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THE  
**JIM ROHN**  
GUIDE TO



**GOAL  
SETTING**



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➤ **DEDICATION** ◀

To: \_\_\_\_\_

From: \_\_\_\_\_

"I wish for you a life of wealth, health  
and happiness; a life in which you give to  
yourself the gift of patience, the virtue of reason,  
the value of knowledge, and the influence  
of faith in your own ability to dream about and  
to achieve worthy rewards."

— *Jim Rohn*

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THE **JIM ROHN**  
GUIDE TO  
**GOAL**  
**SETTING**





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► **JIM ROHN** ◀

For more than 40 years, Jim Rohn honed his craft like a skilled artist, helping people all over the world sculpt life strategies that expanded their imagination of what is possible. Jim set the standard for those who seek to teach and inspire others. He possessed the unique ability to bring extraordinary insights to ordinary principles and events. Those who had the privilege of hearing him speak can attest to the elegance and common sense in his material. It is no coincidence, then, that he is widely regarded as one of the most influential thinkers of our time and a national treasure. Jim authored numerous books and audio and video programs, and he helped motivate and shape an entire generation of personal-development trainers and hundreds of executives from America's top corporations.

*For additional information or to shop for Jim Rohn's best-selling books, CDs, DVDs and more, go to [www.JimRohn.com](http://www.JimRohn.com).*

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## ► A NOTE ON THIS GUIDE ◀

The text of this pocket-size guide is based on transcripts of Jim Rohn's most popular lectures and writings on the subject of goal setting. His original words have been transcribed, edited, rearranged and slightly modified in some instances for greater clarity.

As you read, you may recognize a familiar pace to the text. It is our hope that Jim's easy conversational tone and speaking style come across in your reading of each and every page. Though some of Jim's references may be out of date, his life philosophies and success principles transcend the years and are as relevant today as they were when he first expressed them.

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The intent of this guide is to provide a concise, easy-to-read treatment of the subject matter that can be read in a short sitting of 15 to 20 minutes. Highlight your favorite parts and keep it close for easy reference again and again. Share it with friends, family, associates, clients and anyone you feel would benefit from the timeless wisdom of a true legend.

*See page 48 for information on other booklets  
in the Jim Rohn Guide series.*

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► THE **JIM ROHN**  
GUIDE TO  
**GOAL**  
**SETTING** ◀

Goal setting is a subject that altered my life forever. I hadn't known my mentor, Mr. Earl Shoaff, for very long when one day he said to me, "Mr. Rohn, let me see your current list of goals. I've had a lot of experience and I've been out here for a while, so let's go over them and maybe I can really give you some good ideas." And I said, "I don't have a list." He said, "Well, if you don't have a list of your goals, I can guess your bank balance within a few hundred dollars." And he did.

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That got my attention. I said, "You mean my bank balance would be a lot bigger if I learned how to set goals?" He said, "Drastically bigger." So, I finally said, "Hey, I want to learn how to set goals."

It is a fantastic skill to develop, how to design your own future. A life best lived is a life by design. Not by accident, and not by just walking through the day careening from wall to wall and managing to survive. That's okay. But if you can start giving your life dimensions and design and color and objectives and purpose, the results can be absolutely staggering.

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## ➤ USE YOUR IMAGINATION <

Goal setting gives you the chance to experience the power of your imagination. Think about it. Imagination builds cities. Imagination conquers disease. Imagination develops careers. Imagination sets up relationships. Imagination is where all tangible values and intangible values begin. So what you've got to learn to do is use this powerful resource.

Tapping this resource of imagination for goal setting involves thinking about your future, thinking about tomorrow or the rest of the day, thinking about the rest of the year or five years or 10. You can use your imagination to start prospecting for the future, for what could be possible for you.

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## ► FIVE THINGS THAT AFFECT US ◀

Before we really get into goal setting, I want to outline five primary things that affect all of us.

