



BRIAN TRACY

*Second Edition of the
World's Bestselling Book on Goals*

GOALS!

**How to Get Everything You
Want — Faster Than You
Ever Thought Possible**

An Excerpt From

Goals!:
How to Get Everything You Want –
Faster Than You Ever Thought Possible,
Second Edition

by Brian Tracy

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Introduction:

Success Is Goals

Welcome to the second edition of *Goals!* Since this book was first released in 2003, it has sold hundreds of thousands of copies and been published in more than twenty languages. It has become the bestselling book on goal-achievement in history.

We have now decided to rewrite and upgrade *Goals!* to make it more helpful and faster acting for people living in more uncertain economic times. Three wonderful professional writers and critics have reviewed this book from cover to cover and offered excellent ideas to make it more helpful to more people. I want to thank Katherine Armstrong, Sara Jane Hope, and Janice Rutledge for their insights and wisdom. This new edition is immeasurably improved as a result.

I especially want to thank my friend and colleague Cord Cooper for going through the manuscript of the book to revise, rewrite, add new material, and generally make the entire structure more enjoyable and easier to read.

This book is for ambitious people who want to get ahead faster. If this is the way you think and feel, you are the person for whom this book is written. The ideas contained in the pages ahead will save you years of hard work in achieving the goals that are most important to you.

2 GOALS!

I have spoken more than five thousand times in fifty-four countries before audiences of as many as twenty-five thousand people. My seminars and talks have varied in length from five minutes to five days. In every case, I have focused on sharing the best ideas I could find on the particular subject with that audience at that moment.

After countless talks on various themes, if I was given only five minutes to speak to you and I could convey only one thought that would help you to be more successful, I would tell you this: “Write down your goals, make plans to achieve them, and work on your plans every single day.”

This advice, if you followed it, would be of more help to you than almost anything else you could ever learn. Many university graduates have told me that this simple concept has been more valuable to them than four years of study. This idea has changed my life and the lives of millions of other people. It will change yours as well.

The Turning Point

A group of successful men got together in Chicago some time ago to talk about the experiences of their lives. All of them were millionaires and multimillionaires. Each of them had started from nothing many years before. Like most successful people, they were both humble and grateful for what they had achieved and for the blessings that life had bestowed upon them.

As they discussed the reasons why they had managed to achieve so much in life, the wisest man among them spoke up and said that, in his estimation, “success is goals, and all else is commentary.” After a few moments of silence, each of the others nodded and agreed.

Your time and life are precious. The biggest waste of time and life is to spend years accomplishing something that you could have achieved in only a few months. By following the proven processes of goal setting and goal achieving laid out in this book, you will accomplish vastly more in a shorter period than you ever imagined before. The speed at which you move upward will amaze you and all the people around you.

Follow the Leaders, Not the Followers

By following these simple and easy-to-apply methods and techniques, you can move quickly from rags to riches in the months and years ahead. You can transform your experience from one of poverty and frustration to one of affluence and satisfaction. You can go far beyond your friends and family and achieve more in life than most other people you know.

I have found, over and over, that a person of average intelligence with clear goals will run circles around a genius who is not sure what he or she really wants.

My personal mission statement has not changed in years. It is “To help people achieve their goals faster than they ever would in the absence of my help.”

This book contains the distilled essence of all that I have learned in the areas of success, achievement, and goal attainment. By following the steps explained in the pages ahead, you will move to the front of the line in life.

For my children, this book is meant to be a road map and a guide to help you get from wherever you are to wherever you want to go. For my friends and readers of this book, my reason for writing it is to give you a proven system that you can use to move onto the fast track in your own life.

Welcome! A great new adventure is about to begin.

1

Get Started: Unlock Your Potential

The great thing in this world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

This is a wonderful time to be alive. There are almost unlimited opportunities today for creative and determined people to achieve more of their goals than ever before. Regardless of short-term ups and downs in the economy and in your life, we are entering into an age of peace and prosperity superior to any previous era in human history.

