, we will look at how to evaluate these wishes and create realistic goals which you can achieve.

4.2 CHOOSE THE RIGHT ONE

The next exercise will help you to look at all the goals you have listed so far and choose the ones that are most important and appropriate for you to start working on right now.



Exercise 4F. Choosing Your Goal

1. Take a large piece of plain paper (e.g. A3 size is good.) In the centre, draw a diagram similar to Figure 6. This is often called a mind map, tree diagram or spider chart.
2. Each of the five bubbles represents the **main areas** of your life. If any of the labels are not relevant to you, simply re-label them to represent the main areas in your life. Allow plenty of space around the outside of the diagram.
3. Then draw further lines and bubbles coming from each main area, to represent all your **major goals**. Refer to your notes from Exercises 2B and 3E. Keep it simple and write key words only. You do not need to write whole sentences. For example, your goal could be to improve the communications within your team. Hence, you can simply write the words, 'Team Talk' in a bubble coming from Work.
4. It is best to break down big goals into further **sub-goals** and draw more bubbles, respectively. For example, if you want to improve communications within the team you may want to have regular meetings. So a sub-goal from the Team Talk bubble would be 'Weekly Meetings' in a secondary bubble.

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Figure 6. Goals Mind Map

Your diagram will now have many bubbles showing all the goals from your notes. Your major goals will surround each of the main areas of your life. These will then be broken down into further **sub-goal** bubbles. To **break down large goals**, simply ask yourself **what parts/steps** are required in order to achieve the goal.

Most people find they have a concentration of bubbles around one main area which they need to focus on and less on other parts of their lives. During my last Goal Keeping course in January this year, most of the participants drew diagrams with lots of goals around Health. It seemed that they all wanted to lose weight and get fit after all the over-indulgence during the holidays! They had words such as, ‘fitness, join gym, more exercise, less junk food, manage diet’ and ‘more sleep’ in their bubbles.



Exercise 4F. Choosing Your Goal (continued)

The next part of Exercise 4F must be done in a spontaneous way. Just as before, do not spend too long thinking about or changing your initial responses.

5. Look at each of the **major goals** and ask yourself this question: **How soon** do I need to accomplish this goal? Give each goal a priority rating of **1–9** and write the number inside the bubble. If it must be done immediately give a rating of 9. If it has no urgency and can wait for years, then give it a rating of 1.

Go through every major goal (not the sub-goals) and assign a rating. The numbers will help you think about how important they are and indicate your priorities. Then, decide which should be your primary focus to start work on and **choose only one goal**.

When you have decided on a specific goal, ask yourself what your **reason** is for wanting this goal and note it down. For example, your goal could be to ‘have more free time’ and your reason is, ‘I love spending quality time with my family’. It is essential to be clear about the **purpose of your goal** and identify **why you want to achieve it**.

As you will find, the goals that are unattainable or completely unreasonable will probably not be of high priority to you. If however, your crazy goal of Formula 1 Racing gets a high priority of 9, then perhaps it’s time for you to pay attention to this desire. In this case, ask yourself these questions:

- What will **I feel** when I have achieved this?
- What will **I gain** in the end?
- **Why** is this important to me?

Take some time to think through what this goal is leading you towards or actually bringing you in the end. Then, break it down and make notes on all the steps you could take to make it happen and put these into your sub-goals.

However, if you are new to Goal Keeping, I suggest that you do not start with a big goal but choose a **smaller goal** which is easier to manage. For instance, a major goal may be that you want to ‘change your job’ as soon as possible. This can be daunting for even the most adept Goal Keeper. It would be better to start with a smaller goal such as ‘research possible new jobs’.

As you will notice, your mind map now shows all your particular desires as goals, along with your own priority rating, for you to work towards in the future. You are now ready to define your chosen goal so that it can easily become a reality.

4.3 WRITE IT RIGHT

The next step is to define your goal in order to give you a clear, workable and realistic objective that will help you to take action and measure your progress. When a goal is not clearly defined it can lead to various problems such as:

- vague or ambiguous aims so you do not know when you have achieved them
- unattainable aims causing stress, too much unnecessary work or even giving up
- unclear or illogical direction and not knowing which are the next steps
- no timeframe, hence taking too long to complete and losing interest/motivation

One way to define your goal is to use a well-known tool called '**SMART**'. If you are familiar with setting goals or have been on leadership training courses then you will probably have used this tool before⁷.

The SMART acronym commonly stands for:

- S – specific
- M – measurable
- A – achievable/attainable
- R – realistic/result
- T – timed

It was originally designed to help business managers and there are countless books and articles written about it. Therefore, I am only mentioning it briefly as you will be able to find plenty of information and reading elsewhere. For our purpose, we simply need to define your goal using the SMART method and create a distinct statement that describes it.



Exercise 4G. Writing SMART Goals

1. Choose the goal you wish to focus on for your current project. It should be either one that is of high priority or a smaller goal if you are new to Goal Keeping.
2. Think about your goal as though it is already complete and write a statement which includes all of the SMART elements. You can consider questions such as:
 - How can my goal be more specific? How could someone else be able to see that it is done?
 - How can my goal be measured? Consider quantities, scales, percentages, etc.
 - Is my goal achievable or attainable? If yes, how?
 - Is my goal realistic? Is it possible? What will be the end result?
 - How long do I really need/want it to take?

The following table shows three example goals and the answers to the above SMART questions, relating to each.

GOALS			
	Lose Weight	Team Talking	New Job
Specific	Fit into old jeans	Better results from team because of improved communication	Get a better job as..... (job title)
Measurable	Lose 10cm around my waist	Reduce number of misunderstandings by 50% each month	Better pay, greater job satisfaction and more free time
Achievable	Yes, by eating right food, cutting out junk food, having an exercise routine	Yes, by getting team to agree goals, create strategy together and have weekly meetings	Yes, by joining recruitment agencies, researching and only applying for the right jobs
Realistic	Yes, I've done it before and can do it again	Yes, because the team all want the same thing in the end	Yes, I am well qualified and employers need my experience
Timed	By next 6 months	By end of this month	By this time next year

Figure 7. Writing SMART Goals

Once you have written your answers and noted each SMART element, put it all together and write it as a whole statement. Here are some examples using the key words above:

- I will lose 10cm around my waist and fit into my old jeans again within the next 6 months. I will throw out all the junk food and eat only good, healthy food every day. I will prioritise my exercise routine by writing it in my calendar and join an exercise class twice a week.
- I will discuss with the team how to reduce the misunderstandings by at least 50%. Then, we will create and agree team goals together and schedule regular weekly meetings. By the end of the month, we will have implemented a better communication strategy which will lead to better team results.
- I will join four recruitment agencies, make time to research appropriate jobs/companies and only pursue jobs that are right for me, i.e., with a good working environment, salary, reasonable hours. By this time next year, I will be working in my new job, feeling much happier and spending more time at home.

As you can see, these statements are written with a distinct and specific intention about the goal. They include the five elements of SMART and define the results expected. Taking the time to write this statement will give you clear direction and the outcome you want to achieve.

At this stage, it is important to understand that writing your goals on paper is a very important step towards creating it in reality. This will allow you to orientate yourself towards your new intention and design and plan the actions and steps to take. However, bear in mind that writing down such a statement does not mean it is set in stone and neither should you put undue pressure on yourself to achieve it straight away. There is still plenty of scope for amending the statement if necessary.

4.4 KICK-OFF

With your finished written goal statement, you will have a solid foundation upon which to start moving forward and taking action! Having done all the preparing, selecting and defining, it is now time to take that first action step and get started on your goal. If you do not take action very soon, your goal may be forgotten and forever remain another unfulfilled wish.



Exercise 4H. Writing Action Steps

In order to get the 'ball rolling' and kick off your goal, use your **sub-goals** to create some practical action steps.

1. Write down in brief, what you need to do for each sub-goal. Make sure these are actual **actions** that **you can take** and not descriptions of situations or vague ideas, etc.
2. Now take action and do the first step on your list. Do not think too much or hesitate for too long. If you spend too much time thinking, you might talk yourself out of taking that all-important first step.

Figure 8 shows some examples of the first few action steps to the same goals as described in Figure 7.

GOALS			
	Lose Weight	Team Talking	New Job
Sub goal 1	Food: research foods that I should eat, find suitable supermarkets, recipes and restaurants.	Email: first ask each team member about their ideas for team goals.	Research: look on internet and make list of suitable companies I could work for
Sub goal 2	Gym: visit local gym and sign up for 2 classes.	Meeting: arrange a team meeting to discuss their ideas and the miscommunication problem	Employment agencies: contact and arrange appointments to visit

Figure 8. Practical Action Steps

I have found that for many people, the very first step towards starting their goal is the most challenging. It can be the difference between making or breaking a dream. The reason is because people often put themselves under enormous pressure and feel very anxious before taking that first step.

