

Path to Success

by Carl Hicks, Jr., Ph.D.

Path to Success

Mastering the Art

of

Goal Achievement

by

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Introduction



*“All personal growth begins with a mental picture of what is possible.
Dream big.”*

-Carl F. Hicks, Jr.

Are you driven to become something or someone greater? Are there dreams you hope to actualize? Many of us have a vision of what we hope to do or who we hope to be someday. The key to bringing these visions to life lies in creating realistic, achievable goals. From managing workplace tasks to building the life you’ve always dreamt of living, the art of creating and maintaining goals helps you to achieve all that your growth journey requires.

In order to create exciting and achievable goals, you must first understand: 1) what aspirations are worth pursuing, and 2) how to craft clear, discernible goals from those aspirations. Investing the time in understanding what makes a well rounded goal and whether this goal is relevant to your personal growth journey is absolutely imperative.

In this book, we’ll explore these and other key elements to goal achievement. This guide also provides you with the tools and insights you need to craft clear and attainable goals. Offering essential tips based on decades of leadership coaching and reflective questions designed to challenge you, we’ll prepare you to set and achieve goals that coincide with your overall ambitions.

Are *you* ready to reach your goals and fulfill your potential? Then, let’s get started.

Chapter 1: Defining Your Goals



“Action produces results. Have an idea? A dream? A goal? ACT.”

– Carl F. Hicks, Jr.

Imagine for a moment that you’re given complete control over the renovation of a house. The house itself has enormous potential, but needs many repairs and improvements—maybe even a complete demolition and rebuild. How do you know where to start? Or, which improvements need to be done now and which are long-term projects? Without a clear vision or end goal in mind and a plan to reach it, you’ll likely be left confused, frustrated, and in desperate need of [The Property Brothers](#)¹.

The process of goal-setting is imperative to realizing your ambitions. In fact, [research](#)² conducted by Dr. Gail Matthews concluded that those who take the time to set, define, and write down goals are more likely to actually achieve them. Whether you have short-term work objectives to complete or are interested in pursuing a bit of self-renovation, the first step to starting your goal achievement journey is to clearly identify what your end goal is. Much like the renovation dilemma, if you have something you need or want to achieve, you must take the time to outline what that success looks like. This exercise gives you the direction you need to pursue your goal.

Besides a clear sense of direction, there are many advantages of outlining your goals. Let's explore four.

1. Clarity and Focus

When you invest time in defining your goals, you gain clarity on what it is you actually want to achieve. Rather than simply aiming for an obscure vision for the future, you're focusing on a specific and essential endeavor necessary to your personal growth journey. Along with this greater sense of clarity comes a heightened focus. If you know exactly what you need to achieve, you can then allocate your time and resources where they really matter and prioritize activities that are essential to this particular pursuit.

2. Measuring Progress

If you were to set a goal for yourself to lose weight, for example, you'll likely find it a challenging task to undertake. Physical and mental challenges aside, this goal would be hard to accomplish because of the lack of clarity. How will you know when you've met your goal if the goal itself is as ambiguous as "lose weight"? How much weight? How fast? Setting clear goals grants you a definitive mode of measuring progress. Shifting your goal from "losing weight" to "losing 5 pounds by this October" allows you to see in real time the progress you're making.

3. Motivation

Clear goals can provide the motivation you need to stay the course. When you know exactly what you're working towards, it becomes easier to stay committed—especially during challenging times. The sense of purpose that comes with having defined goals can drive you to keep pushing forward.

4. Decision Making

Your well-defined goals serve as a compass on your growth journey. When faced with decisions, you can consult your goals to gauge whether a certain path will bring you closer to or farther from your end goals. Letting your goals drive your decision making ensures your actions are consistently aligned with your long-term vision.

Regardless of the timeline, area of interest, or motivation behind an effort, setting clearly defined goals is crucial for turning your vision into reality. Without clear goals, efforts can become scattered, resources wasted, and the desired outcome may remain out of reach. Well-defined goals are the foundation for success.

Chapter 1 Pause and Reflect

When was the last time you sat down to define and write down your goals?

Are there goals or objectives you're hoping to achieve in the near future?

Do these goals have clearly defined objectives or expectations?

Take a moment now to define and write down three goals with clear, quantifiable objectives:

1)

2)

3)

Chapter 2: The Hicks Fix 3-Step Initiative



“The steps of any journey are determined by what lies within not ahead or behind.”

-Carl F. Hicks, Jr.

The Hicks Fix initiative gives you the opportunity to define success in a way that reflects your own values, motives, and dreams. This initiative empowers you to define success on your own terms, ensuring that your journey aligns with your personal values, motivations, and purpose. Rather than prescribing a one-size-fits-all approach, this initiative offers a personalized roadmap designed to guide you from your current state to your desired destination. The process is structured around three stages of reflection: affirming, discerning, and determining.

