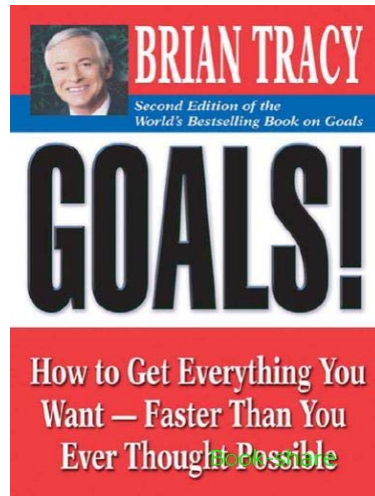


Goals!

How to Get Everything you Want—Faster Than You Ever Thought Possible



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■ The Big Idea

In *Goals!*, Brian Tracy presents a program for establishing goals, making a plan, and achieving success. According to Tracy, effective goals are:

- clear, specific, and written down
- measurable in an objective manner
- time-bound and include deadlines
- challenging
- consistent with your values
- balance the various aspects of life
- reflect a major purpose in life

Setting goals and visualizing them daily can allow anyone to achieve his or her dreams. Tracy contrasts successful people and people who fail to achieve their goals. He observes that successful people:

- Take responsibility for their actions
- Eschew negative emotions, such as fear, self-pity, envy, jealousy, and anger
- Have a vision of the future
- Think of themselves as successful
- See obstacles as challenges
- Never give up

Features of the Book

Reading Time: 2 hours, 288 pages

This inspirational book is intended for anyone wanting to achieve more in life. Each of its 21 chapters represents a step in the process of setting and achieving goals. All chapters end with a numbered list outlining the main points covered in that chapter. The book should be read from beginning to end, although individual chapters can be read separately.

INTRODUCTION

Almost everyone dreams about being successful. Most people, however, are unable to turn their dreams into reality. What prevents most of them from doing so is not unfavorable starting circumstances, such as poverty or lack of intelligence, but their failure to set goals. In *Goals!*, Brian Tracy shows how setting goals gives direction and meaning to life, allows people to take control of their careers and personal lives, and leads almost inevitably to success.

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR DESTINY

Most people fail to realize their full potential because they fail to take responsibility for their destinies. Rather than confronting challenges, they stew in negative feelings, which prevent them from taking positive actions. Key to setting and establishing goals for success is freeing yourself from negative emotions, including fear, self-pity, envy, jealousy, feelings of inferiority, and anger. Ridding yourself of these negative emotions opens the door to positive emotions, such as love, peace, joy, and enthusiasm, which allow people to achieve success.

Four behaviors are typical of people who allow negativity to control them:

1. Justifying. People who are angry need to justify their anger. A person who is laid off, for example, may justify his anger over having been dismissed by decrying the unfairness of the action. Such a person may even take legal action against his employer. In contrast, positive people dwell on the future, not the past. Faced with such a setback, a positive person moves on calmly, clearly focusing on the goal of finding a new job.
2. Rationalizing. Like justifying, rationalizing involves holding someone else responsible for your problems. Rationalizing allows a person to cast herself as the victim. It is another cause of negative emotions. Positive people do not need to rationalize their actions.
3. Being hypersensitive. People who lack a sense of their own worth often derive their self-image entirely from how other people treat them. For this reason, they overreact to criticism and see slights where none were intended. Rather than brush off a comment or an action that negatively affects them, they react with anger, shame, and embarrassment. In contrast, people who are sure of themselves accept other people as they are and avoid feeling hurt by their comments or actions.
4. Blaming. The tendency to blame other people for your own problems is another source of negative emotions. Realizing that no one else is responsible for your problems is an important step toward setting and realizing your goals.

The antidote to all of these forms of negativity is taking responsibility. Once people recognize that they alone are responsible for their situation, they cannot be angry. Acceptance of responsibility dissipates their anger and helps channel their energies into productive outlets. Once people recognize that they are the captain of their own ships, they are able to start setting goals.

CLARIFYING VALUES AND ANALYZING BELIEFS

One of the important ways in which successful people differ from unsuccessful people is that successful people tend to know who they are and what they believe in. Their clarity with regard to their goals, values, and ideals allows them to achieve success where others—including other people endowed with no greater assets or opportunities—fail.