Here are some common problems that often keep people from taking that first step and suggestions for getting started:

- **Procrastination.** If you find you keep putting off taking action and telling yourself, ‘It’s never a good time to start’, then ask yourself these questions: What am I getting out of not starting? What do I have to lose if I made a start now? (More on this in Chapter 6.)
- **Not sure where to begin.** If you have listed many sub goals and are feeling confused about which one to start with, then ask yourself: If it was my best friend doing this project, what advice would I give her/him? Where is the logical place to start? Or choose the smallest and easiest step and do it.
- **Forcing yourself to be creative.** You have made a plan to start writing, drawing, playing music, etc., but find yourself sitting there with no ideas or inspiration. Creative energy often needs to be ‘allowed’ to emerge and being under stress makes it worse. Instead, simply set up your equipment, get your tools and physical space ready and then leave it there. You probably know that the energy and ‘flow’ will come when it is ready. Until then, use the time to read a good book, look at other artists work, listen to some brilliant or inspiring music and enjoy this ‘research’ time. Your natural creativity will eventually ‘tune in’ and when it does, don’t wait, just take action!
- **The task is too difficult, complicated or time-consuming.** If you find that you are looking at the sub-goals and your first step is too big and scary, then try to break it down even further into mini-steps. Then, just choose the easiest, smallest and simplest action to do first. It really makes no difference which one you choose, as long as you make a start.
- **Feeling overwhelmed.** Your sub-goals have further mini-steps and you have also written a list of details for each. This is on top of your ever growing ‘To-Do’ list and you don’t know when you’ll get the time to do anything. In this case, do nothing. Starting a new project whilst you are feeling extremely tired, stressed or overwhelmed is a bad idea. It is better to take a break, close your eyes and again imagine what this goal will be like or bring you in the end. Enjoy the feeling. Then say this affirmation silently, with your eyes closed: ‘I am finding the right time to take action on my goal’. Take the pressure off, relax and let it go for now. The right time and opportunity will come up and you won’t be able to stop yourself!

Now that you have made a start, you are on your way towards achieving your goal. Don’t worry if your end result seems a long way off. Just keep taking **small, easy steps regularly** and try not getting too concerned about the final outcome.

5 DEALING WITH DRAGONS

"Inaction breeds doubt and fear. Action breeds confidence and courage. If you want to conquer fear, do not sit home and think about it. Go out and get busy."

– Dale Carnegie

5.1 ABOUT DRAGONS

Well done! By now, you will have taken the first few steps towards your chosen goal. Hopefully, you are working through the action points you wrote for your sub-goals and making progress. All seems to be going smoothly so far and you are pleased with what you have done. But what if suddenly, a problem comes up, and you are hit by a roadblock which you did not expect?

Often these challenges, obstacles or '**dragons**' as I like to call them, come in a myriad of shapes and sizes. They can show up as tiny irritations, huge storms or unseen shackles that hold you back. You can usually spot them because they always get in the way of you moving forward towards your goal.

So what do you do? Should you blindly continue, regardless of the dragon, only to find yourself even deeper in trouble? Perhaps, you find yourself getting frustrated, annoyed or even worse, feeling like a failure. Do you give up and go home at this stage? Or do you retreat for a while and reconfigure your direction?

Why do so many people fail and never reach their goals when such adversities hit? And why do some always seem to succeed no matter what adversity they might face? What if they know something you don't? Maybe they have some special methods for dealing with dragons?

The difference between standing your ground and tackling the challenge of letting these dragons scare you off, is the difference between those who succeed and those that don't. With a little understanding about how dragons operate, you too can **learn the techniques** of how to handle them.

Let's start by first noting some important points about the nature of dragons which you should bear in mind whilst Goal Keeping:

- a. You cannot avoid these dragons. There will always be some kind of obstacle, challenge or roadblock to cause problems along the way.
- b. It is natural to get emotional at first, whether you react with anger, sadness or fear.
- c. It is a good idea to create contingency plans at the start in case things go wrong. However, you can never foresee all the challenges that might come up.
- d. You cannot make the dragon go away by hiding from it.
- e. **How you deal with the problem** is what really matters.

5.2 EXTERNAL DRAGONS

External dragons are those that you have little or **no control over** and come from outside, not inside yourself. They are caused by **external factors** that arise along the way. For instance, you suddenly get a pile of extra work, your boss leaves the company, expenses increase beyond your control, it rains for days or you become ill. It could be that a family member needs your time and attention or someone close causes problems and says negative things and challenges your ideas.

So, how do you handle the dragon that unexpectedly shows up at your door or has been sitting inside for a while, slowly gnawing at you? Here is a simple tool to help you re-frame how to handle these annoying dragons.



Exercise 5I. Dealing With External Dragons

1. The first step is to identify the dragon and recognise it is standing in your way. Sometimes, the dragon is obvious and there is no question about its presence. At other times, the dragon creeps in quietly and you do not even notice that it is sitting behind you. If so, regularly stop and ask yourself, 'Am I making progress towards my goals or is there something keeping me from moving forward?' **Notice it and name it.**
2. When you have recognised that this is indeed an external dragon, you will most likely feel annoyed, frustrated, upset, etc. Allow yourself this initial stress or **emotional reaction**, which is **perfectly normal**. This feeling will also give you a clear indication that something is off track.
3. Then, after you have taken the time to digest the situation and calmed down, acknowledge to yourself that you need to **do something about it**. If you don't, nothing will change. Now, consider these questions and write your answers in your notebook:
 - How did this situation come about?
 - When I stand in the shoes of the person blocking me, what am I thinking?
 - What can **I do** to change this situation?
 - Who else can help me with this situation?
 - Is there a neutral person I could discuss this with?
 - What other angle or how else could I look at this situation?
 - Now that I am in this situation, what would be the **best possible outcome**?
 - How could I **rearrange/reorganise my plans** and still move towards my goal?
4. After you have taken some time to think through possible alternative routes, take action. Do something differently that perhaps you did not try before.
5. Anything that you think might help you move forward, even if it means taking a few steps back, is good. Do not imagine that doing nothing, worrying or putting your plan on hold will make the dragon go away. Only **you** can overcome it by **taking action**.

The key point to take on board is that external dragons can be dealt with better, if you **give yourself time to think around** the problem from different angles and take a different route of action. For example, your dragon could be an excessive workload which is eating up too much of your time and energy. So you should re-evaluate your workload and consider firstly, why there is such a workload, and then find ways to better manage, delegate or share it with someone else.

One of my clients started her fitness routine with great enthusiasm at the start of this year. However, the winter days became the dragon, which slowly crept up and stalled her progress towards her goal. She told me, “it is simply too horrible to go out running when the weather is freezing cold and it’s dark outside.”

So, I asked her the questions in Exercise 5I which helped her think through the alternatives. She then did a little research and created her own simple daily exercise routine that she could do at home. As she didn’t want to join a gym, she decided to run up and down the stairs of her own apartment block for 10 minutes and then do some stretches and floor exercises. This gave her the motivation to keep going through the winter months and stay focused on her final goal. When the weather was better, she could easily go back to running outside again.



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5.3 INTERNAL DRAGONS

Often, the dragons that stop us are not those that come from outside but arise from our internal world. What are these internal dragons, exactly? They are the difficult ones to spot and seem to come from somewhere **inside your thoughts or feelings**. I have found that the biggest reason people get stuck is because of **the way they perceive** certain situations. Usually, the dragon is not created because of a current situation but one that has been sitting inside your mind, long before you even started on this Goal Keeping journey!

Quite often, we are so habituated to having them around, that they become like pets inside our minds. You continue to nurture them and don't even notice that it is a dragon sitting right inside your home. Therefore, how do we know if we have an internal dragon or not? There are several types that you might recognise and here are a few common ones:

Moody Dragon

As described previously, when faced with an obstacle standing in your way, you will probably find yourself having an emotional reaction. You may get upset, argue adamantly, say nothing and back away, blame yourself or lose interest. The way you **naturally react** to such problems is what I call your '**default reaction**'. This is the emotional response you usually have when hitting a roadblock, challenge or unexpected problem. The important point here is not to criticise it, but to **become aware** of your own behaviour. You can do this by simply remembering how you reacted the last time you were involved in a difficult situation.

We can call it the **Moody Dragon**, whose typical reactions are anger, cynicism, malice, guilt, shame, dread, etc. – all of which are negative and if allowed to brew, could eventually take you off track and stop you from reaching your goal. So, first ask yourself if this default reaction is beneficial for you. If you are happy with it and you do not want to change, then you can skip this part.

If however, you would like to have more control over the moody dragon, consider what kind of reaction you would rather have. For example, instead of verbalising your frustration when things go wrong, you would prefer to be less reactive and release your anger in the gym. First, start by acknowledging your own default reaction, **make a firm decision** that you are going to change, and then follow Exercise 5J, below.

Cynical Dragon

The most common internal dragon is the one that sits on your shoulder and constantly whispers negative words in your ear such as, 'you can't do it'. Many people have regular thought patterns that can be **pessimistic, depressive or critical** to some degree.

