

---

## **Answers to your burning Questions on Goal-setting**

*By Zafar H, Principal Training Facilitator, Team Vision*

In our series on Goal-setting, let us look at some common questions that are burning in our mind.

1<sup>st</sup> Rule to Goal-setting is to SET the Goal and Writing it down. But so often we get distracted by our daily activities, many of us don't get to setting goals. We have too many questions in our mind without answers. Let us attempt to answer some of those questions.

### **1. Must all goals be believable?**

You must believe that it is at least possible for *YOU* to achieve the goal or you will not be motivated to try. More importantly, it is *YOU* who must believe, not others. Also, just because you should believe that the goal is *possible* does not mean that you must expect it to be *easy* or even *probable*.

### **2. Must all goals be measurable and specific?**

Your goals should be measurable and specific enough for you to know clearly whether they have been completed yet or not. You may set your goal as reduce 5 kg in 10 weeks time. That will work out to 1 kg every 2 weeks and you can measure it and ensure whether you are on track. In Team Vision's training on Goal-setting, we use the Binary Goal-Setting method to achieve this.

### **3. How do I know if my goal is realistic?**

A goal is realistic if *YOU* stand a reasonably good chance of accomplishing it, given enough time and effort—and indeed, mountains can be moved if given enough time and effort. "Good odds" is a subjective measure, but one that you have most control over when success or failure depends on what *you* do, as opposed to what other people must do for you to achieve or random events or goals like become an astronaut" or "to win the lottery".

The majority of the goals you set should be very realistic or you risk becoming frustrated if you do not accomplish any of them. However, there is nothing wrong with attempting things that defy the odds or that you expect to be extremely difficult. Such goals require courage, defined here as "attempting something even though you might not succeed."

Almost any goal, no matter how difficult, can be made easier by breaking it down into several smaller goals, to be tackled one at a time. The completion of so-called "baby steps" is one of the best ways to build confidence, momentum, and a track record of performance.

And it's important to review your goals regularly. Ask yourself, "Will completing these steps lead to completion of the goal?" If not, then modify the obstacles, tasks, or due dates until a viable plan exists.

#### 4. What if my goals depend on other people or things out of my control?

If you choose to set a goal in which the outcome is dependent on the actions of somebody else, acknowledge now that, through no fault of your own, you may not reach that goal. For example, if your goal is "To make my 7 year old son read a book by the end of the month" is largely dependent on your son's cooperation. That doesn't mean it's not a good or worthy goal, it simply requires a more flexible frame of mind—you can't force **someone else** to adhere to **your** plan.

Matters of chance or competition are similar. Winning a game, a lottery, a contest, a pageant, or admission to a particularly selective school may be worthy of your efforts and a good goal. But again, accept that the outcome, though **influenced** by your actions, is not entirely in your control.

If you pursue one or more goals like this, be sure to set and pursue several other goals in which you are entirely in control of the outcome. Your life shouldn't be left too much to chance—take control of as much as you possibly can. Wherever possible, aim to accomplish tasks that tilt the odds in your favour.

#### 5. How do I deal with fear of failure in achieving my goal?

Fear of failure is a genuinely scary thing for many people, and often the main reason that individuals do not attempt the things they would like to accomplish. But we need to reset our mindset to accept - the only *true* failure is failure to make the attempt. If you don't try, you gain nothing, and life is too short a thing to waste.

On the other hand, if you do try but don't succeed, then it's a learning experience for which you are probably a better person, with more knowledge and skill than before—all the better equipped for the next attempt. And what if you try and only partially succeed; you still had **more** success than you had before.

There is this story of a man, who was hardly getting by, wanted to earn a Million dollars in a year. At the end of that year he realized he had not reached the target. He was short by about \$50,000. Has he failed? Of course not! Because the man had made \$950,000 in that year! And that man is Jack L Canfield – the co-author of Chicken Soup for the Soul series.

The world is not always black-and-white. Shades of gray often do exist and partial success is still success.

#### 6. How do I deal when I actually fail in my goal?

##### How do I deal with *actual* failure?

This is important: "**Failure**" only occurs when you fail to try in the first place or when you give up on a goal you want to achieve without having first given it your all.

Missed datelines are not failures. Setbacks are not failures. Unexpected challenges or changing priorities are not failures, in fact, they're quite normal. Feeling discouraged doesn't mean you failed.

**You can only fail if you quit, and there's an easy solution to that: Keep going or start again.**

So long as you are working toward your goal and following a plan, you haven't failed. If you stop, just start back up again. And remember, every step forward, every single task you check off as completed is a small accomplishment unto itself. Focus on just taking that next baby step, then the next, then the next. If the tasks are too difficult, then break them down into absurdly simple tasks, ones that you're guaranteed to complete. It may seem ridiculous to break down something as simple as clearing your office drawer into forty individual tasks, but in doing so, you can build momentum with each task checked off. It's a bit like playing a game with yourself, but it really works.