Tracy describes a person's personality as being constructed of five concentric rings. Each ring is associated with an attribute that leads to the next. Values constitute the first ring. Tracy helps readers identify their values by instructing them to:

1. Make a list of the three to five most important values, in order to identify what they really believe in and stand for.
2. List the qualities and values other people associate with them.
3. Identify the most important values guiding their relationships with other people in their lives.
4. Identify their values regarding money and financial success, and think about whether they practice those values daily.
5. Describe their picture of the ideal person.
6. Write an obituary as they would like others to think of them after their death.
7. Identify the changes they could make in their behavior that would help them live in greater harmony with their values.

Values determine beliefs. As Tracy puts it, "You are not what you think you are, but what you think, you are." Beliefs form a person's self-concept, the basic operating system of that person's being. Every thought, feeling, and action a person has—and everything a person achieves in life—can be tied to his or her self-concept.

Beliefs determine expectations. Negative people have negative expectations. Rather than expect success, they expect failure and

disappointment. In contrast, people with positive values believe that they are good people. They therefore expect good things to happen to them. This expectation gives them a positive, future-oriented attitude that endows them with the ability to see the good in people and situations.

Expectations determine attitude. Positive people have a positive attitude because they have positive expectations. They expect things to go their way—and they generally do. People with a positive attitude are people whom others want to do business with, which partly explains why a positive attitude is so important to success. In contrast, the negative expectations that negative people have create negative attitudes. Negative people expect things not to work out. They anticipate failure and defeat—and they are generally right.

Attitude determines the actions a person takes. Positive people are doers. In contrast, negative people have plans that somehow never take shape. They see obstacles where others see opportunities.

SETTING GOALS

Once people identify their values and beliefs, they are ready to think about their goals. Tracy identifies seven main attributes of goals:

1. They must be clear and specific, and they must be written down.
2. They must be measurable in an objective manner. Wanting to “make a lot of money” is a wish; deciding to “earn \$150,000 a year by 2014” is a goal.
3. They must be time-bound and include deadlines and schedules.
4. They must be challenging.
5. They must be consistent with your values and harmonious with one another.
6. They must balance the various aspects of life (career, family, health, spiritualism, community involvement).

7. They must reflect a major purpose in life.

Tracy then outlines 12 steps people need to follow to set and achieve goals:

1. Have a desire. To meet a goal, you need to have a deep desire to achieve it. Working through this step involves thinking deeply about what it is you really want in life.
2. Believe the goal is achievable. To meet a goal, you need to believe you are capable of attaining it. Setting ambitious but reachable goals is critical to developing the self-confidence needed to succeed. Setting goals that are unrealistic or overly ambitious can be self-defeating, as failure to meet them can lead to self-doubt and loss of confidence. In contrast, setting a goal that is reasonable can be motivating.
3. Write the goal down. According to Tracy, a goal that is not written down is not a goal. He ascribes almost a mystical importance to the act of writing down a goal, which he describes as a “psychoneuromotor activity.” Writing down goals combines visual, auditory, and kinesthetic senses in a way that imprints the goals on the subconscious. Tracy recommends writing and rewriting 10–15 goals every day, month after month. In order to imbue the subconscious with the goals, he encourages readers to state the goals as if they have already been achieved. This means that instead of writing “I want to be worth \$1.5 million by 2015,” a goal-setter should write “I am worth \$1.5 million.” Doing so habituates the subconscious and superconscious (Tracy’s term for the superego) to thinking like a winner. In order to establish the notion of responsibility over your destiny, Tracy encourages goal-setters to begin all goals with the word “I.” He urges readers to write the goals on 3 x 5 cards and read them at least twice a day—once first thing in the morning before leaving for work and once just before going to bed at night.
4. Determine your starting point. Analyzing where you stand with respect to a goal is critical to goal setting. The goal of earning \$20,000 a month within the next 12 months is not realistic for someone with an annual salary of \$30,000. Failure to take realistic stock of your starting point can lead to unrealistic goals.
5. Determine why you want a particular goal. Having a multitude of reasons for attaining a particular goal makes achievement of the goal more likely. It intensifies the desire to meet the goal and increases your sense that

the goal can be attained. For example, a person whose goal is to get out of debt might list the emotional relief, the confidence, the peace of mind, and the ability to buy things that would come from achieving the goal of being debt free.

6. Set a deadline. Breaking a large goal down into smaller goals can help achieve the goal. Setting short-term, medium-term, and long-term goals is critical.