Remember when you first thought about your goals and started making the Goals List, did you also find yourself thinking in negative or limiting ways? For instance, your goal could have been to lose weight but, at the same time, other opposing thoughts also entered your mind. This **Cynical Dragon** said things like, “Remember all the times that you failed at diets? You hate exercise! You always eat junk food when you get stressed!”

These kinds of limiting thoughts often whirl around in our heads like a stuck record playing a ‘sad song’ **over and over again**. The first step to taming the cynical dragon is to **recognise your limiting thoughts** and note down the negative words you repeatedly tell yourself. You might notice that these sad songs often start to play as soon as you start to think of something you must do in the future, plan or arrange an event or if there is a difficult situation coming up.

Controlling Dragon

Here is a dragon that resides in your home and makes itself comfortable on your sofa. In other words it is something that you are so **familiar with** that it takes part in your everyday life and you never even question its existence.

This **Controlling Dragon** has been influencing your decisions, thought processes and actions for much of your life and pushing away success or progress. It represents those long-held beliefs such as, ‘I must work long hours in order to gain anything’, ‘my mother was this way and I must be too’, and ‘having a family means stress and no life’. These **negative attitudes** are held onto firmly and believed to be true.

They often stem from our childhood, family, environment or culture. You can recognise them by looking back over your life and noticing the **negative scenarios** that have come up time and time again. For example, you might always be in debt and never have enough money. So, ask yourself, ‘what are my beliefs around money?’ and ‘where does this belief come from?’ You will then begin to become more aware of how this kind of thinking was installed into your belief system.

5.4 TAMING DRAGONS

These three are the most common types of internal dragons that lie inside our minds. Once you begin to identify them, you will notice their negative influence on you more easily and eventually, learn how to tame them. Subsequently, you will not only improve your Goal Keeping skills, but also manage your thoughts, behaviours and attitudes better in any situation that activates those dragons.



Exercise 5J. Transforming Internal Dragons

In order to tame your internal dragon, you must first recognise it and then name it. Then, start transforming these dragons into positive ones by following this simple but effective exercise.

1. Start by considering each of these points in regard to your own thinking or behaviour:
 - Remember when you last experienced a difficult situation that caused your default emotional reaction to come up. What were your immediate reactions?
 - When you are planning something or thinking of an event in the future, what thoughts do you normally have? Identify the words that repeat in your mind.
 - What problems or difficulties keep reoccurring in your life? Notice the commonalities in each of these issues. Your negative expectations and attitudes around these situations will indicate your beliefs. Acknowledge any negative beliefs that you might be holding on to.
2. Use a double page in your notebook. On the left page write a list of all the **negative feelings, thoughts** and **beliefs** that you have identified. Take your time and write only short key words that describe the negative effects of your dragon. See example below in Figure 9.
3. After that, on the right page, next to each negative point, write an **opposite and positive** statement of what you would prefer it to be. Keep it simple and do not use negative words such as no, not, don't, etc. Also, try to write as though it is in the present and happening already. For example, if your negative belief is 'My life is stressful', the opposite and positive statement might be, 'My life is relaxed'. Do not write 'My life has *no* stress'.
4. When you have written a **positive statement** for each, take a thick black pen and thoroughly **cross out** the negative statements on the left, whilst **imagining** that they will never happen again. This is an extremely important step so take your time to really think about each point and imagine you are now throwing it out of your life for good and replacing it with the positive reaction / thought. If you have many points on your list, it is a good idea to do just one or two at a time, over the course of several days.

Figure 9 shows some examples of internal dragons as identified by my clients. On the left are their negative reactions, thoughts and beliefs, which were then replaced with the positive statements, on the right.

Negative Reactions, Thoughts and Beliefs	Opposite Positive Statement
I feel like a failure, I can't do it	I am successful in many things. I can do this
I feel really frustrated because...	I accept this situation and can manage it easily
I am overwhelmed by the amount of work I have to do	The amount of work I have is just enough for me
I just want to run away from it all	I am relaxed, in control and glad to be here
I cannot handle this stress anymore	My life is getting easier and I can handle it all
I am not slim/pretty enough. I am too big/fat	I am perfect just as I am. My body is fine
I am not clever/intelligent/experienced enough	I am clever/intelligent/experienced enough
I dwell on the worst possible situations/outcomes	I am aware of the situation. I focus on the best possible outcome which is...
I don't have enough time	I have enough time to do everything easily
I tried this before and it didn't work	I do things differently and better now
I don't have the money	I am receiving all the money I need
Other people can do it but not me	If other people can do it, so can I
I need to do... before I can start my project	I am starting my project anyway
My mother/partner/friend said I could never...	I am free to create my own direction
My genetics/ancestry/religion restricts me	I am able to do whatever I set my mind on
There is no other way/answer/possibility...	There are many ways/answers/possibilities
The goal is too big and too difficult	I am taking one step at a time. My goal is realistic and achievable

Figure 9. Negative Dragons to Positives

Although this exercise may seem rather simplistic, it is a powerful way to change your negative thought processes and overcome your dragons. As mentioned in Chapter 3, you can also write these **positive statements or affirmations** on 'sticky notes' and put them in places where you will see them every day, such as in your wallet or inside your wardrobe. Once you have completed this exercise you will already begin to feel more positive.

If however, you feel that the positive statements are far from the truth and somewhat unnatural for you, simply remind yourself that this is stretching you out of your Comfort Zone. It is only the first step in recognising and changing the negative patterns in your mind.

Writing positive statements on paper will automatically begin the transformation process. You will find yourself noticing the negative behaviours as they occur, and automatically replace them with positive ones. Over time, your default reactions, limited thinking and beliefs will change as you repeatedly see the positive words and they sink into your subconscious.

5.5 OTHER DRAGONS

So far, we have discussed the most common dragons but they also come in various other shapes and guises. There are those that lurk in the shadows or deep underground, which are more difficult to find. If you think you have one of these dragons hidden away, you will most probably need to do some extra investigation and deeper self-analysis in order to recognise, re-frame and reduce their hold on you.

For now, you can begin the process of taming these dragons by simply becoming aware of them. As you gain greater self-awareness you will already have taken the most important step towards overcoming them.

Too Many Dragons

In some societies it is common place to put huge stress upon oneself and work extremely hard in order to reach a goal. It is expected that you should keep going and going until you eventually persevere. Although this attitude may work for some people, I am not an advocate of ‘breaking your back’ over a project when the challenges and roadblocks seem insurmountable. Working till you burn out is never a good idea. Hence, be very careful if you find yourself constantly struggling or overwhelmed with work.

During a group training session recently, I noticed that one participant was failing to attend, although she had started the course with great enthusiasm. Over the weeks, I noticed that she was looking increasingly stressed and exhausted. When I approached her, she told me she had been working very long hours, including weekends and getting very little sleep. She apologised and said that her workload had doubled because a colleague had left the team. It turned out that, as she had the most experience and was a dependable worker, she felt duty-bound to complete all the tasks. As a result, the management had done little to hire a replacement.

I suggested that she should consider alternative ways to handle the monster workload because if she were to fall ill, it could be terribly detrimental to her physical and mental health, not to mention the possible long-term repercussions on her employment. She immediately took action and decided she must make a stand against the management and also point out the official authorised working hours.

Obviously, the current work would suffer for a while, but she realised that she must set some boundaries and learn to say 'no'. The following week, I noticed that she was looking much happier and healthier. Hers was 'the need to please' dragon, which at first glance is not so obvious but also quite a common one.

The overall journey of working towards your goal, from start to finish, should be one that brings you feelings of joy, confidence and self-fulfilment. Although at times there are bound to be some setbacks, it **should not be** one of **constant struggle**.

If you find yourself in this situation, there may be various reasons such as:

- a. **You are not really into it!** The goal you have set yourself is not one that aligns with your true desires. It is not something that you are really hungry for and your heart is not in it. This could be because you are chasing something that **other people want** for you and you believe it is what is expected of you. Or, perhaps you are doing it out of habit, routine or necessity. If so, take some time to stop and imagine what you really, truly want for yourself. Ask yourself what will make **you happy**.
- b. **The task is too difficult** because there is something else you need to do first. You have set your mind on a particular goal yet you face many difficulties. This could indicate that you still need to learn something more or accomplish a different goal first. For example, you want to start your own business but you are faced with many challenges. Perhaps you need to take another 'in between job' in order to gain more experience about the commercial world first.
- c. Everything you do is an **uphill battle** and life is always a struggle. This is because deep down, **you believe this** to be true. If you find yourself constantly drawn into difficult and challenging situations, and your thoughts are always focused on the problems, day and night, then you are probably caught up in a vicious cycle. The more you worry about problems, the more they occur. The more problems occur, the more you worry, and so on. However, you can break this cycle by spending at least 10% of your 'problem-worry time' on thinking about what you did well and the positive outcomes you want at the end.

