

“Happy people have a clear vision and purpose”



Discover how your goals can lead you to the life of your dreams

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Have you noticed how much talk goes on these days about the importance of goal-setting and goal-getting? Many of us have business goals and targets set for us in our workplace but how many of us spend time and energy working on goals for our personal lives? You're a busy parent, juggling childcare, work, family, finances and household chores so goals don't need to be part of your life, right? Wrong.

If you don't have a clear picture of what you want from life and goals to guide you to where you want to be, you're going to end up where the path of least resistance takes you. Goals are not just about business. Goals are for those people who step up to life's challenges and choose their own path.

It's well known that the happiest people are generally those who have a clear vision or purpose that inspires and drives them in the direction of their personal definition of success. So what is yours?

The big picture

The first step is to make a choice to take control of the direction of your own life. If you spent a bit of time doing the Wheel of Life exercise (June issue of *Your Baby*), you'll have a picture of the current balance, or lack thereof, in your life. If so, you should spend some time thinking about how you want your life to look instead.

Follow three steps to making it a reality.

Step 1: Make a list

It may be helpful to start by writing a list of what you don't want, as what you do want could well be the opposite. Many people make the mistake of getting stuck focusing on what they don't want. Successful people consistently focus on what they want, so you need to quickly leave the “don't wants” behind by replacing each one with a “do want”.

Step 2: Find your vision

Then start with the end in mind by creating a vision for your life. Your vision is a picture of your desired future that

you create from your imagination. Find a quiet time and place and imagine how you'd want your life to look if there were no restrictions. A vision is big. It's a dream, if you like. A vision should not be constrained by reality or negative thoughts of “I can't” or “It will never be like that”.

Step 3: Bring it to life

Once you've spent some time dreaming up your perfect life, you'll need to anchor your vision and bring it alive. There are a number of techniques that may work for you. Pick one that appeals to you and have fun with it!

Techniques

Write your vision as a story

Picture a time in the future – it's your vision so make it one year, five years or 20 years. It's up to you. What are you doing on this particular day in time? Where are you? What have you achieved? Who is with you? What are you feeling?

Or imagine it's your birthday at some specified time in the future. You're surrounded by people from all aspects of your life and they are making a toast to you. What do you want each person to say about you, your achievements and successes? What kind of a parent, employee or partner are you at this time? Write it down.

Mind map

If you don't like the idea of writing your story, you might prefer to create a mind map. Start by writing a word or phrase that is central to your vision in the middle of a piece of paper and link as many related words or phrases to it.

Create a vision board

Alternatively, you may enjoy creating a vision board or book. The easiest way to start is to look through magazines, brochures or catalogues and cut out pictures and words that match your dreams. Take a piece of cardboard and create a colourful collage of all the things you'd like in your life.

Put a picture of yourself in your collage

or find one that represents you, as you must be in the vision for it to really start working its magic.

If you don't like the idea of a vision board, how about a vision book instead? Use a beautiful notebook and give each part of your dream its own page. Just make sure that you look at it on a regular basis!

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SMART goals

As you enjoy the process of one of these techniques, themes will emerge and you will be able to identify some long-term goals and objectives. From here you can work backwards and break down what you need to do by when in order to reach these long-term outcomes. This is where SMART goals come in. SMART is an acronym to help you set short-term goals. It stands for: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-based. These criteria are your roadmap to achieving your long-term objectives.

- * **Specific** This will help you focus on the what, how and when of your goal
- * **Measurable** Find a way to track your progress that will let you know when you've achieved your goal. If you can't physically measure your goal, create your own type of measurement, such as a rating out of 10, a percentage or

even a feeling

- * **Achievable** Your goals should be achievable and realistic when considering your resources, ability, skills and knowledge. But they shouldn't be too easy, as you won't feel satisfied achieving a goal that doesn't challenge you
- * **Relevancy** Are your goals relevant to your long-term dreams and objectives? Are they in line with your values, life purpose and vision? You need to be able to answer yes to these questions in order to be motivated by your goal
- * **Time-based** Finally, there should be a time frame linked to each goal, as a goal without a deadline is just a dream. Your goals should culminate in something bigger than the sum of their parts. Don't get too caught up in the end result at the expense of enjoying the journey. Your goals should never be another “must do” to be fitted into an already hectic life.

Goals are as much about who you will become as they are about having a tick-sheet of achievements. Take the helm and make your goals work for you as you focus on small, daily changes that lead you towards the balanced life of your dreams!

Tips for goal setting

- * **List them** Write your goals down
- * **Keep it short** Don't have too many goals at once or you'll lose focus
- * **Act as if they are real** Goals should be worded in the positive, present tense, such as “I am a very successful interior designer...”
- * **Make them true to you** Align your goals with your values and long-term objectives
- * **Be clear** as to how achieving a goal will enhance your life
- * **Constantly visualise** and use affirmations
- * **Action steps** Identify a single daily action that can move you to your goal
- * **Reward yourself** Put a reward in place for when you achieve a goal. ■