



**If you can imagine it, You can achieve it. If you can dream it, you can become it.**

A goal is a statement in writing with a firm date fixed to it, describing a change, gain or achievement. It's something you'd like to do or be. Goals relate to many different areas of life: school, career, family, health. Your goals must be worthwhile and exciting enough to challenge you until the end. They must also be realistic and organised into manageable tasks, with deadlines.

**There's no point in dreaming of being a millionaire if you're not prepared to put in the work to achieve it!**

Goal setting is the starting point for all meaningful achievement. It's the process required to determine your priorities, get organised, make decisions and turn your dreams into reality. After all, successful companies spend a lot of time, money and effort determining visions, missions, strategies and action plans. Why should this be any different for individuals?

It's important to make short-term and long-term goals. Short-term goals are something you aim for soon. Long-term goals are further away: overall future goals. For instance, if you get 50% for English but would eventually like to achieve 70%, the 70% is a long-term goal. But because it's useful to have a way of getting there, you could say, "I'd like 60% for next week's test". The 60% is a short-term goal.

Serious goal-setters know that there's immense power in writing down goals. Writing helps to crystallise (give shape to) your ideas. Always use positive wording when putting your goals to paper. And place them where they'll be seen often (fridge, mirror, desk)!

### Where Do I Start?

1. Write down a personal mission statement: a sentence or two that sums up what you want to be, what you want to do and what you want to have people remember about you. Ask yourself, "What am I passionate about?", "What makes my life worth living?" and "What do I desire most strongly?". Don't expect writing your mission statement to be an easy task - it may take several drafts before you're satisfied. Below is an example.

**I want to achieve career success as a high-powered businessperson in the media industry. I want to have a happy, healthy and secure family with the resources to enjoy life and experience it to the fullest! I want to be a stimulated and stimulating person.**

The most important use you can find for a personal mission statement is during the jobhunting process. It'll prevent you from making random life changes or applying for any job just to be employed. In interview situations, you'll be able to express yourself with power and grace, because you'll know who you are and what you want to achieve. Just as organisations rely on their vision and mission statements to guide them, so can you!

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2. Then, ask yourself what you'll need to do to make your personal mission come true. These are your goals. Remember to keep your goals "bite-size". Not crumbs. Not mouthfuls. Just right!
3. Write down one or two goals for each area in your life that needs special attention. From there, create an action plan stating how you're going to achieve these goals. You can make copies of this table for any other goals you want to achieve.
4. Work your goals into your life. Build your objectives into your daily, weekly and monthly routine – so they become things you do regularly without thinking about it! When are you going to work out a budget to manage your money (see Budget and Save)? When are you going to do some exercise – and at what time of day? What kind of exercise will it be?

## Action Plan

GOAL:	Obtain a BCom degree to become an accountant by April 2011 (study 2008 – 2010)			
PRIORITY	ACTIONS	RESOURCES	START	END
3	Find out which universities offer a BCom	Career publications/ University websites/ Guidance teacher	29/6/2007	30/6/2007
2	Determine university admission criteria for BCom	Guidance teacher/university	28/6/2007	28/6/2007
1	Spend 2 days at office of uncle who is accountant to make sure this is what I really want to do.	Uncle's permission Money to get to his office and back for 2 days	1/6/2007 (two days during school holidays)	30/6/2007
3	Make a list of people or institutions to fund my studies	Pen and paper	1/7/2007	1/7/2007
4	Determine costs for 3-year BCom degree	Universities - admission departments Telephone/Cell phone to make call	1/7/2007	1/7/2007
5	Determine which of possible options agree to fund my studies (bursaries, loans, parents, family member)	Parents Bank Organisations that employ accountants	2/7/2007	2/8/2007
7	Send application for admission to BCom to 3 universities of my choice	Completed forms Envelopes Postage Curriculum Vitae	1/9/2007	1/9/2007
6	Determine whether I have the correct subjects and M-score in Matric to meet the university admission criteria	List of admission requirements Latest results for each of my subjects Method for working out M-score Pen and paper	3/8/2007	3/8/2007

### Make sure that each of your goals is: SMART

- Specific – How clear are your objectives? If you give them to a friend to read, do they know exactly what you want to achieve?
- Measurable – How will you know when you've achieved your goals? Have they been written in such away that you can eventually tick them off when they're 'done'?

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- Action-orientated – Can you write all the actions you need to take in a ‘to-do’ list by looking at your goal statement?
  - Related – What long-term mission will your goals help you to achieve? Or will they throw everything out of balance?
  - Time-bound – What is your deadline? Or have you given yourself a mental escape route by leaving out a due date?
5. Focus on your most important tasks when you feel most fresh and energetic. Leave routine tasks for times of relatively low energy.
  6. Finally, plan your year to ensure that all your objectives for that year are listed and fitted into your schedule. Take time every 3 months to identify changing circumstances and new opportunities and to review your plans.
  7. Remember to be flexible – even the best-laid plans can go wrong. There are 3 things you can do if your plans go wrong: try again, change your plan or change your goal!

**Compare all the things you have to do to stones. Important tasks are like large rocks; trivial (minor) tasks are like pebbles. If you want to fill a wheelbarrow with stones, you should place the large rocks first so you’ll still have room for the pebbles in between. If you fill the wheelbarrow with pebbles first, you’ll have little room left for the large rocks afterwards. Likewise, if you fill your life with small tasks, you’ll probably leave the large important tasks out!**

### Obstacles along

the way Everybody has hopes and dreams, but not everybody makes them a reality. What stops them?

- Some people lose sight of their visions as they get caught up in everyday life.
- Some people forget to plan. Always break your mission statement down into ‘do-able’ SMART goals.
- Some people set themselves unrealistic goals. Aim as high as you can but stay within the bounds of reality.
- Some people try to achieve the goals others have set for them.
- Some people are negative and live their lives by, “I can’t do that!”. So they don’t.

### NOTE

**Remember: To have something you’ve never had, you have to be prepared to do something you’ve never done.**

Enjoy the satisfaction of your success. When you’ve achieved a goal, take the time to reflect on what you’ve done. Pat yourself on the back. With your new confidence and self-belief, you’ll be able to set higher and more challenging goals!

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