



7 Steps for Setting and Reaching Goals

1. **Stay focused.** It is easy to get bogged down in the demands and details of the day and lose sight of your larger goals. Appreciating and focusing on your larger goals turn ordinary activities into achievements, and every effort into an adventure and learning experience. By embracing the fundamental principles of successful living you will learn to eliminate hindrances to achieving your most important goals.

2. **Set realistic expectations.** The key to staying motivated is setting realistic expectations. Evaluate your previous experience and current situation. What is a realistic, reachable goal for you in the area you are considering? Achieving a small goal is more valuable than brooding over impossible expectations. Dreams can become realities or nightmares depending on the size of the steps! Remember—it's a cinch by the inch, but it's hard by the yard and a trial by the mile! Little steps lead to big victories.

3. **Expect challenges.** We can turn our mistakes into victories if we learn from them, become more vigilant, adopt new strategies for success, and thereby grow in wisdom. Successful people are not mistake-free; they just don't give up when things go wrong. Mistakes can be the greatest stepping stones to achieving your goals if you refuse to be defeated by them.

4. Maintain a positive attitude. Check those negative thoughts! To a large extent, we have the ability to choose how we will think and feel about a situation. Make the choice to focus on solutions rather than problems. Look at difficulties as opportunities for gaining strength to meet challenges. Find a valuable lesson in every challenge. Most important, cultivate thankfulness, optimism, and trust in God in the situations you can't change. If you are naturally negative, give yourself time to grow in this area, but keep a record of your progress!

5. Seek support and accept responsibility. Spending time and forming relationships with people who have positive life skills is one of the best ways to learn new habits and ways of thinking. We become what we surround ourselves with. Social ties create mutual accountability and give us the opportunity to demonstrate and build responsibility and consistency into our lives. The principles of support, accountability, and responsibility enable us to develop deep and meaningful relationships with others.

6. Practice new choices. Extreme makeovers may work on TV home remodeling programs, but remodeling a life is a process that takes place over time. Fast is fragile, but slow is steady, stable, and comes to maturity over time. It is the very slow, steady process of repeatedly making positive choices that builds mind, body, and spirit. Never underestimate the power of little, daily, positive choices in overcoming big, bad habits. Repetition and patience are the keys to crafting a healthful lifestyle.

7. Connect. Circumstances alone cannot change the heart. The best of intentions can plunge without the preserving power of prayer. God has given us invaluable principles for building body, mind, and spirit in His Word, the Bible. But recovery of broken habits, restoration of health, and renewal of hope and happiness come through prayer. God is personally interested in your healing, growth, and progress, and He will guide, sustain, and empower all who come to Him in prayer.

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