Stage 1: Affirming

The first stage of the Hicks Fix initiative is Affirming, where you develop the solid foundation needed for success. In this step, you'll affirm who you are, and who you want to be while crafting a deeper sense of your values and passions. This stage focuses on three specific questions:

What activities and goals add meaning to your life?

This reflection aims to find your passion and drive. Are there activities, goals, or projects you've enjoyed completing in the past? Create a list of these activities, then describe the elements that excited you. This will give insight into certain passions of yours that may have otherwise gone unrealized.

What do you do really well?

This may seem to be an easy question to answer: "I'm a doctor, so I'm good at working in the medical field." However, there may be skill sets you don't realize you have. Think of what questions your friends, customers, colleagues, or clients tend to ask you. Are these questions typically centered around a certain subject or skill? Chances are those around you can see clearly the skills or talents you possess that go unnoticed to you. Sadly, it's a common problem to be blind towards our own abilities, at times.

How do you want to be treated by others?

This question often surprises clients, as it seems to have little to do with goal-setting. However, when you're crafting your future self, it's important to reflect on how you want to be treated by others. How do you want your friends, family, and coworkers to treat you? What do you want your relationships to look like? Take note of these answers by writing a few sentences summarizing how you'd like others to treat you.

[The Birkman® Method](#)³, a personality assessment, can provide in-depth answers to all three of these questions. The self-assessment can be taken online and can usually be completed in less than forty-five minutes. The results are powerful, straightforward, and easy to digest, focusing on your interests and needs.

Stage 2: Discerning

The next phase in the Hicks Fix 3-step Initiative is discernment. We all have reasons for our actions and inactions. Understanding our internal motivators and strengthening our belief system is a crucial next step in setting goals that align with our values.

A deeply-rooted connection exists between one's internal motivations and one's belief system. This belief system is shaped by your experiences, inherent values, social conditioning, and desires and impacts many facets of your life—from moral and ethical behavior to relationships, work ethic, and ambition. Your motivation is driven largely by this deep-rooted belief system. Goals that are connected to and work in conjunction with your beliefs, then, are more likely to be realized. Setting goals that align with your beliefs is a strong step in becoming the best version of yourself.

When setting new goals, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Are you pursuing this path because it's something you want to do?

Is this path, and the journey accompanying it, something you *want* to undertake? Sometimes, we're faced with tasks we simply have to complete: projects for work, personal errands, family functions, etc. But, when it comes to discerning what path to follow and what goals to set, it's important to ask yourself whether or not you even want to undertake these challenges.

2. Do you feel expected to complete this goal by others?

Again, there will always be projects or objectives given to us by others that we simply have to push through and accomplish. But centering your growth efforts around someone else's expectations of you can lead to failure and lack of motivation. Lack of motivation can plague you when the beliefs or inner desires of others aren't enough to motivate you to achieve the end goal. And failure can come when, due to that lack of motivation, you fail to live up to another's expectations of you. Simply put, the goals you set *for* yourself should come *from* yourself.

3. Does this goal align with your core values?

Aligning your goals to your inherent values is crucial to driving motivation and reaching your best self. When starting a new journey or setting new personal/professional goals for yourself, always measure how they hold up to your beliefs.

Whatever your answers to these questions may be, it's important to take a moment of reflection to discern the motives and intentions behind your goals.

Stage 3: Determining

The final phase of this initiative is determining what goals are worth pursuing. As mentioned, goals should align with your beliefs. This allows not only for a betterment of self, but an efficient use of your time and resources. After all, you wouldn't want to waste your efforts on pursuits that leave you further from your best self than when you started, would you?

The goals that encapsulate our beliefs and push us to live the life we envision are referred to as Lifestyle Goals and the goals we undertake in order to ensure adequate resources for our Lifestyle Goals are considered Livelihood Goals. We'll cover both Lifestyle and Livelihood Goals in greater depth throughout Chapters [Three](#) and [Four](#). For now, the key takeaway is to determine what goals are worthy of your efforts by aligning your Lifestyle goals to your Livelihood goals and avoiding endeavors that don't accomplish these.

The Hicks Fix initiative is designed to bring a deeper intention to the goals you set. It's not just about achieving success, but about ensuring that the goals you pursue are worthy of your efforts. This initiative pushes you to take a thoughtful and reflective approach to goal-setting, encouraging you to consider not just what you want to achieve but why those goals are meaningful to you.

Chapter 2 Pause and Reflect

After journeying through the Hicks Fix 3-step initiative, how do you feel your goal-setting process will change?

In the first step of Affirming, we asked the question, “what do you do really well?” It can be helpful to get an external perspective on your talents to answer this question. Who could you ask to give an honest, objective account of what you’re really good at?

What core values do you feel you need to include more in your decision making and goal-setting?

Can you remember a time in which you pursued a goal that didn’t align with your values or wasn’t actually worth your efforts? How can you avoid this in the future?

Chapter 3: Lifestyle Goals



“Having something of importance is evidence of wanting something of importance.”

-Carl F. Hicks, Jr.