7. Identify obstacles. Rather than blame failure on other people or circumstances, successful people pinpoint obstacles to success in order to find ways around them. In particular, they avoid two of the most important obstacles to success—fear and doubt—from bogging them down.

8. Determine the additional knowledge and skills you need. Writing down the skills needed and then developing those skills can change your life. People who want to succeed must be willing to upgrade their skills, their wardrobe, and their attitudes in order to meet their goals. “Committing to excellence” is a hallmark of people who are successful.

9. Determine the people whose help you need. In both life and business, relationships are key: colleagues, bosses, suppliers, customers, bankers, family members, and other people may play vital roles in your success. Developing good relationships with all of the important people in your personal and professional life is key to success.

10. Make a plan. Creating and recording a sequenced, prioritized plan will remind you of all of the activities you need to engage in to meet your goal.

11. Visualize your goal every day. Picturing what your life would be like if you achieved your goal is a first step toward improving your life. Visualization triggers the “Law of Attraction” and the “Law of Correspondence.” The Law of Attraction refers to the notion that thinking about changed circumstances draws in the people, circumstances, and resources needed to achieve your goals. The Law of Correspondence refers to the idea that performance is tied to your self-image. Mentally visualizing images eventually affects what happens in the real world. Imagining what it would be like to have achieved your goal can motivate and inspire you to actually achieve the goal. Thinking about how it would feel to meet the goal also pushes the goal deeper and deeper into your subconscious and

superconscious mind. Tracy provides detailed guidance on how often, how long, how clearly, and how intensely people should visualize their goals.

12. Never give up. Successful people do not allow setbacks or obstacles to do more than temporarily slow their progress. Successful people determine in advance that they will never give up until the goal is met. They recognize that the only limitations on what they can achieve lie in their own minds.

According to Tracy, people who set goals in this fashion become more positive and more effective. As a result, their self-esteem and self-confidence improve. They become energized and enthusiastic. Just setting goals makes it easier to meet them.

WHY GOALS MATTER

People tend to become what they think about most of the time. Successful people often report that they think about what they want and how to achieve it most of the time. In contrast, people who are not successful tend to think about what they do not want most of the time. They complain about their current reality rather than setting a goal that will help them achieve their dream. They live life in a fog, not knowing which direction to follow.

According to Tracy, a cybernetic mechanism deep within the mind allows people to achieve their goals in much the way a homing pigeon finds its way home. This automatic goal-achieving mechanism works no matter what your goals are. The key, then, is to set goals that will translate into success.

Although setting goals is critical, most people fail to accomplish this task. Even graduates of Harvard Business School—men and women selected and trained to seek and achieve success—do not set formal goals, as a study cited in *What They Don't Teach You at Harvard Business School* notes. In 1979, graduates of Harvard Business School were asked, "Have you set clear, written goals for your future and made plans to accomplish them?" Surprisingly, a mere 13 percent of respondents had set goals—and just 3 percent had written them down. The same respondents were interviewed 10 years later. The results were extraordinary: the 13 percent of respondents who reported having goals in 1979 were earning twice as much as their classmates who reported not having specific goals. Even more

amazingly, the 3 percent of graduates who had written their goals down were earning 10 times as much as the average for the rest of the class. These astonishing findings suggest that having clear, focused goals is associated with meeting those goals.

Despite the importance of having goals, most people fail to set them. They fail to do so for four main reasons:

1. They think goals are not important
2. They do not know how to set goals
3. They fear failing to meet their goals
4. They fear being rejected

CREATING YOUR OWN FUTURE

One of the most important ways in which leaders differ from nonleaders is that leaders have vision. Leaders think about the future and what they want to accomplish. In contrast, people who are not leaders think about the present and the past, often dwelling on the problems that have thwarted their success.

Adopting a “future orientation” helps people succeed. Tracy recommends engaging in an idealization exercise that involves fantasizing about how your life would look in five years in a perfect world. Engaging in “blue-sky” thinking is very useful because it helps people identify what would have to happen for the blue-sky scenario to materialize. Tracy recommends engaging in blue-sky thinking not only regarding your career but also your financial life, family, health, and social and community involvement.

Creating an exciting vision for your future stimulates and motivates; it enables people to take daily actions to turn their vision into a reality.

ACTIVATING THE SUPERCONSCIOUS MIND

For thousands of years, only mystics and sages understood the functioning of the superconscious mind—what Sigmund Freud called the “superego” and Alfred Adler called the “collective unconscious.” Great people use their superconscious mind to solve problems and make major breakthroughs. Great artists use this part of their mind to create great works of art.

