

8 Reasons Why Goal Setting Is Important for 2019

by [Harry Guinness](#) 29 Dec 2018

Difficulty: Beginner Length: Medium Languages:

Goal Setting Productivity Planning Small Business Entrepreneurship

You may be wondering, why is goal setting important?

Setting goals is one of the most important things you can do if you want to achieve things in your personal or business life.

With the end of the year coming up, most people's focus starts to turn inwards. It's hard not to think about what you've accomplished this year when every other article is a round-up of the best advice of 2018.



Learn about the importance of goal setting if you want to accomplish things in 2019. (Image source: [Envato Elements](#))

And while looking back and considering what you achieved in 2018 is a good idea, it's even more important to look forward to 2019 and start thinking about what you want to achieve then. Now, let's dive and look at how important goal setting is and why you should do it now.

An Overview on How to Set Goals




We've previously [published a full tutorial on how to set goals](#) in your work and personal life, but I'm going to recap the most important takeaway here: *any goal you set should be SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-constrained*. That is:

- **Specific.** Your goal is clear and well defined. “Lose weight” or “make money” is useless as a goal instead, it needs to be something like “enter a half-marathon in May so I can lose weight” or “learn some new skills from Envato Tuts+ so I can freelance and make money”.
- **Measurable.** Can you quantify success or failure? Losing an ounce is technically losing weight. Getting paid a penny is still earning money. Goals need to be measurable to have a real chance at succeeding.
- **Achievable.** The worst goals you can set are unachievable ones. I'm 28—it's way too late for me to start a career in NASA. It doesn't matter what goals I set, becoming an astronaut is just not in my future. Make sure the goals you set are achievable *for you*.
- **Relevant** to your broader aims. Small goals should drive you towards bigger targets. If you want to get a promotion in work, then you should look at upskilling or finding ways to take on more responsibilities. Don't pick goals that take you in the wrong direction.
- **Time-Constrained.** “Someday” is the same as never. Your goals can't be vague and open-ended. They just won't happen. Instead, you need to put a realistic time constraint on any goals you set. Depending on the goal, that can be something like one week, one month, six months, or even a year.

For more on how to set goals, [check out the full article](#). Now, let's move on to some reasons why it's important to set goals:

1. Goals Give You Direction





One of the reasons goals are so important is that they give you direction. When you've got clearly set and well-defined goals, they make lots of decisions easy. You don't need to expend any mental energy thinking about certain courses of action because they don't fit your goals.

If your goal is to lose two pounds this month and you're out for a meal with friends and have to choose between the greasy burger or the chicken salad, then it's pretty clear which option you should take. Similarly, in a professional context, if your goal is to work towards getting promoted and you've got the choice between helping your boss prepare his PowerPoint deck for a conference or having a drink with a friend, then it's simple to decide.

By setting goals like this you can essentially put your decision making on autopilot, which has the nice dual effect of making you more likely to achieve your goals and giving you more time and energy to focus on taking the more active actions you need to take to achieve your goals.


Advertisement

2. Goals Give You a Way to Track Progress

If you wonder about the purpose of having goals, consider this. Goals are a really powerful way to track your progress and personal growth. By regularly sitting down and looking at how close you are to achieving your goals—or how many goals you've met—you can see in what areas of your life you're succeeding and where you need a bit more work. You'll also be able to see what actions are paying off the most based on the how quickly or easily you're achieving your goals.

For example, if your aim over the last three months was to lose two pounds per month, then you should now be around six pounds lighter. If you are, that's great,





you're well on your way to achieving your broader aim of losing weight. If not, then you need to consider where you're going wrong and what you can do about it.

You can also use goals—or one's you're achieving—to forecast into the future. If you've lost six pounds in the last three months, you should be another six pounds lighter in another three.

3. Goals Keep You Accountable

Another one of the main purposes of goals is that they keep you accountable for your actions. If you've decided you want to do something, you should be taking the steps necessary to achieve it. If you're constantly falling short of your goals then you know that you need to work harder and crack down on actions you're taking that aren't serving your aims. The opposite is also true: if you're easily hitting your goals then you probably need to challenge yourself more. Goals shouldn't be too easy to reach; if they are, then they're not really goals.

With your goals set, you can't lie to yourself. When you honestly reflect, you'll be able to see that:

- You're either taking actions that get you closer to your goals and achieving them.
- You're taking actions that get you closer to your goals, but your goals are unrealistic so you're not achieving them.
- You're not taking the actions necessary to achieve your goals.

