



Updating Agencies, Professionals, and Individuals with Current Life Skills Information

THIS ISSUE OF LIFE SKILLS NEWSLETTER LOOKS AT OBTAINING SUCCESS BY USING GOOD GOAL SETTING METHODS.

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Taking Charge—Success and Failure Cycles

Goal setting is the first step in taking charge of one's life. Without goals life will lack direction. This can lead to a cycle of "failure" which will continue to repeat itself. Lack of direction leads to non-achievement, then to boredom, depression, and a negative self-image. This negative self-image contributes to a lack of motivation. It can immobilize a person and prevent them from taking action. A positive step needs to be taken somewhere in the cycle in order to break away from failure.

Once this positive step has been taken, a person can move on to the "Success Cycle." This is a simpler cycle. One sets a goal, and when the goal is achieved it brings satisfaction and increases self-esteem.

Setting and achieving a simple goal can be the beginning of many successes. Achieving a goal increases self-esteem. It gives a sense of satisfaction resulting in more self-confidence, which is key to reaching more difficult goals. Success makes for success. Transferring the skills used with small goal setting makes larger ones easier to attain.

Source: Gateway To A Better Life Curriculum, University of California Cooperative Extension, 1998.

Failure Cycle El ciclo del perdedor



The four steps of the "Failure Cycle" must be avoided to realize your goals in life.

Success Cycle El ciclo del triunfador



The "Success Cycle" also has four steps that must be realized to achieve your goals in life.

Goal Setting For Success

Successful people know where they want to go and actively plan steps to reach those destinations. They set goals. In Ruby K. Payne's book, "A Framework for Understanding Poverty" she states that individuals in poverty "live for the moment". They are not proactive in their actions nor do they consider the implications of today's actions on the future. Destiny and fate are major tenants of their belief system and choice is rarely considered.

Survival skills are centered on the needs of the immediate moment. Impoverished individuals seek a job, not a career, to satisfy their needs and they rarely plan for future events. "The future does not exist except as a word." (Payne). As a result

they perceive themselves as having little choice in what happens to them or what they can do. Options are hardly ever examined because of this perception.

Setting goals is common to the middle and upper classes of our society. Individuals in poverty are not familiar with planners, organizational tools or methods of goal setting. Setting goals calls for certain cognitive strategies. Cognitive strategies are basic ways of processing information. They are the pathways to the mind. Individuals in poverty need to learn the structure and use of cognitive strategies. Once learned, goal setting is a possibility.

Individuals can be taught how to make good choices and how to set goals. Once learned, they will need the support of

teachers and trainers to reinforce these skills. Small successes lead to larger ones. The trainers can supply support by setting expectations, providing guidance, and being role models and mentors.

Goal setting is important for all activities in people's lives. It gives a sense of power and control over one's life. The setting and obtaining of one's goals is how self-esteem is built and reinforced. Success breeds success.

The following information will provide you with some of the resources you need to teach your clientele the important life skills of goal setting and choice making.

Source: "A Framework for Understanding Poverty", Ruby K Payne, PhD., RFT Publishing Company, 1999.

Goal Setting

We know that goal setting is an important step in achieving satisfaction and success in life. Yet only a small percentage of the population has written goals. Why is this? There are several reasons. Many people don't realize the importance of setting goals. Others have not yet accepted responsibility for their lives. It's easier to blame someone else for what happens in their life. The biggest obstacle is the fear of failing. Many will avoid failure at all costs, even if it means giving up their dreams. Sometimes the only reason people don't set goals is that they don't know how. This is where you can help. Teaching your clients to set goals is easy if you have them follow these five simple steps:

- First, clearly identify the goal. Be as detailed as possible! The more specific one can be, the clearer the goal.
- Then, weigh the benefits against the sacrifices. Is the end result worth what has to be given up? If not, rethink the significance of the goal. Then determine what is most important to achieve.
- Next, brainstorm ideas and options on

how to reach the goal. Determine the total resources needed to achieve the goal. For example, to save \$50.00, one might save money by choosing store brand foods over name brands at the grocery store. If money cannot be saved within the current budget by cutting corners, another option is taking a second job.

