Goal setting is a great way to give yourself direction and achieve those things that you want. Most of us believe we know what we want and therefore don’t need to set goals, yet we somehow struggle to get there. Knowing how to set effective goals will help you no end. Having goals is a really great way to give yourself direction, focus and motivation. Work out what goals to set and learn how to plan them so that you maximise your chances of achieving what you want most in the world.

Goal setting can help if:

- you feel overwhelmed by how much is going on
- you feel like you’re lacking direction
- you have a big project to tackle.

Why Goal Setting is Useful: Turning something you want in life into a goal is a really great way to make it happen. That’s because you’re making a decision to act in order to get what you want. Goals give you direction, they keep you focused and motivated, and increase your chances of achieving things. What’s important about the goals you set is that they need to mean something to you –they shouldn’t be things that you think you should be doing. You will get the most
benefit out of achieving goals that you want to achieve, less out of achieving goals that don’t mean much to you.

**Goal Setting - Where to Begin:** To be able to set a goal you need to know what you want. If you don’t know what you want, you aren’t going to get it. Some tips for helping you work out what you want include:

- Start with things you enjoy. We are happiest when we are using our strengths. Write down the five things you enjoy most in life. Are there any goals you can identify?
- Don’t get too caught up in ‘big’ things. A lot of the time when we think about goals, we think they need to mean a big thing, and that can get overwhelming. Change how you think about goals. A goal should be anything you want to do or achieve - big, small, or completely random.
- Think about what you don’t want. Write a list of five or ten things that you don’t want. Then turn them around to become goals, e.g., turn ‘I don’t want to be stuck at home’ into ‘I want to travel.’

**Make SMART Goals:** To make sure your goals are clear and reachable, each one should be:

- **Specific** (simple, sensible, significant).
- **Measurable** (meaningful, motivating).
- ** Achievable** (agreed, attainable).
- **Relevant** (reasonable, realistic and resourced).
- **Time bound** (time-based, time limited, time/cost limited).

**The Process of Goal Setting.** There are three simple steps you need to take to set a goal.

1. **Define your goal.** There are five important parts to defining a goal. Goals should be **Specific**, **Measurable and Achievable**. Your goal should be clear and easy to explain to another person – so sensible. Your goals should also motivate you and be something meaningful. If it’s a SMART goal, you should also know when you’ve achieved it. Make your goals **Relevant** and **Time bound**. Taking on challenges can be really motivating, but don’t set yourself up to fail. If you’re not sure if your goal is realistic or can be achieved within a limited time frame, talk to someone you trust about it. You can set goals about anything; work, study, physical health, interests etc.

2. **Set sub-goals.** Break up your goal. Breaking up your goal into sub-goals is important to staying motivated, particularly for larger goals that take a long time to achieve. Sub-goals help you recognise and celebrate when you’ve made progress.

3. **Work through a plan of action.** Having a tangible plan of action helps you to stay focused. Write down your sub-goals. Once you’ve worked out your sub-goals, make sure you write them down and keep them in a place that you can see. Having them close by will help keep you motivated. Include a time frame. Deadlines are important. They keep you on the go and help you stay motivated. For each written sub-goal, write down a deadline to prevent you from putting things off or forgetting your goal.

**Extract from Reach Out:** [http://au.reachout.com/How-to-set-goals](http://au.reachout.com/How-to-set-goals)