

# Goal Setting

*Go for and get what you want*

*My goal is to show everyone that they, too, can do what they love to do.*

*--Jason Mraz*

**It's easy** to focus on the details of everyday life and lose sight of larger, long-term goals. Setting goals allows you to take charge of your life as a student by providing direction, purpose and passion.

## Research shows that:

- Setting goals increases positive emotions (feeling in control, happiness!) and decreases negative emotions (stress, anxiety).
- Setting specific, challenging goals leads to better performance & more confidence than setting vague, easy goals.
- Creating challenging goals is energizing, inspiring greater effort than setting lower goals.
- Setting learning-based goals (e.g., understanding a subject) rather than performance-based goals (e.g., getting an "A") increases your interest in the subject matter **and** your performance in the class!

## References:

Latham, G.P. & Locke, E.A. (2007). New developments in and directions for goal-setting research. *European Psychologist*, 12(4), 290-300.

Locke, E.A. & Latham, G.P. (2002). Building a practically useful theory of goal setting and task motivation. *American Psychologist*, 57(9), 705-717.

<http://www.brainyquote.com>

**What is a goal?** You can have **short-term targets** (i.e., goals for the week or semester, such as completing a response paper by 5:00 p.m. on Friday or increasing your confidence in Math by the end of the course) or **long-term goals** (i.e., to become a corporate event planner; to graduate from college with honors and apply to graduate school in your major). Webster's dictionary defines a goal as an "objective: the purpose towards which an endeavor is directed." Research tells us that setting several short-term goals will help you to reach your long-term goals because they can motivate you and allow you to judge your progress.

**How do you set goals?** You are more likely to reach goals that are **important** to you, **challenging yet attainable**, & that you **write** down and **share** with others. Setting **SMART** goals can help motivate you to achieve success:

**S**

**SPECIFIC AND ACTION-ORIENTED** State exactly **what** you want to achieve. Describe your goals using action verbs, and outline the exact steps you will take to accomplish your goal. (e.g., *Understand the concept of regression in Statistics and be able to use my understanding to do my homework; Read, rewrite notes, and do practice problems in Chapter 8.*)

**M**

**MEASURABLE** Establish clear definitions to help you know if you're reaching (or have reached) your goal. (e.g., *Complete the regression homework without looking at my notes; Achieve a B or higher on the upcoming exam.*)

**A**

**ACHIEVABLE** Be sure that, realistically, you have the time and resources to meet this goal. (e.g. *I will do the homework in my free time after work Tues.*)

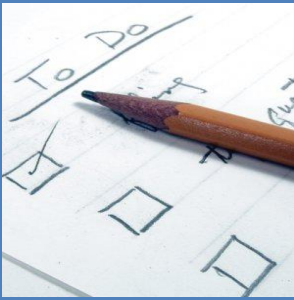
**R**

**RELEVANT** Pursue achievements that you care about. Can you state why the goals matter to you? (e.g., *doing well in French will help me to have fantastic traveling experiences and create more options for my career; Doing well in Statistics will help me to develop necessary problem-solving skills.*)

**T**

**TIME-BOUND** Decide exactly **when** you'll start and finish your goal. (e.g., *I will start on Tuesday night and finish by 11pm so I can watch Family Guy as a reward.*)

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## LAYING OUT LONG-TERM GOALS: A WORKSHEET WIZARD

**1. My long-term goal is:** (Remember, SMART!)

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**2. I want to achieve this goal because it is meaningful to me in these ways:**

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**3. Some short-term goals that will help me to reach this long-term goal are:**

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**4. If a stranger were to read my goal statement (#1 above), he/she would know exactly what I am trying to achieve (Circle YES or NO. Reword statement if the answer is "no"):**

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**5. My goal will require me to have the following skills, abilities, and/or resources:**

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**6. I know my goal is realistic because I have the skills, abilities, and/or resources listed in #5 above (reassess your goal if you don't have items listed in #5):**

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**7. I will know when I have achieved my goal because I will have:**

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**8. What are some obstacles to reaching my goal? What are the benefits and rewards?**

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**Long-Term Goal:**

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**Short-Term Goals:**

1. 

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2. 

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3. 

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**I will begin going for my goal by doing:**

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(Month/day/year)

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(Action)

**I will complete my long-term goal when I have:**

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(Month/day/year)

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(Action)

**I will share my goal with:**

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(Name)