If I were to ask you what lifestyle your best self would lead, what would you say? Sure, there are some elements we can all agree sound pretty fantastic: financial stability, a job that provides a sense of purpose, a good relationship, a happy family, etc. These desires are what we refer to as Lifestyle Goals: goals that reflect the values and aspirations that take top priority in our lives. Lifestyle Goals are extremely personal, selected solely by you, and based on your own desires.

As we discussed in [Chapter 1](#), defining goals is incredibly important to gaining clarity and motivation, and driving decision making. The same is true for Lifestyle Goals. Clearly defining these goals allows you to better center your efforts around a much larger purpose. Lifestyle Goals come in many forms and involve many areas of life. At The Hicks Fix, we recommend using the 8 Fs to identify your Lifestyle Goals.

The 8 Fs

The 8 Fs refer to eight fields in our lives that we naturally tend to prioritize when aiming for becoming the best version of ourselves and living our best lives. They refer to: Faith, Family, Friends, Fortune, Fame, Fitness, Fun, and Fulfillment. You can set your Lifestyle Goals by identifying what you hope each of these eight elements will look like in your life.

1. Faith

Whether you partake in an organized religion or simply believe in a higher state of living, it's imperative that we give ourselves something to believe in and strive for. Some are more comfortable with an organized religion—they attend a church service, mass, mosque, synagogue, or temple regularly. Others find peace in an open spirituality, meditation, or quiet reflection and gratitude.

Whatever your preference may be, a well-placed faith guides you through life's toughest questions and provides you a model to emulate. What would your faith look like if you were your best self? Maybe your best self takes a spiritual retreat once a year or meditates daily. These are your Faith Goals.

2. Family

Family is an extremely important aspect in our lives and our societies. What's important to you in terms of your family? More specifically, what's important to you in terms of your spouse, significant other, children, parents, and siblings? Each of these relationships may prompt an entirely different answer. You may value stable support from your spouse, but simply may want more quality time with your parents or siblings.

In the lifestyle you're striving for, do you spend more time with extended family? Visit your parents more often? Show more interest in building deep relationships with your children? Maybe you and your spouse or significant other have more planned date nights. Taking a moment to reflect on how you want your familial relationships to look and what you can do to encourage that is the first step in making it happen.

3. Friends

We may hold different values when it comes to friendships. Some people are wired to attract and maintain many friends—they are energized by interactions with others. Others may prefer having only one or two very close friends. In either case, true friends are people who are equally present during life's mundane days and life's significant events and milestones. They may be present at weddings, birthdays, graduations, and other celebratory events and also available during tough times like an illness or death of a loved one. How does your life reflect your Friendship Goals? What goals would you introduce to help you become the best version of yourself?

4. Fortune

Fortune can be defined in numerous ways: prosperity, luck, success. Fortune as one of the 8Fs typically centers on your finances and wealth. Rather than focusing on how to acquire as many tangible things as possible, consider zeroing in on goals that ensure you and your loved ones have what you need to feel a sense of security and financial freedom. How would your finances look if you were the best version of yourself? What kind of savings plan would you have in place? How does your investment portfolio look? Are there large-scale purchases—cars, houses, land—that you’d hope to make?

5. Fame

You may hear the word fame and immediately recall images of celebrities—movie stars on the red carpet, musicians being swarmed by paparazzi, or star athletes signing autographs while out-and-about in their hometown. In the context of Lifestyle Goals, however, fame is a term that more closely resembles reputations. What defining personality traits would your best self be known for? Maybe you’d like to be known far and wide for being funny and amiable. Or, perhaps you’d like to be known as an honest and hard worker by your friends, family, and co-workers. Or, you may have your sights set on the more traditional sense of the word fame. Your Fame Goals are those that allow you to achieve the reputation you most desire.

6. Fitness

As Buddha once said, “To keep the body in good health is a duty, otherwise we shall not be able to keep our mind strong and clear.” Fitness is important for your overall health and well-being. In fact, even small increases in physical activity [have been tied to](#)⁴ longevity. Fitness goals include any objectives relating to health, exercise, well-being, and food choices. Would you like to exercise more regularly? Is running a marathon on your bucket list? Maybe you’d like to simply improve your relationship with food. These are your Fitness Lifestyle Goals.

7. Fun

Do you have a favorite hobby or pastime you enjoy or that endows joy or excitement to your life? Engaging in activities that bring more meaning or happiness to our lives is a wonderful thing—it’s what the 7th F is all about. Fun goals are those that encourage you to spend your free time pursuing interests and hobbies unrelated to work. Whether it’s developing a new hobby, rediscovering an old one, or sharing activities with those who make your life a little richer, set a few Fun Goals that allow you to make the most of your free time.

