

Using short and long-term goals to improve your life

Written by Timothy Houston

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I am not a big fan of the term time management. We do not have the power to move time from one day to the next. We must therefore, manage ourselves against time. This self management is accomplished through goal-setting. People who set regular goals for themselves tend to attain at least a portion of them, which brings the self confidence needed to push further. Setting and obtaining goals is the vehicle that successful people use to improve their relationships and their lives.

To begin with, there are two types of goals you should create: long term and short term. When you picture a long term goal in your mind, I recommend that you think of what you would like to accomplish in the next 3-5 years. Long-term goals keep you moving towards the big prize. However, you do not get the satisfaction of completing them right away. Creating short-term goals is a way to keep yourself constantly moving toward your long-term goals. Short-term goals are the mile markers and highway signs that let you know that you are on the right path to reaching your long-term destination.

Next, I recommend that you begin with the end in mind. Make a list of long-term goals you would like to complete. Separate them by categories such as career, relationship, finance, and so on. Once you have long-term goals in each category, set short-term goals (mile makers) for each long term goals. Your short-term goals should be something that you could accomplish in the next six months to one year. These short-term goals will prevent you from letting time pass you by without any actions. For those of you who have been out of high school for more than 10 years, believe it or not, if you had set a short term goal of taking only one college class each term, you would have your 4-year degree by now. Short-term goals equal long term success.

Thirdly, set SMART goals (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely). Setting SMART goals is one of the most important parts of actually achieving them. Goals should not necessarily be easy, but you should be able to complete them with hard work, motivation and perseverance. To help keep you on track, keep a goal notebook or journal. Writing about your goals and progress will help you visualize your advancement. Consult your goal journal on a regular basis to keep you motivated and on track.

Finally, use goals as the building blocks for self-improvement. The completion of one goal is the catalyst for the next. The goal of registering for a class must supersede the goal of completing the class. Each completed goal lays the foundation for the subsequent one. Whatever your steps or short-term aspiration, make sure they serve as a solid foundation for completing your overall goal. For my personal weight loss target, I would not set a goal to lose 25 pounds. If I only lost 20 lbs, somehow I would still feel like a failure. I would rather set a weight loss goal to lose one pound and repeat that goal 25 times. That way, I have 24 victories going into the final goal.

No matter what your current station in time, you can use goals to improve your life. The goals must motivate you to actions. Each short-term goal must serve as a catalyst and building block for the next. This will make you a better and more reliable person, husband, wife, father, mother, or friend. It will also give you the confidence to know that you can accomplish great things if you stay on the path to your long-term destination. Start today by setting some long and short term goals, and live the best life possible!

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