### **1. The Environment**

It doesn't hurt to make a simple contribution to the environment. Pick up a piece of trash and throw it in the receptacle. If everybody did that, what a better world it would be. A little contribution costs nothing. If everybody contributed, what a difference it would make!

### **2. Events**

Events affect us—some small, some big, some personal, some national, some global. Think of any big event of local, national or global significance. Those kinds of events affect us all. There are small events and daily events and family events and community events. We're all affected by events.

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### **3. Knowledge**

We're affected by whatever we know or don't know. Here's a good phrase to jot down: Ignorance is not bliss. Ignorance is tragedy. Ignorance is devastation. Ignorance creates lack. Ignorance creates disease. Ignorance will shorten your life. Ignorance will empty your life and leave you with the husks, nothing to account for. No, ignorance is not bliss.

Here's another note to make: What you don't know will hurt you. What you don't know will tragically affect your life. What you don't know will leave your life empty. What you don't know will leave you without a relationship. We're all affected by knowledge, whether we know or whether we don't know. That's why you've got to read the books. Remember, the book you don't read won't help.

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## **4. Results**

We're affected by results. Whether it's financial results or personal results or social results, we're all affected by results. Disciplines undone in the future give us poor results. Disciplines managed well give us good results.

## **5. Our Dreams**

We're affected by our dreams, our vision of the future.

### **➤ THE PULL OF THE FUTURE ➥**

You want to make sure that the greatest pull on your life is the pull of the future. Some people live in the past and let their life be continually pulled and influenced by the past. Yes, we must remember the past and review the past to make it useful to invest

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in the future. But here's the key: Make sure that the greatest pull on your life is the pull of the future.

Now, if you're skimpy on your dreams or if you're skimpy on your objectives and your purposes, if all of that isn't very well planned, then that doesn't pull very hard. You might have more of a tendency to be pulled by the past or to be pulled apart by events or circumstances or to be pulled apart by distractions. So in order to save yourself from being pulled apart by distractions or pulled back to the past, you want to start, right now, really designing the future so that the greatest part of your attention and focus pulls you forward into the future to accomplish your goals.

## ➤ **STRONG DREAMS** ◀

Goals are like a magnet—they pull. And the stronger they are, the more purposeful they are, the bigger they are, the more unique they are, the stronger they pull.

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Excellent goals and high dreams pull you through all kinds of down days, down seasons. They pull you through a winter of discontent. They pull you through distraction on every side. Strong, powerful dreams, like a magnet, pull you through. Strong dreams and goals pull you through a disaster. Some people get swallowed by the disaster because they have nothing on the other side of the disaster to pull them through. A bad day can almost overwhelm you if you don't have something really purposeful to go for on the other side of that day, on the other side of the difficult time, on the other side of the down time.

If you've got plenty out there to attract and pull, it'll pull you through all these things and very little of it will attach itself to you. You'll be able to get through some of the most difficult times if you have this spectacular vision ahead of you of where you're going and what you're going to accomplish. Getting through will be easier.

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## ➤ LEARNING TO SET GOALS <

Once I learned to set goals, it transformed my life forever. It's an incredible experience. When I travel around the world and sit on an airplane, I say I dreamed about this one day. I used to go to the airport and watch the planes fly away, and I said, "One of these days I'll be on one of those planes." I dreamed about it.

I dreamed about the other side of the world. I'd never been to Italy, but I dreamed about it. I'd never been to Israel, but I dreamed about it. I'd never been to South Africa, but I dreamed about it. I'd never been to Australia, but I dreamed about it. And sure enough, step by step, and country by country, and flight by flight, I started checking them off my list. It was the most exhilarating feeling. Powerful to set those goals, reach out there into the future, design something to the best of your ability, refine it as you go, tear it up periodically if you want to, set a whole new list. It's your life. It's your future.

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## ➤ THREE COMPONENTS OF POWERFUL GOALS ◀

I've often said that the major reason for setting a goal is for what it makes you do to accomplish it. This will always be a far greater value than what you get. That is why goals are so powerful. They are part of the fabric that makes up our lives.