8. Fulfillment

Fulfillment, though the last of the 8 Fs, is no less important than any of the others. This type of goal represents pursuits that don’t fit exactly into other categories. Rather than focusing on something tangible and quantifiable, Fulfillment Goals center around activities that bring a greater meaning and purpose to your life. Community service, activism, and intellectual growth are just a few examples of Fulfillment goals that you may set for yourself. What pursuits would give your life a greater sense of meaning and fulfillment?

Lifestyle Goals can provide clarity, direction, and a sense of purpose for your journey in life. They are, indeed, extremely personal and are centered on your own values and desires. Use the 8 Fs to guide you through the process of determining your own goals. Remember, though, that the number of Lifestyle Goals you have isn't the most important element here. The important thing is to *have* Lifestyle Goals—to write out what you want and how you want to live your life. That's why we've created the [Lifestyle and Livelihood Goals Worksheet](#) ⁵. This complimentary and downloadable worksheet walks you through the process of determining your own, personal Lifestyle Goals for the next 30 days, 6 months, and year.

Chapter 3 Pause and Reflect

Which Lifestyle Goals stood out as being most important to you?

Is there a specific Lifestyle Goal that is in desperate need of attention in your life?

Walk through each type of Lifestyle goal and write down what your best self would look like.

Are there any other types of goals you could add to the 8Fs?

Chapter 4: Livelihood Goals



“Tomorrow’s success relies on today’s efforts.”

-Carl F. Hicks, Jr.

As we previously discussed, Lifestyle Goals are personal goals that are driven by our priorities, purpose, and inner desires. Your Lifestyle Goals—however ambitious or humble they may be—often require financial backing. If, for example, one of your Lifestyle Goals is to improve your fitness, you may need to budget for a gym membership or fitness classes. This is where Livelihood Goals come into play.

To support our lifestyle ambitions, we need to establish solid Livelihood Goals. These goals refer to your plans for generating income, managing finances, and securing resources in order to achieve the Lifestyle Goals you’ve set. There are four solid means of achieving your Lifestyle Goals: compensation, becoming indispensable, acquiring higher credentials, and enhancing your skills.

Compensation

Most of us would like to have a sustainable income that increases over time. This kind of financial stability allows us to better accommodate our Lifestyle Goals. How do you achieve financial stability and growth? Well, that depends. If you work in a commission sales capacity, for example, you can boost your income by selling more. Of course, that approach doesn't work for those who are in salaried positions or who are compensated by the hour.

Instead, if you're in a salaried position, you may need to consider expanding your skillset, deepening your expertise, or stepping into a leadership role. While these tactics may be long-term plays, they can help you get your foot in the door of a field with greater future opportunities. Consider, too, what you could do now to have a greater positive influence on your co-workers, organization, or even build a following? Are there practical steps you could take in the immediate future that could increase your compensation? How much money do you need now and in the future to achieve the Livelihood and Lifestyle Goals you've set for yourself?

Becoming Indispensable

Making yourself indispensable in your work may be another great way of supporting your personal growth and securing higher compensation. As [Zig Ziglar](#)⁶ emphasizes in his work [See You At the Top](#), when you take the spotlight off your own wants and help others attain their wants, you become indispensable to them. For an organization, employees make themselves indispensable when they demonstrate leadership and loyalty. Not only does becoming indispensable help increase job security, it can also open the door to future promotions. Whether by actively assisting those in leadership positions or by taking on extra projects, becoming indispensable in your work can put you on your way to meeting your Livelihood and Lifestyle Goals.

Acquiring Higher Credentials

After college, I found that I was ready to take on the workplace. I was full of new knowledge and eager to put it to use. However, I quickly found that the world was an enormous place brimming with knowledge and information I wanted to discover. Does this sound familiar? There are so many subjects we often want to explore, both in and out of the workplace. Striving for higher education or a deeper understanding of certain skills might make the difference between achieving mediocrity or excellence in your career and in achieving your Livelihood Goals.

These days, I choose to expand my knowledge with seminars, conferences, coaching, and even mastermind groups. You may want to consider leadership coaching, continuing education credits, or even earning an advanced degree.

Enhancing Your Skills

Honing in on your skills, both hard and soft, may be a great way to meet your Livelihood Goals. Building on your natural abilities and learned skills and working to craft new ones adds to your marketability and your value to the workplace. Developing your talents may also point you to your greater purpose. There are two categories of skills we all possess: hard skills and soft or 'success' skills.

Hard skills are specific and teachable abilities that are often quantifiable or measurable. Mostly learned through formal instruction, training, or even on the job, these skills tend to be useful to specific fields of work. We can make the most of our hard skills when we train diligently to acquire them and bring our best efforts when we use them. Also, staying up-to-date on standards, protocols, and new tricks of the trade may help you to develop these skills.

Soft or 'success' skills are quite the opposite. Where hard skills are quantifiable and measurable, success skills are typically unquantifiable and intangible. These skills are typically learned through life lessons, our experiences, and informal training and can give us a competitive edge in our chosen field. Success skills complement our hard skills to round out our abilities and create the best version of self. While hard skills put us on a specific career path, our soft skills give us the capabilities we need to travel it. Skills like time management, clear and concise communication, critical thinking, and public speaking are the kinds of soft skills that can propel us further along our career paths.