It's Not Where You Start—It's How You Finish

When I was eighteen, I left high school without graduating. My first job was as a dishwasher in the back of a small hotel. From there, I moved on to washing cars and then washing floors with a janitorial service. For the next few years, I drifted and worked at various laboring jobs, earning my living by the sweat of my brow. I worked in sawmills and

factories. I worked on farms and ranches. I worked in the tall timber with a chain saw and dug wells when the logging season ended.

I worked as a construction laborer on tall buildings and as a seaman on a Norwegian freighter in the North Atlantic. Often I slept in my car or in cheap rooming houses. When I was twenty-three, I worked as an itinerant farm laborer during the harvest, sleeping on the hay in the farmer's barn and eating with the farmer's family. I was uneducated and unskilled, and at the end of the harvest, I was unemployed once more.

When I could no longer find a laboring job, I got a job in straight commission sales, cold-calling office-to-office and door-to-door. I would often work all day long to make a single sale so that I could pay for my rooming house and have a place to sleep that night. This was not a great start at life.

The Day My Life Changed

Then one day, I took out a piece of paper and wrote down an outrageous goal for myself. It was to earn \$1,000 per month in door-to-door and office-to-office selling. I folded up the piece of paper, put it away, and never found it again.

But thirty days later, my entire life had changed. During that time, I discovered a technique for closing sales that tripled my income from the very first day. Meanwhile, the owner of my company sold out to an entrepreneur who had just moved into town. Exactly thirty days after I had written down my goal, the new owner took me aside and offered me \$1,000 per month to head up the sales force and teach the other salespeople what I was doing that enabled me to sell so much more than anyone else. I accepted his offer, and from that day forward, my life was never the same.

Within eighteen months, I had moved from that job to another and then to another. I went from personal selling to becoming a sales manager with people selling for me. In a new business, I recruited and built a ninety-five-person sales force. I went literally from worrying about my next meal to walking around with a pocket full of \$20 bills.

I began teaching my salespeople how to write out their goals and how to sell more effectively. In almost no time at all, they increased their incomes as much as tenfold. Today, many of them are millionaires and multimillionaires.

Life Goes Up and Down

I have to admit that since those days in my midtwenties, my life has not been a smooth series of upward steps. It has included many ups and downs, marked by occasional successes and temporary failures. I have traveled, lived, and worked in more than ninety countries, learning French, German, and Spanish along the way and working in twenty-two different fields.

As the result of inexperience and sometimes sheer stupidity, I have spent or lost everything I made and had to start over again—several times. Whenever this happened, I would begin by sitting down with a piece of paper and laying out a new set of goals for myself, using the methods that I'll explain in the pages ahead.

After several years of hit-and-miss goal setting and goal achieving, I finally decided to collect everything I had learned into a single system. By assembling these ideas and strategies in one place, I developed a goal-setting methodology and process, with a beginning, middle, and end, and began to follow it every day.

Within one year, my life had changed once more. In January of that year, I was living in a rented apartment with rented furniture. I was \$35,000 in debt and driving a used car that wasn't paid for. By December, I was living in my own \$100,000 condominium. I owned a new Mercedes, had paid off all my debts, and had \$50,000 in the bank.

Then I really got serious about success. I realized that goal setting was incredibly powerful. I invested hundreds and then thousands of hours reading and researching goal setting and goal achieving, synthesizing the best ideas I could find into a complete process that worked with incredible effectiveness.

Anyone Can Do It

Some years later, I began audiotaping and videotaping my workshops and seminars so that others could use them. We have now trained hundreds of thousands of people in these principles, in multiple languages, all over the world.

What I found was that these ideas work everywhere, for everyone, in virtually every country, no matter what your education, experience, or background may be when you begin.

Best of all, these ideas have made it possible for me and many thousands of others to take complete control over our lives. The regular and systematic practice of goal setting has taken us from poverty to prosperity, from frustration to fulfillment, from underachievement to success and satisfaction. This system will do the same for you.

Create Your Own World

Perhaps the greatest discovery in human history is the power of your mind to create almost every aspect of your life.

Everything you see around you in the man-made world began as a thought or an idea in the mind of a single person before it was translated into reality. Everything in your life started as a thought, a wish, a hope, or a dream, either in your mind or in the mind of someone else. Your thoughts are creative. Your thoughts form and shape your world and everything that happens to you.