Hidden Dragons

Another dragon that sometimes rears its ugly head is the one that **silently stops you** from getting what you want. I am pointing out this dragon, especially because it can be very manipulative and cleverly hide itself deep in your **subconscious**.

It does not sit on your shoulder or on the couch where you might be able to notice it. Instead, it hides in your basement, wears a heavy disguise and injects your thoughts and behaviours with some **deeply held fears**. Here are a few examples of these fears:

- A fear of failure: “If I try then I will probably fail so I will find good reasons to not even try.”
- A fear of success: “I work hard but never succeed because if I did, they won’t accept/like me.”
- A fear of love: “I give my love easily but I don’t deserve to be loved. So, I put up emotional barriers.”
- A fear of rejection: “I am extra nice, caring and smile a lot. I never disagree, so that they like me.”

Often, these fears are hard to spot because the person may outwardly seem quite positive, driven or happy⁸. They would most likely deny having any of these fears and so, it is even more difficult for them to recognise or deal with such dragons.

In Chapter 3, we discussed how it is natural and human to make mistakes. However, a hidden dragon could cause someone to regularly make bad decisions, many mistakes or worse, the same mistake over and over again. The **fear of success** is disguised as trying hard but no matter what they do, somehow life always hands them a losing card. So, on the surface it seems as though they really want to succeed. However, they **unconsciously make bad judgements** because underneath it all, they believe they will not be liked or accepted if they do become successful.

Perhaps you know someone who likes to set many goals and seems very positive and motivated. But, as soon as the smallest thing goes wrong, they want to give up. For whatever reason, and usually they find a good reason, they give up much too easily. This could be a deeply held **fear of failure** because they want to avoid looking stupid in case the end result is **not good enough**.

All of these fears stem from some kind of negative conditioning in early childhood and usually, the person's routine behaviour will reflect this. Here are just some indicators that a person may be harbouring a hidden dragon. He/she will:

- start various projects but never finish them
- make promises but never keep them
- never feel satisfied with the results of their own work
- be extremely self-deprecating when they make mistakes
- actively look for reasons to not take action towards a goal

So, how do you tame such a nasty creature? Hidden dragons are as individual as you are and therefore, you will need much deeper self-analysis with the help of a qualified **coach or counsellor**. Please note, it is not in the scope of this book to dig out and tame these dragons from the depths of your psyche. If I were to do justice to this topic, I would probably need to dedicate at least one or two books to this subject.

If however, you really want to start the investigation yourself, you can try this simple suggestion: Keep a **log in your notebook** and write a few words about your thoughts and actions regarding your goal at the end of each day. For example, 'Today, I wanted to go to the gym but didn't feel like it'. Write down what you **actually feel**, not what you think you ought to write. Keep your notes completely private.

Do this for just one month and you will begin to see some trends. It will help you to begin identifying the hidden dragon. Then, if you think you are ready, you can begin your self-analysis by asking the questions:

- Why do I keep doing this?
- What am I gaining from it?
- What will happen if I am successful/good enough/loved, etc.?

However, I strongly recommend that you find an experienced expert to help you with this process as it is very difficult to pull out such deep rooted fears and then change them all by yourself.

If you do have a hidden dragon, you may need to put your goal project on hold for a while. In the meantime, please acknowledge the fact that it is **not of your own making** and you were **not born with it**. It has been instilled in your psyche, reinforced over time and those outward behaviours are learned coping mechanisms. Therefore, if and when you are ready, I suggest you seek help and you will eventually be able to 'unlearn' those fears.

Are All Dragons Bad?

At this stage, you may be wondering: why do we have such dragons? Are they really all so bad or could you just get along with them and work towards your goal anyway? Can they be ignored? The short answer is no, they are not always bad and sometimes, you can continue working on your goal, although it would be a struggle. They usually play a very important part in your life and should not be ignored.

Unfortunately, the longer explanation shall have to wait until my future books, in which I hope to explore this subject more thoroughly. For now, the learning point is, the dragons that sometimes hold us back **can actually be a good thing**.

As you work towards your goal and face those challenges, you may feel that you are not progressing. However, you should note that you **are still moving forward** because, perhaps the road you were intending to take was not the best one after all. At times, we overlook the road blocks which need to be cleared first in order to move forward.

For instance, one of my clients had a terrible work situation to contend with. She had an uncaring, unsupportive boss who never listened to her ideas and did not make use of her many skills. She found the work mundane, didn't like the company and desperately wanted to leave.

During her coaching, it became apparent that she had lost much of her self-confidence due to being undermined by her boss and colleagues. I discovered that she had both external and internal dragons and the biggest one was her low self-worth. She doubted her own abilities and believed that her skills would not be good enough to get a better job.

At the time, she did not realise that these dragons were going to help her **change her life**. After climbing up a steep hill, stepping far outside her Comfort Zone, and with much coaching and support, she finally recognised and tamed those dragons! She learned to acknowledge her own abilities, left the company, gained more experience and steadily worked towards her goals. Eventually, she got a much better job, using more of her skills and working with a boss that genuinely appreciates her. She later told me how those hindrances were **blessings in disguise**.

As you start to notice your dragons, you will find that no matter what shape they come in, whether external or internal, they usually begin to diminish once you **stop and face** them. The very act of recognising the dragon and addressing its influence will start to lessen its power over you. With patience, practice and perseverance you too can learn how to not only tame your dragons, but to make good friends with them.

6 MOTIVATING MOMENTUM

"The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret of getting started is breaking your complex overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks, then starting on the first one."

– Mark Twain

You should now be well on your way towards your goal and I hope you did not encounter too many dragons along the way. So, how is it going for you? Are you making good progress? Perhaps you are moving forward but it feels a little slow at times?

It is easy at the beginning to have plenty of that 'get up and go' feeling, but what happens after that? Have you found yourself lacking some of that initial drive and energy? How do you find the motivation to maintain the pace and keep going, even when you don't feel like it?

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As I write this book, I find myself asking the same questions of my own progress. Now that I am on Chapter 6, have I really managed to stay enthused and on track? “Hah! Of course you must have, you are the coach!”, I hear you say. “For sure, you know how to motivate yourself, even when you feel that slump, right?”

Well, now that I reflect on it, and without sounding too conceited, I can honestly say that I have not yet noticed ‘that slump’. Then perhaps, you would rightly point out that it is because I am doing something I feel passionate about – which is true. However, even those who create the greatest works of passion, at some point have to deal with high and low levels of motivation. Therefore, here are some valuable insights and tools that will help you create a **steady momentum** in your motivation and keep you going.

6.1 RHYTHM AND ROUTINE

If you were a baker and I gave you a box full of carpentry tools as a gift, it would be completely useless to you. In the same way, it would be useless to give you methods and tools that work for me because your motivations are certain to be very different to mine. Therefore, the key to creating motivation that has momentum is to increase your **self-knowledge** about your own motivations.



Exercise 6K. My Personal Motivations

To gain a better understanding about your personal motivations, think about a project or assignment that you were involved in.

1. Remember the stages, from the start to finish, and think through what happened at initial planning, your activities, any problems, solutions you found and the final outcome.
2. Ask yourself these questions and write your answers in your notebook:
 - What activities did I most enjoy and why?
 - What did I dislike doing?
 - Who or what helped me?
 - Who or what hindered me and why?
 - What kind of environment allowed me to do my best?
 - What were the indicators that my energy was getting low?
 - How often did I take breaks? When, where and how long were these breaks?
 - When and where did I get my best ideas?
 - At what time of the day was I best at concentrating, solving problems or analysing things?
 - At what time of the day was I best at doing social, team or practical tasks?
 - At what time of the day was I least likely to be productive?
 - When I feel energised and keen to take action, what is it that gets me excited?

3. Now consider **how to apply** this self-knowledge to the activities for your current goal. Think about how to make tasks and work processes align with your personal motivation and use your time most efficiently. Try to reduce or eliminate the things that lower your motivation. Use the hours of low energy to do activities that require less effort.
4. Create a personal work space environment, with necessary equipment that will encourage your motivation. For example, you could put a **do not disturb** sign on your door at particular hours of the day. Or clear your work space of all paraphernalia that is distracting.
5. Create a **Personal Schedule** for the types of tasks you will do at particular times, hours or days of the week. Allocate time for all your different activities and create a routine in accordance with your levels of motivation. You can design this in any way you like, such as on a timetable, a graph or a simple mind map. You can even allocate times in your diary/calendar.

Here is an example of some answers to the questions in Exercise 6K:

- I get my best ideas when driving to work.
- I solve problems better when I am working with my team.
- In the afternoons, I can concentrate on complex tasks and work twice as fast.
- I need to take a short break about every 90 minutes or so.
- I need to avoid reading complex reports in bed, at night as it effects my sleep.

When you are more aware of the ups and downs in your **mental** and physical **energy levels**, you can learn to organise your work accordingly. Your Personal Schedule should include **when, where** and **what** to focus on, for getting the best out of your efforts. This will give you the mental space to only **focus on the task at hand** and avoid the situations that deplete your energy.