Livelihood Goals are how you fund your Lifestyle Goals. What would it take for you to achieve your 30-day Lifestyle Goals? Start by choosing three Livelihood Goals that complement and potentially finance your Lifestyle Goals. If you haven't done so already, download the [Lifestyle and Livelihood Goals](#) Worksheet to help you capture and track your goals.

Chapter 4 Pause and Reflect

What are some ways you could increase your compensation to begin providing for your Lifestyle Goals?

How could you become more indispensable at your workplace? How would this help achieve your Livelihood Goals?

Are there higher credentials you could or would like to attain? How would these help achieve your Lifestyle and Livelihood Goals?

What hard and soft skills could you enhance today to prove yourself an asset and greater fulfill your purpose?

Chapter 5: *S.M.A.R.T.E.R.* Action-Oriented Goals



*“If something is important enough to you,
you’ll find a way to get it done.
If not, you’ll find an excuse.”*

-Carl F. Hicks, Jr.

The kinds of goals we set matter. Are your goals clear and concise? Are they action-oriented or avoidance-oriented? The truth is, determining goals that align with your values and priorities is only half the battle. If you want to achieve the goals you undertake, make them action-oriented and SMARTER.

Action-oriented goals and avoidance-oriented goals represent two contrasting approaches to motivation and creating positive behaviors that allow for the achievement of your goals. Action-oriented goals focus your attention on actively taking on certain behaviors or objectives, rather than avoidance. These goals are focused around proactive, positive behaviors you want to incorporate in your life.

Avoidance-oriented goals are exactly what they sound like—goals set to avoid a specific habit or behavior in hopes of meeting a certain end. The main focus is on what you don’t want to do in order to meet your goals. Avoidance goals often motivate through fear or restriction, which can

be less sustainable over time. In fact, [recent studies](#)⁷ have concluded that action-oriented goals are more successful than avoidance goals.

One of your Lifestyle Goals for the next 30 days might be to eat healthier. An avoidance-oriented goal would be, “I will not eat any sugar for the next few weeks”. Here, you’re avoiding a specific act or behavior in order to reach one of your goals. An action-oriented goal, however, would take a different approach: “I’m going to eat healthier foods for the next few weeks”.

Aside from being action-oriented, there are other elements to consider when outlining a goal. Goals that are too lofty tend to lose our attention while unclear or indeterminate goals are nearly impossible to complete. When crafting a goal, make it *S.M.A.R.T.E.R.*--that is, *Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound, Enjoyable, Rewarding*. Crafting a goal with these elements in mind allows us to more easily see our progress, and inevitably achieve our intended outcome.

S.M.A.R.T.E.R. Goals

Specific

One of the main characteristics of *S.M.A.R.T.E.R.* goals is that they’re clearly defined and specific. Single, specific goals may be easier to attain than multiple, vague objectives. For instance, setting a goal of losing one pound in 30 days may be much easier than the murky goal to “lose weight this year”. By crafting specific goals, you may find it easier to establish a working plan to achieve them. This allows for a greater chance of achievement. Knowing the specifics of a goal allows you to visualize and actualize the steps needed to accomplish it, keeping you on the track to becoming your best self.

Measurable

When crafting a goal, you should identify a clear, measurable way of determining if it’s been achieved. Goals created without a way to measure them are often too vague and, therefore, difficult to accomplish. Quantifiable goals, on the other hand, enable you to measure the progress you’re making against that goal and help you focus on the destination. When setting large goals, it may help to break them into smaller milestones, so you can more easily and accurately measure your progress. In essence, you’re breaking them into smaller milestones that you can reach in smaller increments of time, moving you closer to achieving the larger objective.

Achievable

For a goal to be *achieved* it must be *achievable*. Setting impossible tasks for yourself that lie outside your abilities or available resources rarely results in growth. Instead, it can lead to frustration. Setting an unachievable goal for yourself, really only guarantees failure. Conversely, setting *achievable* goals is essential to a ‘success’ mindset. We should be aiming for goals that

are within our abilities to achieve, yet still inspire growth. Actionable goals should effect in us success and transformation—not frustration and failure.

Relevant

A well-defined and achievable goal should also be relevant to your work and your purpose. A relevant goal will contribute positively to an area of your work or personal life and may further propel you toward the best version of yourself. Goals that are not positively impacting your work or an area of your personal life are likely not relevant to your success. These irrelevant goals can distract your time and efforts from the goals worth pursuing. Instead, invest your time, effort, and resources into relevant goals that further success in your work or personal life.

Time-bound

A good goal should be bound by a clear time frame. Goals that are open-ended with no clear date of achievement can get left in the dust as other goals with specific time constraints begin to take priority. Putting a definitive and realistic time frame around your goals allows you to better prioritize your time and efforts, letting you achieve what you want to achieve when you want to achieve it. Even better, it adds another element of specificity to the goal, and that can lead to a boost in motivation and direction. If a goal seems like it may take too much time to complete, consider breaking it down into smaller milestones that can be accomplished in a shorter time period.