You can't wriggle out with vague excuses about bad weeks or stress.

4. Goals Are Motivating



Another reason for the importance of goal setting is that achieving goals is incredibly motivating. Each one is a win. If you decided six months ago that you want to [create \\$500 a month in passive income](#) and then, six months later, you're earning that extra \$500, you're going to feel—rightfully—proud of yourself. You put in the work and achieved something you wanted to achieve. You're also going to be much more motivated to set your next set of goals and go out and try to achieve them.

Even small goals are motivating. You don't need to always shoot for the moon. For example, if you want to lose weight, you bust your ass in the gym, and then, at the end of the week, you're a pound lighter, you'll feel pretty good—and you should. You're doing what you decided to do.


By using goals to shape your life, you can give yourself lots of these small victories that keep you on the right path. Without goals, it's way too easy to just coast from thoughtless action to thoughtless action, never really achieving what you think you want to.

5. Goals Help You Get Over Mental Blocks

There are lots of different mental blocks like writer's block, procrastination, misplaced priorities, and perfectionism. [Goal setting can help you overcome these sticking points.](#)

Take procrastination. If you're spending too much time faffing about on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or Instagram when you're meant to be working, then you can use goal setting to get yourself back on track. Start by [setting up some time tracking software](#) and set yourself a goal of less than, say, 30 minutes of social media time during the work day. Remember, the goal has to be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-constrained: less than 30 minutes a day is all five while trying to go straight for zero isn't very achievable.





With a goal in place and a way to keep track of it, you're ready to address your procrastination. At the end of every day you'll be able to see if you managed to keep your social media use to less than half an hour. If you did, well done! Give yourself a pat on the back and enjoy that small thrill of victory and personal pride. If not, then you need to look at why you didn't, and try again the next day.

Whatever the mental block is, there's a way to use goal setting to get around it or through it.

6. Goals Help You Work Out What You Really Want

Actions speak louder than words. If there's one goal that you set every year and you never manage to achieve, or even make a dent in, then you need to take a step back and really assess your priorities. There are lots of things that people assume they *should* want and so say they want them, but never back it up with any actions.

For example, it's one thing to say you want to become a digital nomad, able to work remotely from anywhere, but it's totally another to take the steps necessary to achieve it. There's a pretty clear framework:

- Develop skills that allow you to work primarily from a laptop computer.
- Find a company that hires people remotely or go your own way as a freelancer.
- Travel the world, working as you do.

But if you actually like where you live, if you like your house and your partner and your dog, and you're not following the framework above, then maybe your goal shouldn't be to become a digital nomad. Maybe what you actually want is to see some of the exotic locations that digital nomads are posting on Instagram. If that's the case, then your goal should probably be to get increased paid holiday leave or permission to





take a month of unpaid leave. You should also look at setting a savings goal to get the money together for your trip.

It's the goals you don't achieve, or really, don't even attempt to achieve, that are most illuminating. Looking at what you haven't achieved and why can really help you decide what you actually want, not what you say want.

7. The Year End Is a Good Time to Reset


There's absolutely no reason you can't reassess your life and set a whole rake of new goals on a random Tuesday in May but, most people don't. Instead, most people—myself included—find arbitrary deadlines like birthdays and the New Year to be the best time to set them. They give you a firm, predictable line in the sand, like, “from the first of January, I'm no longer a smoker”.

While there's plenty of reasons to set goals at any time of the year—all the reasons above!—it makes sense to just lean in and embrace the end of year reset. There are always lots of great resources around, like this article, to help you, and most other people are at least considering what they want to do to grow as a person. It's a good time to do it.

8. January Is Quiet and Boring

The other reason the end of the year is a good time to set goals is that January is, for the most part, quiet and boring. Everyone is burnt out from the extended holiday season and if you're in the northern hemisphere it's cold and dark. There are less distractions than at other times of the year.





With that said, if you're serious about achieving personal growth, then you can't do the usual thing of failing out of your New Year's Resolutions by the 2nd of February. You need to keep setting and sticking to your goals. After your initial enthusiasm has worn off, you need to assess what you're doing, and work out how you can [keep on yourself motivated](#) to stay the path.

Final Thoughts

Setting goals is, unsurprisingly, one of the most important things you can do if you want to achieve big, important things. The best things have to be earned.

You've just learned the importance of setting goals. 2019 is a great time to start setting goals and working towards what you want to achieve. And at Envato Tuts+, we're here to help. Why not set some goals for yourself for the new year?

