CLASSIC | GOALS | PERSONAL GROWTH | PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Making Your Goals Count

Evaluate/Reflect; Decide What You Want; Be S.M.A.R.T.; Have Accountability. When you put these 4 key pieces together, you are putting yourself in a position of power that will catapult you toward achieving your goals.

by **Jim Rohn**

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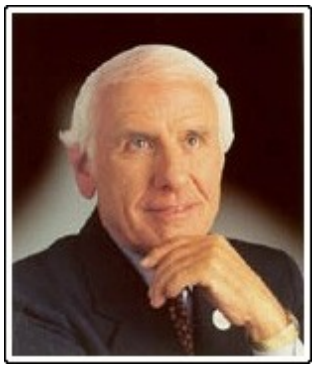


As we enter into a New Year we all tend to have a heightened sense of the opportunities and possibilities that it can bring. The need for goal-setting becomes more obvious and clear. And the great thing about goal-setting is you can keep it as simple or get as elaborate as you would like. Below are some abbreviated points on goal-setting for the New Year.

I've often said the major reason for setting a goal is for what it makes of you to accomplish it. What it makes of you will always be the far greater value than what you get.

That is why goals are so powerful - they are part of the fabric that makes up our lives. And goal-setting is where we create our goals.

Goal-setting is powerful, partly because it provides focus. It shapes our dreams. It gives us the ability to hone in on the exact actions we need to perform to achieve everything we desire in life. Goals are GREAT because they cause us to stretch and grow in ways that we never have before. In order to reach our goals we must become better. We must change and grow.

Also, goals provide long-term vision in our lives. We all need lots of powerful, long-range goals to help us get past short-term obstacles. Life is designed in such a way that we look long-term and live short-term. We dream for the future and live in the present. Unfortunately, the present can produce many difficult obstacles.

> **But fortunately, the more powerful our goals (because they are inspiring and believable) the more we will be able to act on them in the short-term and guarantee that they will actually come to pass!**

So, let's take a closer look at the topic of goal-setting and see how we can make it forceful as well as practical. What are the key aspects to learn and remember when studying and writing our goals?

1. Evaluation and Reflection. The only way we can reasonably decide what we want in the future and how we will get there is to first know where we are right now and what our level of satisfaction is for where we are in life. So first take some time and think through and write down your current situation, then ask this question on each key point - is that okay?

The purpose of evaluation is twofold. First, it gives you an objective way to look at your accomplishments and your pursuit of the vision you have for your life. Secondly, it is to show you where you are so you can determine where you need to go. In other words, it gives you a baseline from which to work.

I would strongly encourage you to take a couple of hours this week to evaluate and reflect. At the beginning of each month we encourage you to see where you are and write it down so that as the months progress and you continue a regular time of evaluation and reflection, you will see just how much ground you will be gaining - and that will be exciting!

2. What are Your Dreams and Goals? These are the dreams and goals that are born out of your own heart and mind. These are the goals that are unique to you and come from who you were created to be and gifted

to become. So second, make a list of all the things you desire for the future.

One of the amazing things we have been given as humans is the unquenchable desire to have dreams of a better life, and the ability to establish goals to live out those dreams. Think of it: We can look deep within our hearts and dream of a better situation for ourselves and our families; dream of better financial lives and better emotional or physical lives; certainly dream of better spiritual lives. But what makes this even more powerful is that we have also been given the ability to not only dream but to pursue those dreams and not just pursue them, but the cognitive ability to actually lay out a plan and strategies (setting goals) to achieve those dreams. Powerful!

What are your dreams and goals? This isn't what you already have or what you have done, but what you want. Have you ever really sat down and thought through your life values and decided what you really want? Have you ever taken the time to truly reflect, to listen quietly to your heart, to see what dreams live within you? Your dreams are there. Everyone has them. They may live right on the surface, or they may be buried deep from years of others telling you they were foolish, but they are there.

So how do we know what our dreams are? This is an interesting process and it relates primarily to the art of listening. This is not listening to others; it is listening to yourself.

If we listen to others, we hear their plans and dreams (and many will try to put their plans and dreams on us). If we listen to others, we can never be fulfilled. We will only chase elusive dreams that are not rooted deep within us. No, we must listen to our own hearts.