Enjoyable

The goals you set should be enjoyable to execute. Does that mean you'll thoroughly enjoy every second of your journey? Probably not. Positive change and growth can be uncomfortable at times, pushing us to transform into a better version of ourselves. But the journey, as a whole, should be exciting and lead towards a positive end.

It's also important to avoid using less-than-enjoyable means to achieve an overall enjoyable goal. Creating an enjoyable goal becomes pointless if you have to constantly stave off frustration and burnout in order to meet it. This is why action-oriented goals are more attainable—you're committing to a more positive mindset than one that operates from negativity and restriction.

Rewarding

Lastly, the goals you construct should be rewarding. The desired end of a goal can be a powerful motivator, driving us to put in the effort needed to accomplish it. When a goal is tied to something we find rewarding—whether it's personal satisfaction, improvement at work, or a tangible benefit—it creates a sense of purpose and urgency. The promise of a reward can fuel more dedication and perseverance. It gives meaning to the effort required, transforming challenges into opportunities for growth.

Moreover, the act of achieving a rewarding goal triggers positive reinforcement. When we see tangible results for our hard work, it creates a sense of achievement that can boost our confidence and self-esteem. This sense of accomplishment and self-satisfaction can extend beyond the initial goal, influencing other areas of our lives. For instance, success in one of your Lifestyle Goals can inspire you to pursue more goals or take on new challenges.

How we frame our goals matters. Action-oriented, *S.M.A.R.T.E.R.* goals stand a better chance of being actualized than goals with a murky-at-best objective centered on avoidance. Take a moment to sift through the goals you've set for yourself. Are they action-oriented? Do they meet the definition of a *S.M.A.R.T.E.R.* goal? If not, it may be time to reframe them.

Chapter 5 Pause and Reflect

Select three of your Lifestyle and Livelihood Goals to reflect on. Are these goals framed as avoidance-oriented or action-oriented goals?

How could you restructure your goals to take a more action-oriented approach?

Do these goals meet the standards for *S.M.A.R.T.E.R.* goals? If not, what elements are missing?

Have you ever set a goal for yourself that was ill-defined, unachievable, or lacked a clear time-frame? What happened?

Why are these goals important to you? What is the reward for achieving these goals?

Chapter 6: Ensuring Achievement with Magic Cards



“What you visualize you can realize.”

-Carl F. Hicks, Jr.

Even the most well-defined goals may go unrealized without continual efforts and motivation. Without a conscious effort to meet your goals, they can fall by the wayside, leaving less motivated and less confident. This is where your Magic Cards come into play.

The Magic Cards process is designed to pull your focus from the ‘how’ to the ‘why,’ calling to mind the greater purpose behind your goals. Your reasons for pursuing a goal is the fuel that propels you toward achievement. Goal achievement isn’t easy. Growth can be uncomfortable and can require sacrifices, great and small. Reflecting often on the ‘why’ behind your goals allows you to see the greater purpose behind the small sufferings you may encounter on your growth journey.

Start by grabbing a blank index card. At the top of the card, write “My *S.M.A.R.T.E.R.* goal.” Then, write a brief description of the goal you’re hoping to achieve. Next, take a moment to write the reasons *why* this goal is important to you and why you want to complete it. (See *example*

below.) That done, you've successfully turned an ordinary index card into a magic motivator. Repeat these steps for your other *S.M.A.R.T.E.R. goals*.

At the start of each day—and as many times as needed throughout the day—take a moment to read through your Magic Cards and meditate on your 'whys.' If you keep your deeper purpose top of mind, you'll find the motivation you need to endure almost any obstacle you encounter as you strive to achieve your goals. For a deeper and more personal dive into this process, [watch the video](#)⁸ as the theory behind Magic Cards is explained in full.

My S.M.A.R.T.E.R. Goal

(Write down your goal.)

Why this goal is important to me:

1. *(Write down reason 1)*
2. *(Write down reason 2)*
3. *(Write down reason 3)*
4. *(Write down reason 4)*
5. *(Write down reason 5)*