Goal setting provides focus, shapes our dreams and gives us the ability to home in on the exact actions we need to take in order to get everything in life we desire. Goals are exciting because they provide focus and aim for our lives. Goals cause us to stretch and grow in ways we never have before. In order to reach our goals, we must become better. We must change and grow.

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## **Powerful goals have three components:**

- They must be inspiring.
- They must be believable.
- They must be goals you can act on.

When your goals inspire you, when you believe and act on them, you will accomplish them!

## **➤ LONG-TERM VISION ➜**

Goals also provide long-term vision in our lives. We all need lots of powerful, long-range goals to help us get past short-term obstacles. Life is designed in such a way that we look long term and live short term. We dream for the future and live in the present. Unfortunately, the present can produce many hard obstacles. Fortunately, the more powerful our goals (because they are inspiring

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and believable), the more we will be able to act on them in the short term and guarantee that they will actually come to pass.

## ➤ **KEY ASPECTS OF GOAL SETTING** ◀

So, let's take a closer look at the topic of goal setting and see how we can make it forceful yet practical. What key aspects should we learn and remember when studying and writing our goals? I believe there are four main areas of emphasis:

### **1. Evaluation and Reflection**

The only way we can reasonably decide what we want in the future and how we will get there is to first know where we are right now and what our level of satisfaction is for where we are in

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life. With our focus on goal setting, the first order of business is for each of us to set aside some serious time for evaluation and reflection.

## **2. Dreams and Goals**

What are your dreams and goals? Not related to the past or what you think you can get, but what you want. Have you ever really sat down, thought through your life values and decided what you really want? This isn't what someone else says you should have or what culture tells us successful people do or have. These are the dreams and goals born out of your own heart and mind, goals unique to you and that come from who you were created to be and gifted to become.

## **3. SMART Goals**

SMART means Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-sensitive.

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- **Specific:** Don't be vague.  
Exactly what do you want?
  - **Measurable:** Quantify your goal. How will you know if you've achieved it or not?
  - **Attainable:** Be honest with yourself about what you can reasonably accomplish at this point in your life while taking into consideration your current responsibilities.
  - **Realistic:** It's got to be doable, real and practical.
  - **Time:** Associate a time frame with each goal. When should you complete the goal?

## 4. Accountability

Think of the word *accountable*. It means to give an account. When someone knows what your goals are, they help hold you accountable. Whether it is someone else trying to reach the same goal with

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you or just someone you can give the basic idea to, having a person who can hold you accountable—an accountability partner—will give you another added boost to accomplishing your goals.

So, evaluate and reflect. Decide what you want. Be SMART. Have accountability. When you put these four key pieces together, you put yourself in a position of power to catapult toward achieving your goals and the kind of life you desire.

## ➤ **EVALUATION AND REFLECTION** ➙

The basis for knowing where we want to go is knowing where we came from and where we are. It is also knowing how well we have done achieving things we have previously set our eyes on. This is the essence of evaluation and reflection. We need to understand how to look at what we have done and then use that as a platform for what we want to do next.

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The process of evaluation is relatively simple but can be varied a bit. The important point is having a process. Here is the basic process for evaluation and reflection:

## **1. Find a Quiet Place**

Reflection is best done away from distraction. It gives your mind space to think.

## **2. Take a Regular Time**

Whether it is once a week, every other week, once a month or quarter, be sure to set aside a regular time at regular intervals to evaluate and reflect.

## **3. Look Back**

Look at what you have accomplished and where you are. Be specific. Be truthful. Be ruthlessly honest.

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## **4. Write It Down**

Keep a record. This gives you the chance at the next stage of evaluation to see exactly where you were last time and keeps it as objective as possible.

## **5. Look Forward**

Set your next goal. Stretch yourself according to what works for you.

That is the basic process of evaluation and reflection. If you have not done this before, then this will get you going. Be sure to follow the general idea and set aside time for your evaluation and reflection.

