

10 Steps to Becoming a Goal Achiever

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Be bigger than your excuses and your critics explains Anel Martin



It is that time of the year when we make New Year's Resolutions or, better yet, set goals. But let's be honest; many of us set the same goals year in and year out and don't achieve them. We may even be further behind than the year before. Research has proven that most of us have abandoned our goals or resolutions as early as February.

Why?

In my personal experience, I think we set goals that feel like a punishment. A common example of this "punishment type" goal is losing weight. We also lack the discipline to follow through, and often we get busy and simply lose focus.

As a results-based coach, a former assistant and a person who strives to achieve my own goals I have discovered a few factors that have contributed to attaining objectives.

Here are my top tips for becoming a goal achiever:

1. Set goals that are emotional and important to you

Neuroscientists have found that goals that are tied to strong (positive) emotions are easier to achieve. This makes complete sense to me. There is a big difference between want and need. So instead of saying I want to lose weight, you can reframe the goal into being fit and healthy enough to jump on the trampoline with your children. That is tied to a joyful emotion instead of a punishment or a comparison to others.

2. Don't set too many goals (your brain likes to work in threes)

We have all been told that goals should be S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely) and I agree wholeheartedly. We also need to be aware that setting too many goals will only split focus.

In Results Based Coaching we focus on three goals only. This gives you stretch but it is still realistic and achievable.

3. Focus on goals that, if you achieve them in the next six months, would have a significant impact on your life

We need to get focused and decide what to work on. For many of us this is the hard part. Look at your life. Make a list of your significant roles. Which of these areas require work? As mentioned above, don't spread yourself too thin. Pick the items that will create the biggest impact and momentum in your life during the next six months. You are unlikely to achieve your goals in those six months but that should be your window. At the six-month mark analyse your results and decide if your goals are still aligned with your current reality. Have you made progress? Do you still want these things? Has something more important popped up? Life is not static, and your goals should not

be either. If you have picked the correct three goals it should be easy to keep focussed because they are important, and they matter!

4. Set ambitious goals: by pushing your limits you achieve more and grow in confidence

The old saying goes "Aim for the moon, even if you miss you will be among the stars". It is the same with goals. They should challenge you and they should inspire you! Your brain will respond fearfully to anything which is outside of your normal routine or breaks your autopilot mode. In ancient times this impulse kept us safe, but in today's world it keeps us in our comfort zone. This is a place where we stop growing and become bored. If your goal does not make you feel challenged, you need to go back and set a bigger goal.

5. Goals need to be written or documented in some way

It is a fact that goals that are documented and shared are more likely to be achieved. Writing down goals is the first step of bringing them out of your head and into reality. Talk to people about your goals; this helps you to get serious and focused. Sometimes people can help you or provide you with a piece of the puzzle that you may need. If your goal simply stays in your head it will remain a dream. When you put it on paper it will become a plan. Taking the time to document your aims for this year will serve you well.

6. What gets scheduled, gets done

Like any project, you need to schedule the respective milestones; the steps and the dates by when you want to have completed each part of the goal. And like a project plan you need to check in regularly to ensure that you are on track to achieve or to make the required course corrections. It is time to find your discipline and do the work!

7. Experience the achievement of your goal in your mind: how will it feel to have it,

achieve it or create it. Make sure you enjoy this "movie in your mind" as your brain will then try to find ways to make it a reality

By creating the contrast between what is, and what we really want, in our minds (in a very powerful, emotional and tangible way) our brains experience cognitive dissonance. Your brain cannot differentiate between the "mind movie" and reality, so it experiences this process as real. When you come back to reality your brain actively tries to attain the "mind movie state". I know some of you don't believe me but here is an example some of you may have experienced already:

You want to buy a specific model and colour of car and suddenly it seems that they are everywhere. Did everyone suddenly buy this car or is your brain more attentive? Is your brain finding them and pointing them out to you? By playing the movie as often as possible, your brain will do the same thing with your goals: it will notice people, things, places and resources you would not have noticed otherwise. Your brain is powerful, so use it! This process of playing the movie should have as much detail as possible and you should feel and see yourself in the moment in a powerful way. Ask yourself what you hear, see, smell, feel and taste, who is with you, what are you wearing? Using your senses and imagination will help you create and access the emotion. Do not dwell on the negatives of the current situation.

8. Have a visible reminder of your goal in your car, office, make-up mirror (something you see daily to ensure you keep the goal on your radar)

It can be as simple as a sticker, a Post-It note or an image of the thing you are trying to achieve. Your brain allocates approximately 40% of its available resources to the visual world. Use this to keep your goal front of mind. If you have the time and inclination I would encourage you to create a vision board either on paper or in PowerPoint - and use it! This supports your "mind movie" of the ideal state and will

increase your excitement and motivation to achieve your goals. The image for this article is my visual reminder.

9. Work on your goal at least once a week

You must do something about your goals every week. If not, you will most probably stall on them by March. It can be as small as a phone call or a bit of research on the internet. But you need to commit to this and be disciplined on this. The old African proverb says, "How do you eat an elephant, the answer, one bite at a time." How do you change things? One good decision at a time.

You will find that by taking small steps towards what you really want to achieve you will grow in confidence, excitement and momentum. Make it a priority! If it is important you will find a way; if not, you will find an excuse!

10. Do your homework

There is nothing new in this world; someone has already done it, so what can you learn to make it easier for yourself? There are blogs, books, videos and other resources available to you. You don't need to struggle. Chances are that someone has already figured it out and can explain the process to you step by step. Use these resources to reach your goals more easily.

On a final note I want to say that when you start by saying "I don't have the money", "I am too old/young" (or whatever other barrier you are holding up over this goal) you will never achieve it. This process starts in your mind. You need to see yourself as competent and worthy. You need to find your discipline and divorce yourself from the negative dialogue in your head and in the world around you. Be bigger than your excuses and your critics.

I really want you to look back on this year as the year when everything changed for the better. You have the power to make it so! So, go and achieve those goals!

about the author



Anel Martin is a multi-award winning ex-Personal Assistant who now works as a full time trainer. She has extensive experience in the profession and is widely considered an industry expert. Anel is also one of the Directors of the Isipho Admin Bursary (www.isiphoadmin.org.za) and currently involved in the World Administrator Summit 2018. She is the author of *The Executive Secretary Guide to Building a Powerful Personal Brand*, available now on Amazon. Anel will be speaking at Executive Secretary LIVE in Johannesburg, September 2018. For full details and to book please visit www.executivesecretarylives.com