The great summary statement of all religions, philosophies, metaphysics, psychology, and success is this: *You become what you think about most of the time.* Your outer world ultimately becomes a reflection of your inner world. Your outer world of experience mirrors back to you what you think about most of the time. Whatever you think about continuously emerges in your reality.

Many thousands of successful people have been asked what they think about most of the time. The most common answer given by successful people is that they think about *what they want*—and *how to get it*—most of the time.

Unsuccessful, unhappy people think and talk about what they *don't want* most of the time. They talk about their problems and worries and who is to blame for their situation most of the time. But successful people keep their thoughts and conversations focused on their most intensely desired goals. They think and talk about what they want most of the time.

Living without clear goals is like driving in a thick fog. No matter how powerful or well engineered your car, you drive slowly, hesitantly, making little progress on even the smoothest road. Deciding upon your goals clears the fog immediately and allows you to focus and channel your energies and abilities toward what you really want. Clear goals enable you to step on the accelerator of your own life

and race ahead rapidly toward achieving more of what you want in life.

Your Automatic Goal-Seeking Function

Imagine this exercise: You take a homing pigeon out of its roost, put it in a cage, cover the cage with a blanket, put the cage in a box, and then place the box into a closed truck cab. You can then drive a thousand miles in any direction. If you then open the truck cab, take out the box, take off the blanket, and let the homing pigeon out of the cage, the homing pigeon will fly up into the air, circle three times, and then fly unerringly back to its home roost a thousand miles away. No other creature on earth has this incredible cybernetic, goal-seeking function—except for *you*.

You have the same goal-achieving ability as the homing pigeon but with one marvelous addition. When you are absolutely clear about your goal, you do not even have to know how to achieve it. By simply deciding exactly what you want, you will begin to move unerringly toward your goal, and your goal will start to move unerringly toward you. At exactly the right time and in exactly the right place, you and the goal will meet.

Because of this incredible cybernetic mechanism located deep within your mind, you almost always achieve your goals, whatever they are. If your goal is to get home at night and watch television, you will almost certainly achieve it. If your goal is to create a wonderful life full of health, happiness, and prosperity, you will achieve that as well. Like a computer, your goal-seeking mechanism is nonjudgmental. It works automatically and continuously to bring you what you want, regardless of what you program into it.

Nature doesn't care about the size of your goals. If you set little goals, your automatic goal-achieving mechanism will enable you to achieve little goals. If you set large goals, this natural capability will enable you to achieve large goals. The size, scope, and detail of the goals you choose to think about most of the time are completely up to you.

Why People Don't Set Goals

Here is a good question: If goal achievement is automatic, why do so few people have clear, written, measurable, time-bounded goals that they work toward each day? This is one of the great mysteries of life. I believe there are four reasons why people don't set goals.

They Think Goals Aren't Important

First, most people don't realize the importance of goals. If you grow up in a home where no one has goals or you socialize with a group where goals are neither discussed nor valued, you can very easily reach adulthood without knowing that your ability to set and achieve goals will have more of an effect on your life than any other skill. Look around you. How many of your friends or family members are clear and committed to their goals?

They Don't Know How

The second reason that people don't have goals is because they don't know how to set them in the first place. Even worse, many people think that they already have goals. Alas! What they really have is a series of wishes or dreams, like "Be happy" or "Make a lot of money" or "Have a nice family life."

But these are not goals at all. They are merely *fantasies* that are common to everyone. A goal, however, is something distinctly different from a wish. It is clear, written, and specific. It can be quickly and easily described to another person. You can measure it, and you know when you have achieved it or not.

It is possible to earn an advanced degree at a leading university without ever receiving one hour of instruction on goal setting. It is almost as if the people who determine the educational content of our schools and universities are completely blind to the importance of goal setting in achieving success later in life. And of course, if you never hear about goals until you are an adult, as happened to me, you will have no idea how important they are to everything you do.

They Have a Fear of Failure

The third reason that people don't set goals is because of the fear of failure. Failure hurts. It is emotionally and often financially painful and distressing. All of us have experienced failure from time to time. Each time, we resolve to be more careful and avoid failure in the future. Many people then make the mistake of unconsciously sabotaging themselves by not setting any goals at which they might fail. They end up going through life functioning at far lower levels than are truly possible for them.