- Now, commit to the goal. Set a realistic target date by which to achieve the goal.
- Lastly, be flexible. Life does not always go as planned! Whatever happens, DON'T GIVE UP! Simply readjust the plans and target date and get back on track.

With these simple tools, your clients should be able to attain the goals they decide to strive for. Once they get a taste of success, they will be well on their way to changing their life for the better.

Source: Gateway to a Better Life Curriculum, 1998.

Source: MOMS' Weekly Exercise Newsletter "Setting & Achieving Your Goals", "Why People Don't Set Goals", Brian E. Bartes, www.mothersonamission.com

What are the greatest myths about poverty?

There are many myths that surround the issue of poverty. The most common are:

1. **All poor are long-term.**
Most are not.
2. **All welfare recipients are long-term.**
The average period of welfare for a recipient is 3 years.
3. **Most poverty is found in our nation's inner cities.**
Although poverty problems are often severe in these neighborhoods, many more of our nation's poor live outside of these neighborhoods.

The Choice Making Process

Many people go through life without thinking about why they make the decisions they do or whether another choice may have been better. Teaching individuals the choice-making process can help them to make decisions that will allow them to reach their goals and obtain more satisfaction in the use of their resources.

There are three steps in the choice-making process:

- Gathering information about the choices available is the first step. What options are available? How much does each option cost? What are the advantages and disadvantages to each choice? Encourage clients to gather as much information as possible by talking to friends and relatives and others who might offer useful information. Perhaps reading consumer magazines or going to the store to compare products and features would help. All of the information gathered will help them to make the best choice. They may want to cre-

ate a comparison chart to list the options and advantages and disadvantages to each choice.

- The second step is to judge and rank the options. Keeping their values, goals and available resources in mind, clients need to rank the options. Which option is better for or more important to their family? Since they place more importance on some values than others, some values will have more influence on their behavior than others. Keep in mind that your clients may not make the same judgments you would make. Ask your clients to rank their options listing the “best” option first.
- The last step in the choice-making process is to choose the action or item that is best in their situation. Each step, when successfully completed, develops skills your clients can apply to the decision they need to make.

Authors: Carol Powell, Margaret Johns, Karen Varcoe

Research Update: Most Adolescents Expect to Reach Their Goals

Earlier research has found that the goals adolescents set for themselves can shape and determine the kind of selves they become and influence actual achievement. Most research in goal setting has focused on academic achievement, with less attention on long-term goals. Also, there have been significant disparities in the ambitions of children from various immigrant groups. There were two principal areas of focus for the present study: (1) identify the long-term goals of adolescents from five ethnic groups (Mexican American, Vietnamese, Armenian, African American and European American), determine whether they expected to achieve their goals, and examine differences among ethnic groups in these variables; and (2) examine the attributions for future success or failure in attaining goals among these adolescents. The sample included 371 adolescents from families of various SES (socioeconomic status) levels. Youth answered open-ended questions pertaining to their (a) goals, If you could do anything you wanted with your life, what would you most want to do and be? (b) expected outcome, Do you think that you will be able to do or be that? and (c) attribution, Why or why not? Results found no significant association between goals and ethnicity, with SES controlled. Overall, 64.4% of the adolescents expected to attain their goals, 19.1% were not sure and 12.1% believed they would not reach their goals.

Source: Phinney, J.S., Baumann, K., & Blanton, S. (2001). “Life goals and attributions for expected outcomes among adolescents from five ethnic groups”, *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 23 (4), 363-377.

Step One

Clearly identify your goal. Write it down. Be specific.

Step Two

Weigh the benefits of the end result. How will the end result benefit you? What will you have to give up?

Step Three

Brainstorm different ways to achieve your goal. Determine what resources you'll need.

Step Four

Commit to the goal. Set a realistic target date to achieve your goal. Decide on a plan for accomplishing your goal.

Step Five

Be flexible. Things always don't go as planned. Evaluate if you need to adjust your plan or your goal.

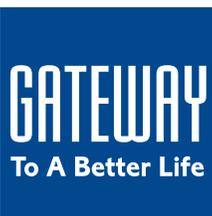
5 Steps to Reach your Goals

Welfare to Work Curriculum

Help prepare welfare recipients to enter the workforce.