For me, being self-employed, my personal schedule looks like a monthly calendar but with no dates. It shows the days/hours which I dedicate to my writing, training courses, coaching and personal/leisure activities. Also, at particular hours of the day I find I have high concentration and other times I use for making appointments, writing emails or taking breaks. There are of course those dreary tasks which I really don't enjoy but must do. I assign only a short time for them and never spend too long on trying to do them all at once. In this way, I do not overload myself and they still get done.

With practice you will find your own rhythm and routine that allows you to do more, in less time and in **harmony** with your **own particular motivation** levels.

6.2 CLIMBING THE MOUNTAIN

During my last Goal Keeping course, whilst on the topic of motivation, one of the participants exclaimed, “It looks like a mountain ahead of me. It just seems SO big!” She was describing a feeling that we are all familiar with. That sense of trepidation at the start of a major project.

As I mentioned previously, it can often be scary at the beginning of your particular goal, no matter how passionate or good you are at Goal Keeping. Especially, having listed all the actions yet to do, you may find yourself staring at the daunting mountain ahead of you.

When I agreed to write this book, it too looked like a huge mountain in front of me. How would I ever find the time, given my already busy schedule, to include writing this book as well? As you can guess, I created a **Project Plan** and reordered my work schedule. I allocated time to use my concentration periods, at specific times and on particular days, over a period of several months, in order to meet the deadline.

So, the secret is in being able to break down the mountain into **manageable chunks** or sections and then take only small steps at a time. It will prevent you from feeling overwhelmed and pace yourself appropriately⁹. Here is an exercise to help you break down the mountain and create your Project Plan.



Exercise 6L. Project Planning

Look back at your notes from the exercises in Chapter 4 which should include your sub-goals, SMART goal statement and some action steps. Now you will turn these into smaller easy-to-do tasks.

1. Create a **Project Plan** for your current goal from the sub-goals. Break down the larger tasks into smaller activities. Each step should have several manageable ‘bite size’ tasks. Also, put similar tasks together that you can do at the same time.
2. Draw up your Project Plan using any medium you prefer. You can create a project timetable on a spreadsheet, draw a timeline on paper or write a simple ‘To-Do’ list. See the example in Figure 10, below.
3. Decide on a **timeframe** for each activity or step. Look at your SMART goal statement and ensure that these coincide with your overall timeframe.
4. Consider your levels of motivation and assign a time/place for the different types of tasks according to your Personal Schedule.
5. It is a good idea to make a paper version of this Project Plan that **only you** will see every day.
6. Every time you complete an action, tick it off. This will boost your confidence as you complete more tasks and so, increase your motivation.

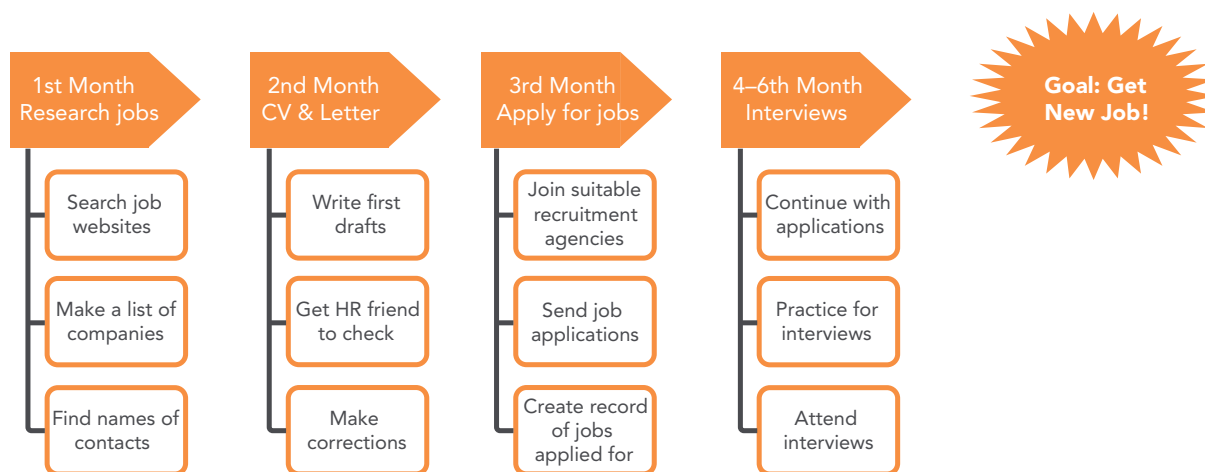


Figure 10. Project Plan

Figure 10 is an example of a simple Project Plan. It shows a breakdown of the main tasks for getting a new job. Depending on the complexity of your project, you can break down each step even further, if necessary.

As you become a more accomplished Goal Keeper, you will easily recognise the fluctuations in your motivation levels and learn to work with them and also be able to keep a more consistent pace.

For my Project Plan on writing this book, each chapter was broken down into smaller sections and related research topics. Every time I sat down to write, I would only work for a couple of hours and focus on just one little section. I find that my concentration comes in **short bursts** of energy. Perhaps you will find that your concentration levels are longer and come in waves. Whichever way works for you, recognise it and use it.

Hence, it is important to accept that there is a **rhythm and natural flow** in the way you work. In other words, you will have productive and non-productive days. For now, you need not concern yourself too much as long as you keep taking those little steps forward. The key is in trusting yourself and not giving up when you feel things slow down.

6.3 CONQUERING THE MOUNTAIN

Once you have broken down the mountain and started your climb, how do you then keep going? You simply make an assertion to yourself by saying, “I will **commit to taking just one small step** every day.” Or each week/as often as you have allocated according to your Personal Schedule. Sometimes it may feel like you are doing very little but you will still be making progress.

Don't Look Up

When you first start to climb your mountain, try not to look up towards the top. The more you stare at the whole mountain, the more intimidating it will seem. Just **focus on the current step** in front of you and do it as best as you can. When it's done, tick it off your list and **enjoy the feeling** of having finished it. Keep your focus on the current steps at the start of your project.

Half Way Up

Usually, when you are about half way up the mountain, there often comes a point where motivation seems to be at its lowest. This is when you might feel like you still have a long way to go or you have not yet done as much as you had hoped. You may even contemplate giving up. Firstly, you must understand that this phase is **quite normal** in every project. Especially if you have had many dragons to conquer along the way. Every artist, architect, project planner or manager will tell you there is always a time during every project when they might feel like giving up. The trick is to not let it override your better judgement. Secondly, remind yourself of the outcome at the end and visualise the feelings when complete.

Now Look Down

You can occasionally stop and look down the mountain and see all that you have **already achieved**. Take time to note your efforts and see how much you have accomplished. Remember where you were at the start, the difficulties you overcame and all that you have learned. **Appreciate your own efforts** as though you were giving positive feedback to a colleague/friend. Acknowledge that you have come much **farther than you ever did before**.

Now Look Up

When you have passed the low motivation phases, you will find that things start to speed up again. As you climb further up the mountain, you can take a look towards the top and notice the path getting shorter and shorter. Usually, when you begin to see the summit ahead of you, your **motivation and pace will increase**. For instance, as in the case of long distance runners, after getting past the pain threshold, mental hurdles and all the physical challenges, they always seem to find a final burst of energy as they reach the finish line.

6.4 LAZY BONES

This is a mean little monster that could qualify to be a dragon. Let's call it the '**Lazy Bones**' Dragon. I am including it in this chapter because we all have to **contend with procrastination** to some degree. Even the most motivated person will admit that occasionally, they say 'I'll do it later'.

Here is a common scenario which I am sure most of us can relate to: you are given an assignment, a report to write or a piece of work that you must do by yourself. In other words, there is no-one else involved in the project and you have a deadline by which to get it done. So, you plan your work, outline the steps and allocate the time necessary. You are ready to go!

Then, the time comes and you sit down to start work. But instead, you find yourself thinking, “First, I’ll just take a few minutes to:

- look at my emails/social networks/check on...
- telephone/talk to so and so
- get warmed up by reading the news/this article/the football scores
- do this other little thing which needs my attention. Then I can concentrate...”

What starts off as a few minutes turns into hours. Soon, it’s time for lunch and you need to run some other errands before you can sit down again. Suddenly, the day is over. You tell yourself that you will feel more motivated tomorrow and get started on the project. However, tomorrow turns out to be another version of the same and so the Lazy Bones Dragon wins again.

