

BRIAN TRACY



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

by Brian Tracy
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Preface

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.

I have spoken more than two thousand times before audiences of as many as twenty-three thousand people in twenty-four countries. 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 “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 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. 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 estimate, “success is goals, and all else is commentary.”

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

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.

In my talks, seminars, and consulting, I have worked with more than two million people all around the world. 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.

❖ Introduction

This is a wonderful time to be alive. There have never been more opportunities for creative and determined people to achieve more of their goals than there are today. 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.

In the year 1900, there were five thousand millionaires in America. By the year 2000, the number of millionaires had increased to more than five million, most of them self-made, in one generation. Experts predict that another ten to twenty million millionaires will be created in the next two decades. Your goal should be to become one of them. This book will show you how.

A Slow Start

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 hay in the 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. 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.

It's important to note that since those days in my mid-twenties, 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 eighty 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

In 1981, I began teaching my system in workshops and seminars that have now reached more than two million people in thirty-five countries. I began audiotaping and videotaping my courses 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.

What I learned early on is that any plan is better than no plan at all. And it is not necessary to reinvent the wheel. All the answers have already been found. Hundreds of thou-

sands and perhaps even millions of men and women have started with nothing and achieved great success following these principles. And what others have done, you can do as well if you just learn how.

In the pages ahead, you will learn twenty-one of the most important ideas and strategies ever discovered for achieving everything that you could ever want in life. You will find that there are no limits to what you can accomplish except for the limits you place on your own imagination. And since there are no limits to what you can imagine, there are no limits to what you can achieve. This is one of the greatest discoveries of all. Let us begin.

A journey of a thousand leagues
begins with a single step.

—CONFUCIUS



1

Unlock Your Potential

The potential of the average person is like a huge ocean unsailed, a new continent unexplored, a world of possibilities waiting to be released and channeled toward some great good.

—BRIAN TRACY

Success is goals, and all else is commentary. All successful people are intensely goal oriented. They know what they want and they are focused single-mindedly on achieving it, every single day.

Your ability to set goals is the master skill of success. Goals unlock your positive mind and release ideas and energy for goal attainment. Without goals, you simply drift and flow on the currents of life. With goals, you fly like an arrow, straight and true to your target.

The truth is that you probably have more natural potential than you could use if you lived one hundred lifetimes. Whatever you have accomplished up until now is only a small fraction of what is truly possible for you. One of the rules for success is this: It doesn't matter where you're coming from; all that matters is where you're going. And where you are going is solely determined by yourself and your own thoughts.

Clear goals increase your confidence, develop your competence, and boost your levels of motivation. As sales trainer Tom Hopkins says, "Goals are the fuel in the furnace of achievement."

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, all 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 and mirrors back to you what you think about. 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 most of the time. But successful people keep their thoughts and conversations on the topics of 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. Clear goals enable you to step on the accel-

erator of your own life and race ahead rapidly toward achieving more of what you really want.

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 man.

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 where it is or 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 seeking 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 when what they actually 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 I experienced, 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. Everyone has 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.

No Road Signs

The importance of clarity is easy to understand. Imagine arriving on the outskirts of a large city and being told to

drive to a particular home or office in that city. But here's the catch: There are no road signs and you have no map of the city. In fact, all you are given is a very general description of the home or office. The question is, How long do you think it would take you to find the home or office in the city without a road map and without road signs?

The answer is, Probably your whole life. If you ever did find the home or office, it would be very much a matter of luck. And sadly enough, this is the way most people live their lives.

Most people start life traveling aimlessly through an unmapped and uncharted world. This is the equivalent of starting off in life with no goals and plans. They simply figure things out as they go along. Often, ten or twenty years of work will go past and they will still be broke, unhappy in their jobs, dissatisfied with their marriages and making little progress. And still, they will go home every night and watch television, wishing and hoping that things will get better. But they seldom do. Not by themselves.

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. Victor Frankl, the founder of logotherapy, wrote that the greatest need of human beings is for *a sense of meaning and purpose in life*.

Goals give you a sense of meaning and purpose. Goals give you a 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 assure 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*. 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?

Clarity Is Everything

Your inborn potential is extraordinary. You have within you, right now, the ability to achieve almost any goal that you can set for yourself. Your greatest responsibility to yourself is to invest whatever time is required to become absolutely clear about exactly what you want and how you can best achieve it. The greater clarity you have regarding your true goals, the more of your potential you will unleash for good in your life.

You have probably heard it said that the average person uses only 10 percent of his or her potential. The sad fact is that, according to Stanford University, the average person functions with only about 2 percent of his or her mental potential. The remainder just sits there in reserve, being saved

for some later time. This would be exactly as if your parents had left you a trust fund with \$100,000 in it but all you ever took out to spend was \$2,000. The other \$98,000 simply sat in the account, unused throughout your life.

Develop a Burning Desire

The starting point of all goal attainment is *desire*. You must develop an intense burning desire for your goals if you really want to achieve them. Only when your desire becomes intense enough will you have the energy and the internal drive to overcome all the obstacles that will arise in your path.

The good news is that almost anything that you want long enough and hard enough, you can ultimately achieve.

The great oil billionaire H. L. Hunt was once asked the secret of success. He replied that success required two things and two things only. First, he said, you must know *exactly* what you want. Most people never make this decision. Second, he said, you must determine the *price* that you will have to pay to achieve it and then get busy paying that price.

The Cafeteria Model of Success

Life is more like a buffet or cafeteria than a restaurant. In a restaurant, you eat the complete meal and then you pay the bill. But in a buffet or cafeteria, you have to serve yourself and pay in full before you enjoy the meal. Many people make the mistake of thinking that they will pay the price *after* they have experienced success. They sit in front of the stove of life and say, “First give me some heat, and then I’ll put in some wood.”

As motivational speaker Zig Ziglar once said, “The elevator to success is out of service. But the stairs are always open.”

Another important observation from Aristotle was his conclusion that the ultimate purpose of all human action is the achievement of personal happiness. Whatever you do, he said, it is aimed at increasing your happiness in some way. You may or may not be successful in achieving happiness, but your happiness is always your ultimate aim.

The Key to Happiness

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 on, to be 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.

**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** What are the activities that give you your greatest sense of meaning and purpose in life?
- 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** What do you think and talk about most of the time—what you want or what you don't want?
- 5** What is the price you will have to pay to achieve the goals that are most important to you?
- 6** What one action should you take immediately as the result of your answers to the above questions?

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