



When I teach classes, I usually ask how many people believe in the power of written goals. Most people say yes. Yet when I ask how many of them have written goals for *this year*, very few do. This always surprises me, given the fact most people know intuitively (and [research has proved](#)) that those who write their goals down accomplish *significantly* more than those who do not write their goals. The following is a simple plan that Michael Hyatt has designed for beginners....there is no need to reinvent the wheel he has created a simple strategy that can work for anyone.

So where to start?

1. **Keep them few in number.** Studies show that you really can't focus on more than 5–7 things at a time. Don't cheat by including sections with several goals under each section. This is a recipe for losing focus and accomplishing very little. Instead, focus on a handful of goals that you can repeat almost from memory. Keep it simple.
2. **Make them “smart.”** This is an acronym, as you probably know, and it is interpreted in various ways by different teachers. When I refer to *smart goals*, I mean this. Goals must meet five criteria. They must be:
  - *Specific*—your goals must identify exactly what you want to accomplish in as much specificity as you can muster.  
Bad: Write a book.  
Good: Write a book proposal for *The Life Plan Manifesto*.
  - *Measurable*—as the old adage says, “you can't manage what you can't measure.” If possible, try to quantify the result. You want to know absolutely, positively whether or not you hit the goal.  
Bad: “Earn more this year than last.”  
Good: “Earn \$5,000 more this year than last.”
  - *Actionable*—every goal should start with an action verb (e.g., “quit,” “run,” “finish,” “eliminate,” etc.) rather than a to-be verb (e.g., “am,” “be,” “have,” etc.)  
Bad: Be more consistent in blogging.  
Good: Write two blog posts per week.
  - *Realistic*—you have to be careful here. A good goal should stretch you, but you have to add a dose of common sense. I go right up to the edge of my comfort zone and then step over it. (If I am not out of my [comfort zone](#), I'm not thinking big enough.)  
Bad: Qualify for the PGA Tour.  
Good: Lower my golf handicap by four strokes.
  - *Time-bound*—every goal needs a date associated with it. When do you plan to deliver on that goal. It could be by year-end (December 31) or it could be more near-term (September 30). A goal without a date is just a dream. Make sure that every goal ends with a *when* date.

## STRAIGHT TALK WITH CATHY

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Bad: Lose 20 pounds.

Good: Lose 20 pounds by December 31st.

3. **Write them down.** This is critical. There is a huge power in writing your goals down even if you never develop an action plan or do anything else (not recommended). Henriette Anne Klauser documents this in her fascinating book, [\*Write It Down and Make It Happen\*](#). When you write something down, you are stating your intention and setting things in motion.
4. **Review them frequently.** While writing your goals down is a powerful exercise in itself, the real juice is in reviewing them on a regular basis. This is what turns them into reality. Every time I review my goals, I ask myself, *What's the next step I need to take to move toward this goal*. You can review them daily, weekly, or monthly. ([I review them weekly](#).) It's up to you. The key is to do let them inspire and populate your daily task list.
5. **Share them selectively.** I used to advise people to “go public” with their goals—even blog about them. But in his 2010 TED talk, Derek Sivers [makes the compelling case](#) that telling someone your goals makes them less likely to happen. Now I counsel people not to share them with anyone who is not committed to helping you achieve them (e.g., your mentor, mastermind group, or business partner).

The practice of goal-setting is not just helpful; it is a prerequisite for happiness. [Psychologists tell us](#) that people who make consistent progress toward meaningful goals live happier more satisfied lives than those who don't.

If you don't have written goals, let me encourage you to make an appointment on your calendar to work on them. You can get a rough draft done in as little as an hour or two. Few things in life pay such rich dividends for such a modest investment.

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Each person has a unique way of thinking and interacting with those around them; as your coach, it's helpful for me to get a better understanding of how you view the world in general and yourself in particular. These are some questions designed to provoke thought and dialog between us, and help this experience be both productive and beneficial. Please consider the following, and answer the questions to the best of your ability and comfort level. A short answer is all that is needed, but should you wish to write more feel free to do so.

1. What is your role in the world you live in?
2. What are you passionate about, why?
3. What things in life scare you? Things that you avoid or procrastinate over.
4. What motivates you?
5. How do you tend to sabotage yourself?
6. What is missing in your life? What would make life more fulfilling?
7. What is your dream?
8. Does religious faith have a role in your day to day life?
9. How would you define success? What does it look like?
10. If you could have anything in the world what would it be?
11. What do you want out of your life?
12. If you could be anything you wanted to be what would you be?
13. Who has been the most influential person in your life?
14. How intensive do you want these sessions to be?
15. What is your learning style?
16. What is your favorite way to relieve stress?
17. What are your hobbies/interests?
18. How do you care for your mental and emotional well-being?
19. What do you think are your weak points in life?
20. What are your strong points?
21. What are your happiest and saddest memories?
22. What are some goals/dreams you gave up on? Why?