A routine of procrastinating can thus result in creating a vicious cycle because every time you put off the task till tomorrow, you make it even harder to get started. Here is a simple technique you can use to break the cycle:



Exercise 6M. Avoiding Little Distractions

When you sit down to do the task and other tempting distractions come up:

1. Acknowledge that this is your Lazy Bones Dragon trying to get the better of you. For a moment, think about the distraction but **do not** start it. Say to yourself, “Right now, I would like to..... (distraction).”
2. Then tell yourself you will have this tempting distraction after just 1 hour. Choose a **short time** that suits you, e.g. 1–2 hours/30 minutes. Say to yourself, “I will allow myself to.....after **1 hour** and this is my **reward** which I will **really enjoy**.”
3. Now, decide which small task you can work on in this short time and say, “I will only do.....for now”, e.g. write one paragraph or read one page.
4. Start your small task and work for just the short time you have given yourself.
5. When you have done it, stop. Give yourself a pat on the back and reward yourself with the tempting distraction. It is important to reward yourself with the thing you wanted earlier or something equally enjoyable.

When you use this technique, you will usually do more than you initially set yourself. If you practice this simple method often, you will begin to create a **work habit** that will allow you to not only accomplish your tasks, but also to enjoy your distractions.

6.5 PRACTICE MAKES PROGRESS

If you are new to Goal Keeping and find yourself worrying about whether you are actually making progress or questioning yourself about your own motivations, then remind yourself that this is all a learning process. Perhaps you find that even though you are working through your steps, you still do not feel very confident inside. This could become very de-motivating if you allow yourself to dwell on it.

As we discussed in Chapter 3, you are currently on a learning curve. When learning anything new, you must allow your **confidence to grow gradually** and slowly, through practice. You are not yet a master of this art and it could take several successful goals before you wholeheartedly believe in yourself. Your inner confidence in your own ability at Goal Keeping is something that can only get **better with practice**.

Do you remember the first time you attempted to drive a car or your first day at a new school or a new job? Do you **remember how worried you were** and that it felt like huge mission? At the time, it may have seemed like foreboding territory. As you began, you probably felt nervous, anxious or shy and made many mistakes. This is **quite normal** and natural on the very first day of starting **something new**. However, after a few days of working at it, you probably felt the initial fears slip away and the more you practised, the easier it became.

Eventually, you could drive the car or do the job without any worry or stress. The tasks and activities have since become so fluent and automatic that you no longer need to try or even ‘think’ about doing them. Therefore, **confidence comes with practice** and you will learn that these insecure feelings will diminish over time, as you accomplish more and more goals.

Most often, a **hands-on approach** is one of the best ways to learn anything new. For instance, if you have read this book only theoretically until now, you will have gained little insight into the value or practice of Goal Keeping. Whereas if you have actively applied the tools to your own goals, you will have learned firsthand about their effectiveness.

However, the idea that practice makes ‘perfect’ is not the aim here. I like to think that there is no such thing as ‘perfect’ in the realm of human effort. Only the gods and Mother Nature can create pure perfection. We are not perfect, our work is never completely perfect and whatever we create will no doubt have its flaws.

For instance, I could go on forever amending, rearranging and tweaking the words in this chapter, and still not be satisfied. Or, I could stop when I feel that it has reached the objective I want and accept that I have done my very best. Therefore, it is better not to put a lot of pressure on yourself by striving towards absolute perfection. Instead, accept that you are on the road of learning and that **‘practice makes progress’**, in other words, you are moving forward and growing with every step.

So for now, simply allow yourself **time to just practice** and inevitably, your Goal Keeping skills will increase as you learn to **trust** that you are on track. Also, note that this has a cumulative effect and that the more goals you achieve, the more your belief in your own success will increase. When you come to planning future goals it will **become easier** and easier, after you have achieved your current goal.

6.6 AWARD AND APPRECIATE

Another key to increased motivation is one we rarely consider. We do not often stop to appreciate and acknowledge our own efforts. Most of the time, we are focused on the problems or issues at hand and all the work still outstanding. The only time we notice that we have made progress is when someone else points it out to us.

It is necessary to look back every so often, not to criticise, but to appreciate how far you have come. Therefore, regularly stop to review your Project Plan checklist and note how **you managed** to make things **go well**. In this way, you will affirm your own skills as they develop and recognise the methods that get you the best results.

When you design your Project Plan, it is a good idea to include a nice reward at the end of each major step. This can be something material or experiential, which you can give yourself on completing every big step of your goal project.

It should be something that makes you **feel good inside** and which acknowledges your accomplishment. For example, you could treat yourself to your favourite meal, go out somewhere you really like, visit a dear friend, have a whole day off, do something you love that is fun or creative, etc. However, don't overdo it and save the **best reward for last**, when you have completed your goal!

The aim here is to take the time to **appreciate** your own achievement, in your own personal way and give yourself a chance to **reflect** and feel **thankful**. This may sound trivial or be something you are not used to, but if you start this practice of timely and **worthwhile self-reward**, you will not only increase your motivation but also your self-understanding and inner confidence will improve.

Another motivator for some people is to be able to ‘advertise’ their own accomplishments. As I mentioned before, the ability to keep your ‘cards close to your chest’ and not tell everyone about your plans can make a significant difference to your own expectations and motivation. However, if giving yourself a reward means you want to start sharing your accomplishments, then of course, go ahead. Just be sure that those you share your achievements with will genuinely support you and understand your goal.

Before you go ahead ask yourself, ‘is it necessary for this person to know?’ Think about how the information you are about to impart, will **benefit or effect** the **other person**. If you first consider how they will react and what questions they might ask, you will probably think again about whether to share your thoughts or not. Usually, most people get excited and want to tell the world because it gives them a sense of outward confidence. They do not stop to consider how the other person will benefit from this information.

You now have a number of methods to keep your motivation motoring. These are all techniques that get easier and feel more natural with practice. Remember that you are human and therefore cannot work like a robot. Understanding your own energy rhythms and natural preferences will take you a long way towards achieving your goals more easily.

7 A GOOD GOAL KEEPER

"Greater self-esteem produces greater success, and greater success produces more high self-esteem, so it keeps spiralling up."

– Jack Canfield

As I come to the final chapter of this book, I feel very excited for you! I hope by now you are well and truly on your way towards your goal and you have completed many of the To-Do on your Project Plan. Perhaps you have even faced your biggest challenges and taken steps to overcome those irritating dragons. If so, I congratulate you. You have indeed made progress!



Successful Goal Keeping is an art and some people, as we know, do it more easily than others. They understand that it is usually **how you think** and not what you do, that counts. The art comes with honing your skills of how you think about problems, how to approach difficult situations, how you apply your self-knowledge, etc. It is very much about the **mindset you choose** to have whilst you are working on your projects which will help you to climb up the mountain and overcome obstacles.

In order help you adopt the best mindset, here are few more strategies that will make your journey even easier. These will not only help you in becoming a good Goal Keeper but will also be useful in other areas of your life.

7.1 OPEN MIND

When you set a firm intention to work towards a specific goal and start taking steps forward, you may also find people or particular situations begin to change around you and re-align themselves. You will find your awareness refocusing and **seeing things** that you might otherwise never notice. For instance, you may be doing something completely unrelated to your goal but unexpectedly, you come by a product, a place or a person that triggers a solution to the problem you were dwelling on.

Often, the answer to your problem is just around the corner but you cannot see it. Have you ever found yourself with a dilemma or issue which you just could not figure out? Then, after much worrying you went to bed, only to wake up the next morning with a new idea or a fresh perspective? This is because our unconscious minds are able to ‘tune in’ to notice all the possibilities around us, when given a chance to relax and let go. When this kind of thought process occurs naturally, we call it a sudden **insight** or **gut feeling**.

However, instead of relaxing and allowing our subconscious to work for us we usually do the opposite. We try extra hard and get overly stressed, which inhibits our ability to ‘think outside the box’. For instance, I am sure you have had this experience: you are talking about a film with someone and try to remember the name of a movie star. The name is on the ‘tip of your tongue’ but remains just out of reach. No amount of head scratching seems to help. Then, you give up and do something else, and suddenly, the name pops up out of nowhere!

Many psychological studies have shown that, when you focus on something and **relax the mind**, your brain becomes more 'habituated' to that thing. The 'Reticular Activating System' is the part of your brain that selects relevant information and then allows it into your conscious awareness¹⁰. In other words, whatever you choose to focus on will be brought to your attention more often.

Your **subconscious mind** is an enormous resource which you have probably never been taught how to use. It is an extremely clever tool that often gets ignored and left unused throughout our adult lives. However, the good news is that you can learn to re-awaken this natural intuitive sense that can bring you some of the most creative solutions.

Here is a simple technique that you can use to tap into your intuitive mind and sharpen your own extraordinary abilities.



Exercise 7N. Intuitive Openness

1. In your notebook, write down a problem or issue you have to figure out. Use your logical, rational mind to think through and analyse any ideas or possible solutions.
2. Then, let it go and take a break. Tell yourself that **you will get the best answer** but right now, you deserve a break from all the analysing and problem-solving. Take your mind off it by doing something else to distract yourself. Work on another part of your project or go home and switch off. If you can, it is best to let yourself sleep on it. This is a very important step in allowing your subconscious mind to do its work.
3. In the morning, or whenever you are ready, bring the problem back to mind. Note any spontaneous ideas or thoughts that come up at this point. Try to just allow the train of thought without rationalising too much at this point.
4. If nothing comes to mind, let it go again and repeat 2 and 3.
5. Keep an open mind and notice anything else or anyone that triggers an idea over the next short time.

