



GOALS

The Goal-Setting Blueprint

Turn what you want into a written plan that survives real life, built on decades of goal research.

A NOTE FROM OUR TEAM

Every big win we've ever seen started with somebody writing it down and getting honest about what could stop them. This is the blueprint we'd hand our own families. Take an hour, find a quiet table, and don't rush the obstacle section. That's where goals are actually won.

— The Auto Advocate Team

Most goals don't fail for lack of desire. They fail because the target was vague, the obstacle was never planned for, and nobody was keeping score. This blueprint walks you through the handful of practices that goal research consistently supports: a specific, challenging target, a clear-eyed look at what's in your way, if-then plans, and progress you actually write down.

40,000+

PARTICIPANTS IN GOAL STUDIES
REVIEWED BY LOCKE & LATHAM

94

INDEPENDENT TESTS OF IF-THEN
PLANNING ANALYZED

138

STUDIES ON TRACKING PROGRESS
TOWARD GOALS

1 What the Research Actually Says

- **Specific and challenging beats "do your best."** Across decades of studies, people given specific, difficult goals generally outperformed people told to simply do their best (Locke & Latham, 2002).
- **Commitment and feedback matter.** The goal-performance link is strongest when you're committed to the goal and can see how you're doing.
- **If-then plans help.** A meta-analysis of 94 tests found that "If X happens, then I will do Y" plans had a medium-to-large average effect on reaching goals (Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006).
- **Tracking helps, especially on paper or in public.** Monitoring progress improved goal attainment, with larger effects when progress was physically recorded or reported to others (Harkin et al., 2016).

2 Your Vision, Life Area by Life Area

Before you pick goals, look at the whole picture. Score where you are today, then describe what "great" would honestly look like three years from now. Star the one or two areas that would change everything else if they improved.

LIFE AREA	TODAY (1-10)	WHAT "GREAT" LOOKS LIKE IN 3 YEARS	PRIORITY ★
Health & energy			
Marriage, family & friendships			
Career, business & leadership			
Money & financial security			
Faith, character & personal growth			
Fun, adventure & rest			
Home, giving & community			

3 The SMART Goal Worksheet

SMART is a widely used checklist that traces back to a 1981 management article by George Doran. Treat it as a quality check, not a law. Pick your top two goals from the starred areas and pressure-test each one. Make it a stretch: a goal you could hit without changing anything isn't a goal, it's a forecast.

Goal #1	Goal #2
Specific: exactly what? _____	Specific: exactly what? _____
Measurable: the number _____	Measurable: the number _____
Achievable: it's a stretch because _____	Achievable: it's a stretch because _____
Relevant: it matters because _____	Relevant: it matters because _____
Time-bound: done by _____	Time-bound: done by _____
One-sentence goal _____	One-sentence goal _____

Weak: "Get in better shape." Strong: "Walk or run 3 miles, 4 days a week, and complete a 5K by June 1."

4 The WOOP Exercise

WOOP was developed by psychologist Gabriele Oettingen. It pairs a positive picture of the future with an honest look at the inner obstacle in your way, then a plan to get past it. Do it for Goal #1, in writing, somewhere quiet.

- Wish.** What do you want that's challenging but achievable? Write it in a few words.

- Outcome.** Picture the best result. What will it feel like and what will change? If it doesn't excite you, pick a different wish.

- Obstacle.** What is the main thing *inside you* that could stop you: a habit, an emotion, a belief, an excuse? Be honest; this is the step people skip.

- Plan.** If [that obstacle shows up], then I will [one specific action].

5 Obstacles & If-Then Plans

Name the moments where you're most likely to quit, and decide your response now, while you're calm. A good "then" is short, concrete, and doable in the moment.

LIKELY OBSTACLE OR MOMENT OF WEAKNESS	IF... (THE TRIGGER)	THEN I WILL... (THE RESPONSE)
Example: Tired after work, skip the gym	If I get home and want to sit down	then I change clothes before I touch the couch

6 Accountability: Keep Score Where Someone Can See It

Progress you write down, and share, is progress you're more likely to make. Choose one person who will tell you the truth, not just what you want to hear.

Accountability partner _____ Phone / email _____

Check-in day & time _____ How (call, text, coffee) _____

The number I'll report every week _____

Where I'll track it (journal, wall chart, app) _____

If I miss two check-ins in a row, my partner has permission to _____

My signature _____ Date _____

7 Put Your Reviews on the Calendar

Feedback is what keeps a goal alive. Block these now, before the year fills up, and treat them like appointments you can't move.

REVIEW	WHEN	THE QUESTION TO ANSWER
Weekly (15 minutes)		Did I do what I said I'd do? What's my number?
Monthly (30 minutes)		Am I on pace? Which if-then plan needs a rewrite?
Quarterly (1 hour)		Is this still the right goal? What's the next 90 days?

FROM OUR TEAM

We see this pattern constantly: people who decide in advance, on paper, what they want and what they'll do when pressure hits make better decisions than people who decide in the moment. It's true in the gym, in business, and at a dealership desk. Your if-then plans are a skill. Use them everywhere.

BEFORE YOU MOVE ON

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ I scored every life area honestly | ☐ I wrote at least three if-then plans |
| ☐ My top goal is specific, measurable, and a stretch | ☐ I picked a partner and a weekly check-in |
| ☐ I named my inner obstacle in the WOOP | ☐ I'm turning Goal #1 into No. L02, The 90-Day Action Plan |

DISCIPLINE THAT CARRIES OVER

Disciplined people make disciplined purchases.

A clear target, a plan for the obstacles, and someone in your corner: the same habits that hit goals protect you on the biggest purchases of your life. If a vehicle is part of this year's plan, the Buyer Brief does the homework first, with dealer-grade trade valuation, rebate and incentive research, and incentivized rates, so your goal doesn't get rewritten at the sales desk.

Buyer Brief \$99

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THE DEALERSHIP HAS EXPERTS. NOW YOU DO, TOO.

SOURCES

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This blueprint is an educational personal-development tool, not medical, psychological, or financial advice. Research findings describe averages across groups and do not guarantee individual results.