

GOAL SETTING CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristics of Reachable Goals

- A. **A reachable goal is realistic.** Set goals that are realistic for your situation, your skills, talents and interests. For weekly goals, don't choose something that is uncharacteristically demanding for you. You can always do more than your stated goal so build in success by choosing something realistic.
- B. **A reachable goal is believable and possible.** You are the key person here so don't set a goal that you don't believe in. Make sure that you believe you can do it and that it is possible to do in the time you've set aside.
- C. **A reachable goal is measurable.** If your long term goal is "to be successful" you will be more likely to reach that goal if you say it in concrete and specific terms. For instance, you might say that you want to be earning \$40,000 a year by the time you are 28. For a weekly goal, move beyond statements like I want to do better in all my classes. Instead, promise your self that you will read two chapters of history by Saturday.
- D. **A reachable goal is flexible.** Sometimes our plans change; sometimes we get sick. Be prepared to reassess and revise your goal if necessary. If you are too sick to study, you may have to revise your goal of reading two chapters of history by extending the time to Monday.
- E. **A reachable goal is controllable.** Make sure you are in charge of your goal. If friends suggest that the best way to pass a class is to study old tests but you know your learning style demands chapter outlines to get the material down, stick with what works for you. You are in control.

Now make a list of rewards that you might give yourself for meeting your weekly goal. A candy bar? A movie? A TV show? Promise yourself that you will get the reward if you meet your goal. Now you must be willing to withhold the reward if you don't make it! And there is no sense in saying that a movie will be your reward if you know very well that you are going to see it regardless. Make the reward real!!!

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Finally choose a goal and a reward for next week and write it below.

Big Rocks

One day an expert in time management was speaking to a group of business students and, to drive home a point, used an illustration those students will never forget. As he stood in front of the group of high powered overachievers he said, "Okay, time for a quiz".

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Then he pulled out a one gallon, wide mouthed Mason jar and set it on the table in front of him. Then he produced about a dozen fist sized rocks and carefully placed them, one at a time, into the jar. When the jar was filled to the top and no more rocks would fit inside, he asked, "Is this jar full?" Everyone in the class said, "Yes."

Then he said, "Really?" He reached under the table and pulled out a bucket of gravel. Then he dumped some gravel in and shook the jar causing pieces of gravel to work themselves down into the space between the big rocks. Then he asked the group once more, "Is the jar full?" By this time the class was on to him. "Probably not," one of them answered. "Good!" he replied.

He reached under the table and brought out a bucket of sand. He started dumping the sand in the jar and it went into all of the spaces left between the rocks and the gravel. Once more he asked the question, "Is this jar full?" "No!" the class shouted. Once again he said, "Good." Then he grabbed a pitcher of water and began to pour it in until the jar was filled to the brim.

Then he looked at the class and asked, "What is the point of this illustration?" One eager beaver raised his hand and said, "The point is, no matter how full your schedule is, if you try really hard you can always fit some more things in it!"

"No," the speaker replied, "that's not the point. The truth this illustration teaches us is: If you don't put the big rocks in first, you'll never get them in at all." What are the 'big rocks' in your life? Your children; Your loved ones; Your education; Your dreams; A worthy cause; Teaching or mentoring others; Doing things that you love; Time for yourself; Your health; Your significant other. Remember to put these BIG ROCKS in first or you'll never get them in at all.

If you sweat the little stuff (the gravel, the sand) then you'll fill your life with little things you worry about that don't really matter, and you'll never have the real quality time you need to spend on the big, important stuff (the big rocks).

So, tonight, or in the morning, when you are reflecting on this short story, ask yourself this question: What are the 'big rocks' in my life? Then, put those in your jar first.



Student Success Services
Health Science Building-203
1300 West Park, Butte, MT 59701