As with all skills, you must practice using your intuition regularly and not just save it for difficult problems. It is a good idea to practice the above exercise on a small scale such as when you are looking for something you've lost, trying to decide which item to buy or which task to work on next. Simply think of the issue, distract yourself and let go. Then, come back to it after a while. In the same way that you exercise your physical body, this will exercise and develop your creative mental abilities.

Opportunities

Alongside this natural intuition or ‘sixth sense’, you may also notice that **unexpected opportunities** come along or things you would never consider start working for you. You may find that things appear ‘out of the blue’, that complement or enhance your project.

You may receive an unexpected email offering something you particularly need or go to a social event where you meet someone that could help you. A close friend of mine, recently told me she was worried that her job was at stake because of a difficult situation at work. Then, as she was taking a break in a coffee shop, she met a stranger and had a nice, long chat. It turned out that this complete stranger was a Human Resources manager and was able to give her some very useful and pertinent advice on employment law.

These fortunate coincidences will take place more often as you practice your intuition and open up to new possibilities and opportunities. Hence, it is worthwhile to keep your eyes open and **be open** to potential new offers, solutions and situations.

Letting Go of HOW

When working on goals, plans and projects, we often get caught up with thinking too much about **how to make it work**. We are often so focused on the ‘how to’, that we put far too much pressure on ourselves. Sometimes it is better to allow yourself some slack and **let go of the need** to work it all out in your head. If you are the kind of person who worries consistently, you will hold back your own creative process, intuitive answers or possible opportunities that might otherwise come your way.

If you notice that you are agonising over all the tiny details of a task or constantly being unsure of the ‘**how to**’ do something about your project, you will create a stressful and anxiety-ridden situation for yourself. During the course of your project, if you find yourself repeatedly thinking, “**how** in the world am I going to make XYZ work?”, “**how** am I going to find the right materials?” or “**how** will I get time to do all this?”, then you will be spiralling down a line of negativity and hopelessness. Firstly, this will not encourage confidence in your own actions and slow down your progress towards your goal and secondly, your stress will impact negatively upon your family and other people around you.

Please note, I am not implying you should not concern yourself with such details. At the **outset** of your project, it is necessary that you **think through and plan** the steps and tasks required to achieve your goal. Once you have created your SMART goal, written your list of sub-goals and made a **Project Plan**, focus on taking the actions, one step at a time. Try not to get caught up in figuring out **how** you will handle every tiny detail of every task. Let go and stay centred, trusting your own actions.

Also, if you focus too much on the **need to attain** the end goal and become excessively focused on having the result, you will be dwelling in a state of **desperation**. For instance, you may find yourself fixated on thoughts such as, ‘I must have this XYZ, there is no other way’, ‘I have got to get slim, otherwise I will never....’ or ‘I need to earn more money or else....’ If you find yourself constantly feeling like there is a ‘lack of’ something in your life, you will only succeed in creating more of it. Remember, your brain will allow in more of whatever you focus on.

This desperately-needing-something mindset will cause you to feel **hungry** all the time and you will never enjoy the feeling of being **satiated**. In other words, replace needy thoughts with recognising all that you already have and also the good feelings you will have, on reaching your goal. Try to **let go**, relax and not be too concerned with what is still missing.

Simply accept that you are doing the best you can, steadily work towards your goal and tell yourself that whatever the result is, it will be the **best outcome** for you and any others involved. Letting go is all about developing a state of **relaxed trust** in yourself, in your own actions and in the final outcome.

7.2 EASY FOCUS

You can develop this relaxed trust and positive attitude by adopting the mindset of successful Goal Keepers. By this, I do not mean being blindly positive or having an endless supply of will power. It is more about being aware of the obstacles, constraints and self-limitations but managing them in the best way possible and remaining positive in your outlook.

To do this, you must reinforce that **knowing feeling** which says your **goal is being achieved** and you are on track. You can create this strong conviction in yourself and in your goal without becoming obsessive or desperate using the following exercise. It will help you to release any worries about ‘how to’ or that ‘hungry needy’ feeling. Instead, you will cultivate a sense of relaxed trust and belief in your direction. It will also help you to increase your intuition, stay focused and be calm if dragons come along.

In Chapter 3, you visualised your goal for the first time and in much detail. This time, you will visualise your goal again, but only **focus on the outcome** and see it as complete and achieved. This is a much shorter exercise and should only take about a minute. Try to practice it **every day**, for at least the first month or two of your project.



Exercise 70. Visualise and Affirm

1. Choose a time of day, either when you wake up in the morning or just before sleep at night, and sit or lay on your bed with eyes closed.
2. Take a deep breath and allow yourself to relax. As you did before, follow Step 1 from Chapter 3, Exercise 3E.
3. Now imagine your goal as though it is done and complete. Let your imagination dwell on this image and **enjoy the good feelings** it brings.
4. It can be a moving or still image or a description in words. See or feel it wrapped in a positive glow.
5. Say these words in your head, "I am very happy that I have completed my goal of..... and I feel very grateful."
6. Then, let it go. Imagine putting it on the shelf and come out of the visualisation. Continue with your normal routine of getting up or going to sleep.

You can use the words given in 5 above or you can create your own words that express your positive feelings. As previously mentioned in Chapter 3, these statements are known as **affirmations**. Always use positive words that describe your goal as **already completed**.

Here are some affirmations for the SMART goals we mentioned earlier in Chapter 4. Notice that the words describe the goal as now being finished and include the **positive emotions** of already having achieved it:

- a. I have lost 10cm around my waist and can fit into my old jeans again. I eat good, healthy food, exercise regularly and I feel really great!
- b. I feel proud that my team is working much better together since we decided on our group goals. We are enjoying more open and efficient communications every day.
- c. I am delighted with my new job! I have a good salary, reasonable hours and a great environment with good people. I love spending more time at home.

You can also use Exercise 70 to **tame your dragons** and change your thoughts and beliefs into positive ones. Simply use the **positive statements** you wrote for Exercise 5J as affirmations. First relax, then imagine yourself as already having become the positive way you want to be. See yourself in action and say the affirmation in your head whilst enjoying the good feelings.

Do this regularly and do not dwell on how it will happen. Over time, this new thinking will settle into your subconscious mind and begin to change the old thoughts and beliefs. Also, be careful to not overload yourself and only work on one or two dragons at a time.

Regularly visualizing will not only help you stay positive also to focus on the task at hand and stay in the present. As mentioned before, whilst climbing the mountain, take one step at a time and do not look up the mountain too often. Only **visualise the result** when you are calm and **relaxed**.

Also, if you do find yourself at any point getting fretful or worried about the mountain, the dragons or anything negative, just close your eyes, breathe deeply and say your positive affirmation in your head. Pop up the outcome image in your mind and again enjoy the good feelings. This should only take a moment and it will instantly calm your anxiety and help you to let go.

7.3 TAKING STOCK

Once you have accomplished your goal or are near the end, take a little time to reflect on the journey. This is a very good practice for honing your Goal Keeping skills by noting your thoughts, attitudes and the daily practices, methods and processes which worked for you.

Reassess your SMART goal by asking yourself these questions:

- a. Did your final goal turn out the way you wrote it?
- b. Could you have given yourself a better SMART goal at the outset?
- c. Were you able to achieve the goal according to your Project Plan?
- d. Did you need to take all the steps you had planned?
- e. Did the goal posts move?
- f) Was the outcome different to the original goal that you visualised?

As you answer these questions, you may be tempted to criticise yourself by scrutinising everything you did. However, this is not an exercise in self-flagellation! Remind yourself this is a learning curve you are on, mistakes are allowed and you will get better every time.

Look back down the mountain and go through your notes in your notebook. Taking the time to go through all the steps, the situations, roadblocks and how you tackled them. This will give you many learning points but also a better understanding of your own thinking and behaviour.

You will of course remember the difficulties and consider how you might have avoided them or handled them better. However, as mentioned in Chapter 6, it is very important to take note of how and what **you did well**. Acknowledge your strengths, the processes, methods and systems that worked well for you and how you kept yourself motivated. This self-evaluation will give you positive examples and **tangible evidence** of your own **capabilities**, which will then provide you with the impetus to pursue the next goal.

Also, note how you **felt** at the end. Did you experience all those positive feelings of accomplishment on reaching your goal that you had imagined? Was it as good as you thought it would be? Was it even better? If you take stock of these good feelings, you can then use them to energise your visualisations for the next Goal Keeping project.

7.4 IT'S A GOAL!

Now, it is time to celebrate! When you are sure that your goal is complete, it is time to reward yourself with an appropriate celebration. This step is very important in the Goal Keeping journey in order that you do not condition your sub-conscious mind to **expect that goals** are all about toil and hard work with no **reward**. Give yourself a suitable gift and take time to relax and enjoy the outcome, in whichever way that makes you **smile**.