According to Tracy, the most important mental law ever discovered is the Law of Superconscious Activity, which states that “Any thought, plan, goal, or idea held continuously in the conscious mind must inevitably be brought into reality by the superconscious mind.” He interprets this “law” to mean that people who can access their superconscious mind can achieve whatever they want to achieve; they are limited only by the bounds of their imagination.

People can activate their superconscious mind by formulating and writing down clear specific goals and then regularly visualizing having achieved them. Tracy believes that the more you harnesses the superconscious mind, the more you benefits from two interrelated phenomena: serendipity and synchronicity. Serendipity is the process of making positive discoveries along the road of life. Unexpected events and experiences that fall at exactly the right moment are serendipitous occasions. Synchronicity refers to the relationship between two simultaneous events that appear unrelated but in fact contribute to meeting a goal. Uncannily, the more you access the superconscious mind, the more likely serendipitous and synchronous events are likely to occur, and the more likely you are to achieve your goals.

Once the superconscious mind is stimulated, it can generate inspiration. Ideas generated by the superconscious mind share the following qualities:

- They provide all the answers to achieving a goal. They feel natural and perfectly suited to the situation.
- They induce a feeling of exhilaration. People who experience these bursts of inspiration should act on them immediately.

The superconscious mind can be stimulated in two ways. The first way is to concentrate intensely on achieving a goal. The second way is to relax completely. Tracy recommends using both methods. Specific ways of activating the superconscious mind include the following:

- Think about a time when your superconscious mind helped you solve a problem. Then think about how you might be able to repeat this experience.
- Visualize your most important goal. As you think about it, let yourself feel 100 percent confident that you can achieve it.
- Engage in daily meditation, in which your mind floats from thought to thought. Wait patiently for the right answer to the right question to appear.
- Completely trust and act on ideas that emerge from the superconscious mind.
- Understand that the right solution will eventually emerge from your superconscious mind.

OVERCOMING FEAR

Fear is one of the greatest obstacles to success. Overcoming it requires developing the habit of courage—the “foremost of the virtues,” according to Winston Churchill, “for upon it all others depend.” Developing the habit of courage imbues people with self-confidence. It enables them to set goals they otherwise would be afraid even to think about.

Fear, according to Tracy, stems from childhood conditioning, usually in the form of destructive criticism from parents. Such criticism creates fear of failure and fear of rejection. Both fears paralyze people from taking constructive actions that can help them succeed.

Fortunately, fear can be overcome. Fear that is caused by ignorance can be overcome by knowledge and experience. Fear that is caused by illness or fatigue can be overcome by improved health or a good night's sleep. Being relaxed can go a long way toward making a person feel confident.

Successful people confront their fears. By doing so, they overcome them and build their self-confidence and self-esteem. In contrast, unsuccessful people let their fears dominate them. Fear erodes their self-confidence and diminishes their self-esteem, dooming them to failure or underachievement.

Identifying your fears represents the first step toward conquering them. Tracy suggests that people list all of their fears—everything that causes them anxiety—on a piece of paper and prioritize them. He then recommends writing answers to the following questions about the number one fear on the list:

- How does this fear hold me back in life?
- How does this fear help me, or how has it helped me in the past?
- What would be my payoff from eliminating this fear?

THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-DISCIPLINE AND PERSISTENCE

Neither self-help books nor advice from successful people can substitute for what Tracy believes is the single most important key to achieving success: self-discipline. People who want to achieve goals must continuously take actions that move them toward success; they must be persistent in disciplining themselves to do what needs to be done in order to succeed.

Self-discipline is critical at many stages of setting and achieving goals: it is needed to set goals; it is needed to revise your plans for achieving your goals as new information becomes available; and it is needed to concentrate on meeting the goals—by investing in yourself professionally, delaying gratification, and keeping yourself from wandering from the path of success.

Persistence is particularly critical when setbacks occur. Persistence under such circumstances increases self-esteem and builds resolve. Tracy is inspired by the words of Calvin Coolidge, who wrote, “Press on. Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education alone will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.” He cites a host of successful men—from Thomas Edison and John D. Rockefeller to B. C. Forbes, Conrad Hilton, and H. Ross Perot—who attest to the critical importance of the ability to stay in the game when others walk away.

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