Here are some practical steps/thoughts on hearing from our hearts on what our dreams are:

Take time to be quiet. This is something that we don't do enough in this busy world of ours. We rush, rush, rush, and we are constantly listening

to noise all around us. The human heart was meant for times of quiet, to peer deep within. It is when we do this that our hearts are set free to soar and take flight on the wings of our own dreams! Schedule some quiet "dream time" this week. No other people. No cell phone. No computer. Just you, a pad, a pen, and your thoughts.

Think about what really thrills you. When you are quiet, think about those things that really get your blood moving. What would you LOVE to do, either for fun or for a living? What would you love to accomplish? What would you try if you were guaranteed to succeed? What big thoughts move your heart into a state of excitement and joy? When you answer these questions you will feel GREAT and you will be in the "dream zone." It is only when we get to this point that we experience what OUR dreams are!

Write down all of your dreams as you have them. Don't think of any as too outlandish or foolish - remember, you're dreaming! Let the thoughts fly and take careful record.

Now, prioritize those dreams. Which are most important? Which are most feasible? Which would you love to do the most? Put them in the order in which you will actually try to attain them. Remember, we are always moving toward action, not just dreaming.

3. S.M.A.R.T. Goals. S.M.A.R.T. means Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-sensitive.

I really like this acronym S.M.A.R.T., because we want to be smart when we set our goals. We want to intelligently decide what our goals will be so that we can actually accomplish them. We want to set the goals that our heart conceives, our minds believe and that our bodies will carry out. Let's take a closer look at each of the components of S.M.A.R.T. Goals:

Specific: Goals are no place to waffle. They are no place to be vague. Ambiguous goals produce ambiguous results. Incomplete goals produce incomplete futures.

Measurable: Always set goals that are measurable. I would say "specifically measurable" to take into account our principle of being specific as well.

Attainable: One of the detrimental things that many people do - and they do it with good intentions - is to set goals that are so high they are unattainable.

Realistic: The root word of realistic is "real." A goal has to be something that we can reasonably make "real" or a "reality" in our lives. There are some goals that simply are not realistic. You have to be able to say, even if it is a tremendously stretching goal, that yes, indeed, it is entirely realistic -- that you could make it. You may even have to say that it will take x, y, and z to do it, but if those happen, then it can be done. This is in no way to say it shouldn't be a big goal, but it must be realistic.

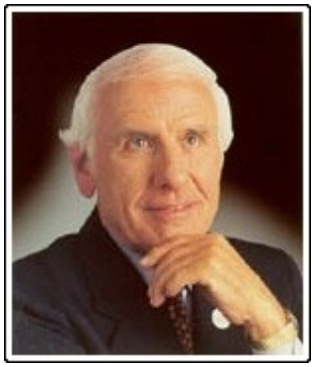
Time: Every goal should have a timeframe attached to it. I think that life itself is much more productive if there is a timeframe connected to it. Could you imagine how much procrastination there would be on earth if people never died? We would never get "around to it." We could always put it off.

> **One of the powerful aspects of a great goal is that it has an end, a time in which you are shooting to accomplish it. You start working on it because you know there is an end.**

As time goes by you work on it because you don't want to get behind. As it approaches, you work diligently because you want to meet the deadline. You may even have to break down a big goal into different parts of measurement and time frames. That is okay. Set smaller goals and work them out in their own time. A S.M.A.R.T. goal has a timeline.

4. Accountability (A contract with yourself or someone else). When someone knows what your goals are, they hold you accountable by asking you to "give an account" of where you are in the process of achieving that goal. Accountability puts some teeth into the process. If a goal is set and only one person knows it, does it really have any power? Many times, no. At the very least, it isn't as powerful as if you have one or more other people who can hold you accountable to your goal.

So: Evaluate/Reflect; Decide What You Want; Be S.M.A.R.T.; Have Accountability. When you put these 4 key pieces together, you are putting yourself in a position of power that will catapult you toward achieving your goals.



Jim Rohn is considered to be "America's Foremost Business Philosopher". He's been delivering his life and work-changing seminars for over 39 years... addressed over 6,000 audiences and four million people worldwide... he's the recipient of the 1985 National Speakers Association CPAE Award... authored 17 different books, audio and video programs... and, Mr. Rohn is internationally hailed as one of the most influential thinkers of our time.

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