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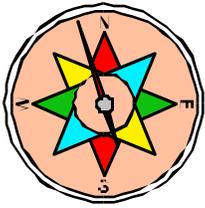
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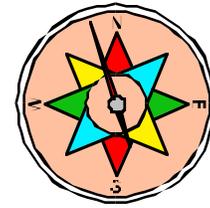
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Reaching My Goals



Step One

Clearly identify the goal. Write down your goal. Be as detailed as possible! The target you want to reach is clearer when the goal is specific.

Example: generic goal- "I want to get a job."
 specific goal- "I want to get a job within six months that will help me support my family."

Step Two

Weigh the benefits of the end result. Ask yourself if the end result will benefit you. Is it what you really want or need? Is it worth making the sacrifice? If not, go back to step one and re-evaluate your goal.

Example: outcome- "By taking this life skills class, I will learn information I need to get and keep a job."
 benefit- "I will have skills I can use to help me get a job and income."

Step Three

Brainstorm different options to achieve the goal. Determine the total resources needed to achieve the goal. Then, write down all the possible options you could take to achieve it.

Example: resources- "Training for a job."
 options- "I can take this class, find out about scholarships to community college, sign up for more classes at the community college, answer ads in the newspaper, talk to my counselor at DPSS, etc."

Step Four

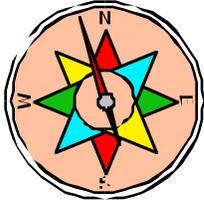
Commit to the goal. Set a realistic target date by which to achieve the goal. Then, commit to a plan that will lead you to accomplish your goal. Self-discipline to stick with your plan is the key to success.

Example: "I *will* get a job in 6 months by completing this class and using the county job placement services to find a job."

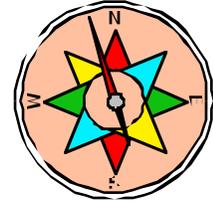
Step Five

Be flexible. Remember that life doesn't always go as planned. Something may come up, such as a death in the family, a car problem that needs to be fixed, or a leak in your roof. Take time to review your plan. Consider whether your goal can be achieved by adjusting your plan, or you need to adjust your goal.





Para lograr mis metas



Primer paso

Identifique claramente la meta. Escriba su meta con todo lujo de detalles. El objetivo que se ha trazado será más claro entre más específica sea su meta.

Ejemplo: Meta general - “Quiero conseguir un empleo”.
Meta específica - “Quiero conseguir un puesto en los próximos seis meses para ayudar a sostener a mi familia”.

Segundo paso

Beneficios qué obtendrá. Pregúntese si el resultado de sus esfuerzos le beneficiará. ¿Es esto lo que usted realmente quiere o necesita? ¿Vale la pena el sacrificio? De no ser así, regrese al primer paso y vuelva a evaluar su meta.

Ejemplo: Resultado - “Al tomar esta clase, aprenderé cosas que necesito saber para conseguir y mantener un empleo”.
Beneficio - “Aprenderé habilidades que puedo usar para conseguir un trabajo y aumentar mis ingresos”.

Tercer paso

Piense en diversas formas de alcanzar su meta. Piense en todos los recursos que necesitará para lograr su meta. Luego, anote todas las opciones a su alcance para alcanzar su meta.

Ejemplo: Recursos - “Recibir entrenamiento para un trabajo”.
Opciones - “Puedo tomar esta clase, informarme sobre becas que ofrezca el colegio comunitario, inscribirme en más clases, responder a un anuncio clasificado en el periódico, hablar con mi consejero del DPSS, etc.”

Cuarto paso

Comprométase a lograr su meta. Fíjese una fecha sensata para alcanzar su meta. Luego, comprométase a seguir un plan que le ayudará a lograr su meta. La clave del éxito está en seguir el plan al pie de la letra.

Ejemplo: “Conseguiré un empleo en seis meses, después de completar esta clase, y usaré los servicios que ofrece la oficina de empleos del condado”.

Quinto paso

Sea flexible. Recuerde que no todo resulta como lo planeamos. Pueden surgir problemas, como la muerte de un ser querido, un auto que necesita reparaciones, un techo que tiene goteras. Revise su plan cuidadosamente. Fíjese si puede hacer ajustes a su plan o si es necesario cambiar su meta.