Chapter 6 Pause and Reflect

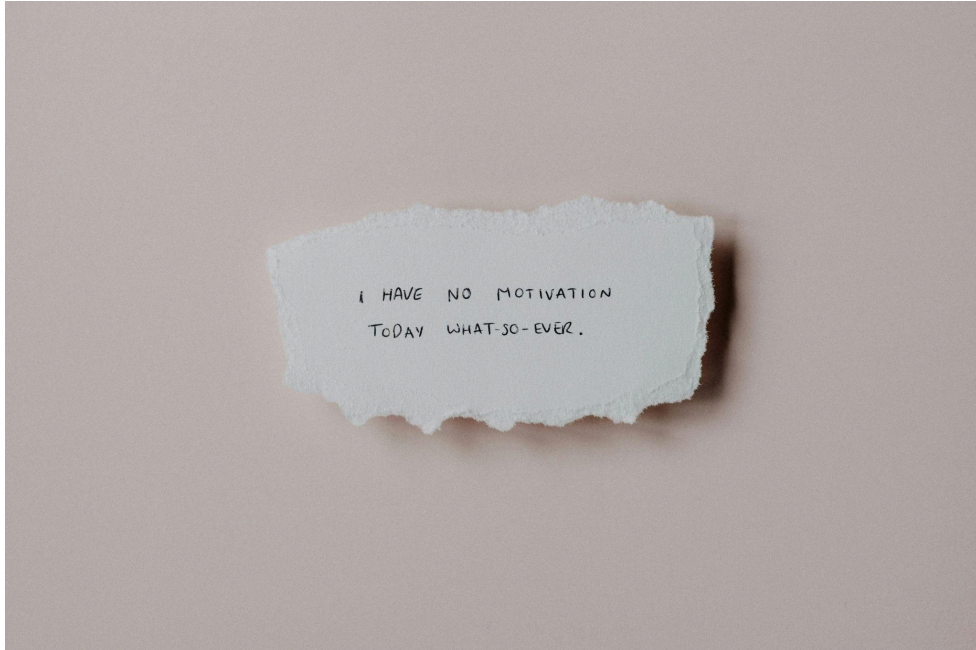
How motivated are you to achieve your goals?

Do you ever find your motivation waning?

Have you, when faced with low motivation, reflected on your 'why' or deeper purpose for pursuing certain objectives?

How could you benefit from making Magic Cards?

Chapter 7: Getting and Staying Motivated



*"It's self-limiting beliefs that stop your progress—
not the obstacles you face."*

-Carl F. Hicks, Jr.

Motivation is the incentivizing power that drives us to achieve goals. It's the invisible force that carries you along your journey to a better self and pushes you through the trials and troubles along the way. Without this powerful force, your hopes and aspirations would go unactualized.

Motivation can be influenced by a number of factors: How much you want to achieve your goal, the reward you grant yourself by achieving it, and even the loss resulting from not achieving your goal. Your motivation may also be affected by the type of goal you set and whether it's clear and defined or irrelevant and murky. It can also be influenced by your own expectations of the growth journey you hope to make.

Without the drive of motivation, it would be nearly impossible to accomplish what we want or *need* to complete. Motivation aids in our understanding and visualizing goals. Moreover, our motivation actually helps us cope with the challenges we face—and can even provide answers to unexpected complications. Staying motivated, therefore, is critical to staying on track, and ultimately, achieving our goals and dreams.

9 tips for getting and staying motivated

1. Set clear and *achievable* goals

Articulating concise goals that are both practical and challenging is the objective here. As we detailed in [Chapter One](#), clearly defining a quantifiable goal is paramount to achieving that goal. Ambiguous or impossible goals can seldom be accomplished. The impossibility of ill-defined goals leads to a motivation burnout. Using the [S.M.A.R.T.E.R. goals outline](#) for each of your goals can help ensure that your goals are clear and attainable.

2. Have a plan

Like setting a vague goal, having an ill-conceived plan or no plan at all can only lead to failure and lack of motivation. Create a clear plan that aims to achieve its purpose. Break your goals into smaller, more manageable tasks. Be sure to include any time constraints into your plan to better set yourself up for success. Not sure where to start? Check out our downloadable [Think, Plan, Act worksheet](#)⁹ to devise a clear and concise strategy for achieving your goals.

3. Harvest a good support system

No one can accomplish their goals alone—we all need help sometimes. The right support system is absolutely essential for realizing your dreams and staying motivated to pursue them. Surrounding yourself with family, friends, or associates who truly support you can provide you with the encouragement and motivation you need to achieve just about any goal and become the best version of yourself.

4. Review your goals regularly

The most advantageous way of staying on track with your goals is to take stock of where you are in your journey regularly. Are you where you should be? Has your progress slowed over time? If so, why? Are the goals you set still attainable? Are your goals too challenging—or maybe not challenging enough? Do you need to revise or replace your goal? Pause along your journey to reflect on your progress against your goals. Keeping track of your progress can boost motivation, as we can visualize how far we've come and where we need to go.

5. Create a routine

A strong routine centered on your goals may be just what you need to stay the course. By creating goal-affirming habits, we make achievement part of our daily routine. This can also prevent us from drifting off course or losing motivation. Consider building a daily, weekly, or quarterly routine that directly supports the achievement of your goals. For instance, one of your goals may be to spend more time with your immediate family. You can create a routine that drives this goal by adding time for focused conversation, family dinners, or even game nights to your daily or weekly routine. It's harder to lose the motivation needed to meet your goals when your day centers on them.