They Have a Fear of Rejection

The fourth reason that people don't set goals is because of the fear of rejection. People are afraid that if they set a goal and are not successful, others will criticize or ridicule them. This is one of the reasons why you should keep your goals confidential when you begin to set goals. Don't tell anyone. Let

others see what you have accomplished, but don't tell them in advance. What they don't know can't hurt you.

Join the Top 3 Percent

Mark McCormack, in his book *What They Don't Teach You at Harvard Business School*, tells of a Harvard study conducted between 1979 and 1989. In 1979, the graduates of the MBA program at Harvard were asked, "Have you set clear, written goals for your future and made plans to accomplish them?"

It turned out that only 3 percent of the graduates had written goals and plans. Thirteen percent had goals, but they were not in writing. Fully 84 percent had no specific goals at all, aside from getting out of school and enjoying the summer.

Ten years later, in 1989, the researchers interviewed the members of that class again. They found that the 13 percent who had goals that were not in writing were earning, on average, *twice* as much as the 84 percent of students who had no goals at all. But most surprisingly, they found that the 3 percent of graduates who had clear, written goals when they left Harvard were earning, on average, *ten times* as much as the other 97 percent of graduates all together. The only difference between the groups was the clarity of the goals they had for themselves when they graduated.

Happiness Requires Goals

Earl Nightingale once wrote, "Happiness is the progressive realization of a worthy ideal, or goal."

You feel truly happy only when you are making progress, step-by-step, toward something that is important to you.

Viktor Frankl, the founder of Logotherapy, wrote that the greatest need of human beings is for a sense of meaning and purpose in life, for a goal to work toward.

Goals give you that sense of meaning and purpose, a clear sense of direction. As you move toward your goals you feel happier and stronger. You feel more energized and effective. You feel more competent and confident in yourself and your abilities. Every step you take toward your goals increases your belief that you can set and achieve even bigger goals in the future.

More people today fear change and worry about the future than at any other time in our history. One of the great benefits of goal setting is that goals enable you to control the direction of change in your life. Goals enable you to ensure that the changes in your life are largely self-determined and self-directed. Goals enable you to instill meaning and purpose into everything you do.

One of the most important teachings of Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, was that man is a teleological organism. The Greek word *teleos* means “goals” or “purpose.” Aristotle concluded that all human action is purposeful in some way. You are happy only when you are doing something that is moving you toward something that you want. The great questions then become: What are your goals? What purposes are you aiming at? Where do you want to end up at the end of the day?

You Hold the Key

Setting goals, working toward them day by day, and ultimately achieving them is the key to happiness in life. Goal setting is so powerful that the very act of thinking about your

goals makes you happy, even before you have taken the first step toward achieving them.

To unlock and unleash your full potential, you should make a habit of daily goal setting and achieving for the rest of your life. You should develop a laser-like focus so that you are always thinking and talking about what you want rather than what you don't want. You must resolve, from this moment forward, to become a goal-seeking organism, like a guided missile or a homing pigeon, moving unerringly toward the goals that are important to you.

There is no greater guarantee of a long, happy, healthy, and prosperous life than for you to be continually working on being, having, and achieving more and more of the things you really want. Clear goals enable you to release your full potential for personal and professional success. Goals enable you to overcome any obstacle and to make your future achievement unlimited.

GET STARTED: UNLOCK YOUR POTENTIAL

- 1.** Imagine that you have the inborn ability to achieve any goal you could ever set for yourself. What do you really want to be, have, and do?
 - 2.** Identify the activities that give you your greatest sense of meaning and purpose in life. How could you do more of them?
 - 3.** Look at your personal and work life today, and identify how your own thinking has created your world. What should you or could you change?
 - 4.** Resolve today to think and talk only about the things you want in life and refuse to talk about the things you don't want.
 - 5.** Determine the price you will have to pay to achieve the goals that are most important to you, and then resolve to pay that price, starting today.
 - 6.** Imagine that you were absolutely guaranteed of success in achieving your goals and that you had no fears at all. What goals would you set for yourself?
 - 7.** What one action should you take immediately as the result of your answers to the above questions?
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