

Do You Make These Mistakes In Goal-Setting?

By Mindy Tyson McHorse

Nobody signs up for a life of long hours and even longer commutes. We get caught up in what we're told to want — things like a high salary and a house in the suburbs.

Most of us certainly weren't raised to think we could live *the writer's life* with the potential to achieve anything we want.

Unfortunately, the all-too-common stress-ridden lifestyle can keep you from achieving any big goals. Not only that, it can also keep you from ever wanting to *make* big goals.

Why? Because there's no sense in making them if you don't know how to see them through ... right?

Wrong. Here's why.

Mistake #1 in Goal-Setting: Never Making a Goal

When you're in a job you hate, you tend to focus on all the things you don't want, like long hours and a capped salary.

It's hard to be optimistic when you're not satisfied with your situation. It's even harder to think about what you want instead.

Your default answer to the "What do you want?" question becomes simply, "Not this!"

But by not visualizing what you'd like in place of your current circumstance, you unconsciously lock yourself into your bum situation.

Finding a way out starts with thinking your way out: make a big, exciting goal. From there, work backwards and break it down incrementally. Eventually, you'll find a way to achieve it while at the same time rescuing yourself from what you don't want.

For example, instead of brooding over a bad work situation — "I hate having to work forty hours a week at a job where I can only earn \$50K!"

Focus instead on what you want — "I'd like to live *the writer's life* and work part-time, earning at least \$100,000."

Mistake #2 in Goal-Setting: Focusing on Material Wealth

Most people say they'd like to be wealthy, but all they have in mind is a big house and a nice car.

Great prosperity is a different story. It's not something that requires you to sacrifice your pride.

Don't get me wrong — I'd love a bottomless pocketbook just like anybody else. Beachfront vacations and shopping sprees to Paris would be awesome.

But after years and years of that, your satisfaction would start to wane.

When thinking about goals, move beyond the temptation to be rich and famous. Think about what would really give you pleasure in life, like starting a youth camp or creating your own art.

After all, no matter how much money you have, you still have to spend it on something. Deciding what that will be is the real question to answer.

Mistake #3 in Goal-Setting: Not Personalizing Your Goals

It's fine — healthy even — to have the same goals as others. It's even very practical to make goals in tandem with your spouse or someone close to you in life.

Regardless, you still need goals that are all your own — goals that represent who *you* are and what *you* want — not what anybody else wants or needs or thinks.

Set aside some brainstorming time to come up with your personal goals. Start by making a list of every word you can think of to describe yourself. Be assertive and list every good trait you have. Don't worry — nobody else needs to see the list (unless you want them to).

You might even ask other people, like your parents, siblings, or friends, how they would describe you. Chances are good they'll point out an attribute you didn't think of.

Once you know your own personal strengths, it's easier to start thinking about your future and how you want to shape it.

Mistake #4 in Goal-Setting: Stopping Short

One major reason we don't realize a lot of our goals is because we get lazy. I'm not even talking about actually *going after* your goals — I'm talking about coming up with them in the first place!

When brainstorming your goals, make a list of at least 100 things you want to do, be, or have in life.

Consider all possibilities. Think about every wish and dream you've ever had for yourself. Try breaking them up into categories, like the following:

1. Financial: income, debt, net worth, financial freedom, etc.
2. Career
3. Hobbies: recreation and fun
4. Health and fitness
5. Relationships: family and friends
6. Personal development and growth
7. Community: contribution to society

The first 30 will probably be a snap. You'll have to push yourself to get to 80. And the last 20 will get tricky, but that's also usually where you'll discover your deepest desires.

So go for it and don't stop short. This is important work. It's also a way to make sure you address all the vital areas of your life. You don't want to focus on just one area and let another fall by the wayside, such as growing your net worth while letting your health deteriorate.

Plus, a long list of potential goals means you'll have a steady stream of motivation. Once you achieve one goal, you can move seamlessly on to tackle the next. This is especially true if you're living *the writer's life* since you can adjust your schedule and income as necessary.

Mistake #5 in Goal-Setting: Seeing Money as an Evil

It's okay to want things money can buy — just focus on what those things will mean to you and not how they'll make you look to other people.

In other words, if your dream is to live in a big, beautiful house on a lot of acreage, is that because you want other people to admire you? Or is it because you want plenty of space to host friends and family, or to have a quiet, beautiful space to do your art or write?

The former option is not a healthy goal because it's not about you. The latter one is.

Don't treat money as an evil. Instead, look at it as a means to true satisfaction.

Mistake #6 in Goal-Setting: Not Telling Anybody About Your Goals

This one is as simple as it sounds. If you keep your goals secret, you're less likely to achieve them because nobody holds you to them. You can forget them. Pretend you never had them. Nobody will know whether you fail or not.

But if you tell someone, you're held accountable. That one thing — accountability — is enough to get anyone moving in the right direction to meet their goals head-on.

Final Goal-Setting Guidelines

In the end, healthy goal-setting really comes down to following these rules:

- Think big — don't stop short of an idea because it feels impossible right now
- Never settle for less than what you want, even if you're not sure you deserve it
- Go for your own dreams — not someone else's
- Focus on what you want, not what you don't want

You deserve to have the best life you possibly can. Just remember, it all begins with an idea — your idea, which is your ticket to a satisfying, memorable life.

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2 Responses to "Do You Make These Mistakes In Goal-Setting?"

Have you had some kind of revelation or have you found an inspiring coach?

Lee Schwarz Black Lion Marketing – over a year ago

I like what I'm reading about goals and discipline. We can all use more of that. What if instead of calling it a longterm "goal" (it makes me think of a soccer goal, or a football goal), we were to use the word, "Intention". It's been my experience that Intention is far more powerful than longterm goal-setting. A goal on paper is the grand expectation for success we set for ourselves, which we sometimes fall short of, or fail to reach. And you know what happens to many of us when we fail to reach a grand goal. We sometimes beat ourselves up and feel eternally guilty.

There is a certain finality about "goal" that when not reached, can easily discourage even the best of us. But when we begin to think of goal in terms of Intention, by simply believing we not only deserve the freedom from our 9-5 menial jobs to be full-time freelance writers, but we already ARE full-time freelance writers waiting to happen, a shift takes place. Maybe I'm getting too philos

Guest (Kay) – over a year ago

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American Writers & Artists Institute

220 George Bush Blvd, Suite D

Delray Beach, FL 33444

(561) 278-5557 or (866) 879-2924