So now, you can go ahead and tell those people who matter and appreciate your efforts. Go ahead and put all your cards on the table because nothing that anyone says will affect your achievement. At this point, you may even find that you do not want to tell all the people that you once thought you should. As you have learned the value in keeping quiet, you will also have recognised those who fully support you and those who don't.

As for me, how will I celebrate when I finish writing this book? Well, I plan to take some time off to visit my family abroad. First, I will enjoy spending some quality time for myself, relaxing and doing one of my other favourite hobbies.

Another good way to celebrate and a wonderful practice suggested by many successful people, is to write a **Gratitude List**. This is a positive way to reinforce your newly acquired mindset and increase your self-worth by appreciating all that happened, good and bad, on your Goal Keeping journey.

Write a list in your notebook of all that helped you and went well for which you are grateful. For example, if your goal was to ‘get a new job’, your list could look like this:

- I am so grateful to my family for supporting me.
- I am thankful for the help from the employment agencies.
- I appreciate myself for taking the time to prepare thoroughly before the interviews.
- I feel so lucky that the interviewers were nice and easy-going.
- I am extremely grateful to my new boss and company for taking me on.
- I feel very grateful to my new team for their warm welcome.
- I am glad that I had those awful situations in my last job, which propelled me forward.
- I am thankful for my body, mind, energy and abilities.
- I appreciate myself for learning and applying the tools from this book.
- I am so very thankful that I now have this fantastic new job!

You can write your Gratitude List at the end of your project or write it as you go along, every day.

7.5 INNER CONFIDENCE

Last but not least, here is a final exercise for you to assess your personal development during your Goal Keeping journey. Be sure you have **completed your goal** and finished your celebrations before you do this exercise. **Do not** look at your notes from before.



Exercise 7P. Final Check

Answer these questions spontaneously and without thinking too much. On a fresh page in your notebook, write down YES or NO answers only:

- a. Do you feel valued inside yourself and know that you are a worthwhile person?
- b. Do you appreciate and accept yourself, just as you are?
- c. Do you feel confident when making decisions and taking action on those decisions?
- d. Do you feel good when you look at yourself in the mirror?
- e. Are your work/personal plans going in the direction you want?

Now, give a rating from 1–10, on how strongly you feel about each answer.
(1= No, not at all. 10 = Yes, very much).

As you may notice, these questions are exactly the same as in Exercise 2A. This is so that you can now measure your before and after levels of inner confidence. I truly hope that there are a few more Yes's or at least an increase in the ratings you gave yourself.

You can also consider these questions:

- Having completed all your tasks, plans and project, how have **you** changed?
- Has the Goal Keeping journey made any difference to your levels of inner confidence?
- What would you still like to change?

This is of course a subjective measure and there are other outside factors which could also influence your self-ratings. However, if you use Exercise 7P to check yourself, every time you start a new goal and again at the end, it will give you an interesting gauge of your own personal development over time.

You may also find that you feel different in a way that you cannot explain. Don't worry, it will eventually become clear. You will notice a deeper shift in your behaviour and thinking as you grow, overcome the dragons, master your motivation and become better at the skill of achieving goals.

To this end, I sincerely wish you much, much success in achieving prosperity, peace and positive inner power, throughout all your Goal Keeping journeys. Never be afraid to take that first step towards making your dreams a reality!

* * *

8 LAST WORDS

A Word of Warning

In this book, I have set out some simple yet very powerful techniques for acquiring your personal goals. Please be aware that these methods may only be used for the purpose of positive and beneficial outcomes, for you and all other people concerned. These techniques and tools cannot be used for any negative, harmful or destructive purpose.

If your goal is to find a romantic partner, be warned that these tools may not always work. Usually, there are many other factors that need to be considered first regarding your personal situation. In my experience, most people that are looking to find a partner invariably need to tame their personal dragons and learn about self-love first. Therefore, I strongly recommend that you work on other goals to increase your inner confidence and get an expert to coach you to overcome those dragons.

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75

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Coaching and Training

If you are interested in developing yourself further, I can offer you the same down-to-earth guidance and practical support that you have found in this book. You can learn easy-to-apply methods and techniques through personalised one-to-one coaching, live and online, from anywhere in the world.

I also offer some uniquely designed group training courses such as:

- Goal Keeping
- Life On Purpose
- Dealing with Dragons
- Mastering Motivation
- Courageous Confidence

To find out more about these courses, personal coaching or the tools and recommendations given in this book, send an email to nazishqazi@jivondeesha.com

To receive useful tools, insightful information and upcoming events, you can sign up for email updates at: www.jivondeesha.com

Or just give my page a like on Facebook: www.facebook.com/Jivon-Deesha

Your Feedback

Your success is my reason for writing this book. So if you have enjoyed it and applied the Goal Keeping techniques, I would be delighted to hear from you. Perhaps, I might even use your positive story in future books or promotions, with your permission of course, to help others improve their lives.

Please do write to me as I would love to hear about your experiences:
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If you had asked me as a child, “What do you want to be when you grow up?”, my reply would definitely not have been ‘writer’. Back then, my answer was a vehement, “I want to be an artist, a painter!” Then, you may wonder why I am here, writing these books – and quite rightly say, “Well, at least you are still doing something creative”.

Interestingly however, the road to my current destination has been a rather winding one. When I started school I could hardly speak any English. As a foreigner in England, I had little in common with the other kids. Although I was not a natural introvert, the teachers reported that I was a shy child. Hence, it is not surprising that, as soon as I had learned to read, you would find me in the library, lost in a world of imagination and wonder. Reading storybooks and drawing pictures became my best friends.

Thus, my career started with pursuing art which evolved to graphic design. However, by the time I reached my early twenties and after many trials, I concluded that art college and the design world were not particularly interested in my talents. So I took whatever office jobs I could get in order to pay the rent, whilst pursuing my creative drives outside of work. Over the next ten years, I managed to accumulate a broad knowledge of the commercial world whilst working in retail, wholesale, insurance, customer care, recruitment, sales, marketing, travel and local governments.

The turning point came in 1997, whilst working for a training company. A nagging feeling was growing inside me and finally, I realised that despite the extensive experience, and helping others develop their careers, I had made little progress in my own. It was time for a re-think and, after much critical self-analysis, I found that underneath what seemed like a patchwork career, there lay a common denominator throughout all of my previous roles.

Incredibly, the ‘eureka’ moment came as I discovered that, whilst I had been pursuing my first love, art and design, I had been ignoring my one persistent passion. For as long I could remember, I had always been studying human behaviour. The inclination was so innate that I had never even noticed it. The same preoccupation still remains strong today. Consequently, the jigsaw pieces soon fell into place.

The following year I returned to university and, in 2002, emerged with Bachelor and Master degrees in Psychology. It gave me enough time to explore that common denominator and I concluded that I had a particular penchant for recognising a person’s deeper psychological needs and I really enjoyed guiding them in self-development.

Also, I realised that ‘The Silva Method’ course, which I had done in 1985 and been successfully practicing, could also be applied to this new career direction. Both of my parents were former Silva instructors and others had often mentioned that I too would make a good instructor. And so, another piece in the puzzle fitted perfectly.

Since then, I have not looked back and established a deeply rewarding career in creating and delivering training and coaching programs. Also, with a multicultural upbringing and having travelled widely, as well as living/working in England, Germany and Middle America, I have gained a profound understanding of many different cultures.

Over the years, I have designed and delivered a multitude of training courses, from management coaching, business communication and soft skills training to career/self-development programmes for the unemployed, young adults and alcohol/drug misuse clients. I have worked in companies ranging from small businesses, colleges, training schools to large councils and giant multi-nationals. Since 2004, my focus has been in coaching individuals to achieve their own career and life goals.

Behind the scenes, I have overcome my own life challenges, both personal and professional problems, and not only lost that childhood shyness, but conquered the fear of public speaking.

With all this psychology and behaviour knowledge, I have come to realise that there are certain fundamental weaknesses, needs and common difficulties that we all experience as humans. At some point, we all need a helping hand in order to defeat the dragons of life. Therefore, I write with the intention to bring **down-to-earth guidance** and provide **user-friendly tools** which everyone can use.

Yes, I have come full circle, back to using my creative abilities. And now, I enjoy my introverted side with time for reading, researching and writing. Whilst still continuing to add to my portfolio of training knowledge, human observations and successful coaching practice, I am compelled, as any good teacher/coach should be, to share all this knowledge with you. Sometimes, I still dabble in my first love but, most of the time, I am completely absorbed in my endless passion.

As always, I wish you many wonderful and rewarding life changes. If you want to know more about my coaching, courses or would like to share your experiences and 'eureka' moments, I would be delighted to hear from you. Email me at: nazishqazi@jivondeesha.com

Find further information at: www.jivondeesha.com
<https://www.facebook.com/Jivon-Deesha-924982010887997/?fref=ts>

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