6. Take scheduled pauses

Of course, even with the most important and purpose-driven goals we can still find it hard to stay motivated. In times of true burnout, take a pause from your journey and let yourself reset. Better yet, schedule these regular breaks to stave off burnout before it rears its head. Maybe you set aside time each day to go for a walk and clear your head. Or, perhaps you spend your Sundays in complete relaxation, resetting for the week ahead. Whatever the break may be, do not be afraid to take it. Even professional athletes take time off.

7. Keep your ‘why’ in mind

When introducing the [Magic Cards process](#), we delved into the importance of keeping in mind the deeper purpose behind your goals. Not only does this keep the vision of your best self in the spotlight, but it also stokes your motivation. Whether by reading your Magic Cards regularly or by taking a few moments to reflect on your larger goals, always keep your purpose in mind. When the going gets tough, the tough may get going—but those who know their ‘why’ rarely stop in the first place.

8. Get rid of distractions

If certain habits, practices, or hobbies tend to throw you off your goal achievement course, it may be time to ditch them. There are some tasks and activities that may not directly align to your goals, of course—brushing your teeth, for instance, may seem to take time away from achieving goals, but by golly it’s necessary—and it could align to a health goal. But those extra activities—like watching a streaming series, taking long lunch breaks, or playing digital games on your phone—might be the temptations that steal your motivation. Remove those distractions when possible to stay motivated and on track.

9. Reward yourself along the way.

One effective way to help you stay motivated and focused on your ‘why’ and your goals is to reward yourself along the way—even a small reward can help. Consider this: break your large goal into several smaller objectives. Then, give yourself a ‘pat on the back’ after you achieve each of those smaller objectives. These small rewards or celebrations serve as an incentive and a taste of the fulfillment and satisfaction you can experience when you achieve your overall goal.

Chapter 7 Pause and Reflect

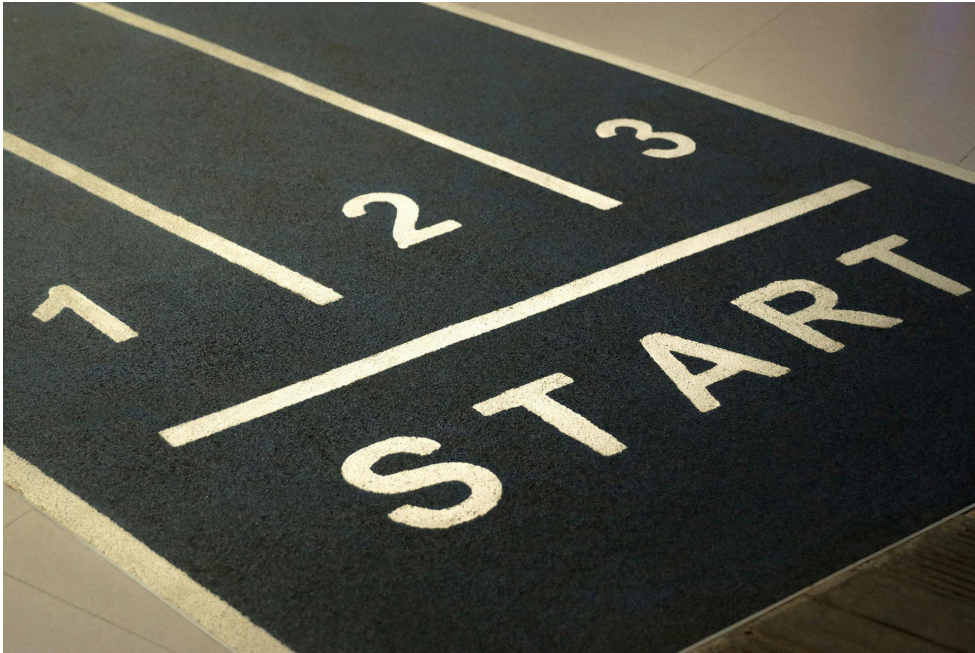
Which of the 9 tips stood out most to you?

Are there any tips you could implement today?

What do you tend to do when your motivation decreases?

Are there any habits or routines that tend to drive you motivation? Diminish it?

Conclusion



“Don’t lose sight of your goal; keep pushing yourself towards it.”

-Carl F. Hicks, Jr.

Goal-achievement is not a one-time event, but a lifelong journey—especially if we wish to achieve our best selves. Now that you have the tools to set clear and measurable goals, maintain motivation, and overcome obstacles, the only thing left to do is to start.

As you begin or continue your journey, remember that goal achievement isn’t about perfection—it’s about progress. There will likely be a few failures along the way. But, persevering—even when things get tough—is what can lead you to success. Each step, no matter how small, brings you closer to achieving your ultimate goal and realizing your full potential.

Remember, the only real limits you’ll encounter are those you place on yourself. You are capable of reaching your fullest potential. And, as you move along your growth journey, you may need to refine or even change your goals somewhat. That’s okay. Simply aim to expand your horizons and believe that you can achieve anything you set your mind to.

Appendix

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