



Most Common Mistakes People Make When Setting Goals

Mistake 1: Setting Unrealistic Goals

When you're exploring possible goals, you need to unleash your imagination and ambition, put your reservations aside, and dream big dreams. However, once you've decided on a goal, make sure that it is realistic, and that you can actually achieve it in the time frame that you have set for yourself.

Try This

To set realistic goals, use SMART Goal Setting strategies: make sure that your goals are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

Mistake 2: Focusing on Too Few Areas

Many people focus solely on their work when they set goals. However, you can't neglect activities that bring you joy. Goals like writing a book, competing in an adventure race, or starting a home garden might also be incredibly important for your happiness and well-being.

Try This

So, when you set your goals, make sure that you strike the right balance between different areas of your life. And remember that "balance" is different for everyone – use the Wheel of Life tool to understand which areas of your life you need to focus on most.

Mistake 3: Underestimating Completion Time

If you don't estimate goal completion time accurately, it can be discouraging when things take longer to achieve than you think they should. This can cause you to give up.

Try This

So, use Action Programs and effective scheduling strategies when planning your goals. And always pad your timelines to account for delays and setbacks. If you add extra time into your estimate, you'll feel less pressure to rush and finish by a certain date.

Mistake 4: Not Appreciating Failure

No matter how hard you work, you will fail to achieve goals from time to time. We've all been there, and it isn't fun! However, your failures are what ultimately determine your character. They also contain lessons that can change your life for the best, if you have the courage to learn from them.

Try This

So don't be too upset if you fail to achieve your goals – just take note of where you went wrong and use that knowledge to reach your goals next time around.

Mistake 5: Setting "Other People's Goals"

Some people – family, friends, or even your boss – may want to influence the goals you set. Perhaps they feel that they know what's best for you, or maybe they want you to take a certain path or do certain things. Clearly, it's important that you have good relationships with these people, and you need to do what your boss asks, within reason.

Try This

However, your goals need to be your own – not anybody else's. So be politely assertive, and do what you want to do!

Mistake 6: Not Reviewing Progress

It takes time to accomplish goals. And sometimes it can feel that you aren't making much progress. This is why it's important to take stock of everything that you've accomplished on a regular basis. Set small sub-goals, celebrate your successes, and analyse what you need to do to keep moving forward. No matter how slow things seem, you probably are making progress!

Try This

You can also take this opportunity to update your goals, based on what you've learnt. Have your priorities changed? Or do you need to set aside some extra time for a particular goal activity?

Mistake 7: Setting "Negative" Goals

How you think about your goal can influence how you feel about it, and whether you achieve it. For instance, many people have a goal to "lose weight." However, this goal has a negative connotation; it's focused on what you don't want – your weight. A positive way to reframe this goal is to say you want to "get healthy."

Try This

Negative goals are emotionally unattractive, which makes it hard to focus on them. Reframe any negative goals so that they sound positive: you may be surprised by the difference this makes!

Mistake 8: Setting Too Many Goals

The problem with this is that you have a fixed amount time and energy. If you try to focus on many different goals at once, you can't give individual goals the attention they deserve.

Try This

Instead, use the "quality, not quantity" rule when setting goals. Work out the relative importance of everything that you want to accomplish over the next six to twelve months. Then pick no more than, say, three goals to focus on.



Remember, the success of your work towards a goal rests on focusing on just a few things at a time. If you limit the number of goals you're working on, you'll have the time and energy you need to do things really well!



DAVID BRETT-WILLIAMS

ADVANCING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH VIRTUAL MENTORING