## **► WHY EVALUATE? ◀**

Now, the purpose of evaluation is twofold. First, it gives you an objective way to look at your accomplishments and your pursuit of the vision you

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have for your life. Second, it shows you where you are so you can determine where you need to go. In other words, it gives you a baseline from which to work.

We have all heard the quote, "The unexamined life is not worth living." To evaluate and reflect brings us face to face with who we are and what we have become. More important, it allows us the time to dream and create a vision for what we want to become. Only when we take time out of our busy schedules can we get into the state of mind and quietness of heart we need in order to find that inner place where we see what we are and what we can become.

Those who never take time to evaluate and reflect will blow to and fro through this life, living by the forces of culture, circumstances, societal pressures and, unfortunately, personal weaknesses.

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In contrast, those who take the time to evaluate will find they are like an oak tree in a storm: They have a firm foundation, they know where they are going, they know how to get there, and, ultimately, they will get there no matter what comes their way!

I strongly encourage you to take a couple of hours this week to evaluate and reflect. See where you are and note it in your journal so that as the months progress and you continue a regular time of evaluation and reflection, you'll see just how much ground you have gained—and that will be exciting!

## ► **ESTABLISHING DREAMS AND GOALS** ◀

One of the amazing things we have been given as humans is the unquenchable desire to have dreams of a better life. Even better, we also have the ability to establish goals to live out those dreams.

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Think of it: We can look deep within our hearts and dream of a better situation for ourselves and our families, of a secure financial future and healthy emotional or physical states, and certainly of deeper spiritual lives. But what makes this even more powerful is that we have also been given the ability to take action and pursue those dreams. Not only can we pursue them, but we possess the cognitive ability to actually lay out a plan and strategies—to set goals—to achieve those dreams. Powerful!

## ➤ **WHAT ARE YOUR DREAMS AND GOALS?** ◀

Now let me clarify something here about your dreams and goals: This isn't about what you already have or what you have done. This is about what you want.

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Have you ever taken the time to truly reflect, to listen quietly to your heart, to see what dreams live within you? Your dreams are there, everyone has them. They may live right on the surface or be buried deep from years of others telling you they were foolish, but they are there. Back when I met Mr. Shoaff, he put me to work by asking the hard questions that got me excited about my dreams, and he helped me translate that excitement into strategic action to pursue all that I wanted. Now I'm going to walk you through the same disciplines that will help unleash the power of the dreams inside each of you.

## ► **LISTEN TO YOURSELF** ◀

So how do we know what our dreams are? This is an interesting process and relates primarily to the art of

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listening. This is not listening to others; it is listening to yourself. If we listen to others, we hear their plans and dreams, and, at times, others will try to put their plans and dreams on us. If we listen to others, we can never be fulfilled. We will only chase elusive dreams that are not rooted deep within us.

Instead, we must listen to our own hearts to hear the dreams born out of the passions and desires we each uniquely possess. Quiet yourself and listen. Just like when you are quiet enough to hear your own heart beating within your chest, your dreams have their own rhythm beating within you. All you have to do is get quiet enough to hear the beat.

Now let's take a look at some practical steps and thoughts on listening to our hearts and connecting to our dreams.

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## ➤ TAKE TIME TO BE QUIET ◀

Taking the time to be quiet is something we don't do enough in this busy world. We rush, rush, rush and are constantly listening to noise all around us. We must not get faked out by just being busy. Instead, we must constantly ask ourselves the question, "Busy doing what?" In other words, are the activities you are participating in moving you toward your goals? If not, then work to eliminate those things and replace some of that time with quiet.

The human heart was meant to have times of quiet reflection, allowing us to peer deep within ourselves. It is when we do this that our hearts are set free to soar and take flight on the wings of our own dreams. Schedule some quiet "dream time" this week. No other people. No cellphone. No computer. Just you, a pad, a pen and your thoughts.

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Think about what really thrills you. When you are quiet, think about those things that really get your blood moving. What would you love to do, either for fun or for a living? What would you love to accomplish? What would you try if you were guaranteed to succeed? What big thoughts move your heart into a state of excitement and joy? When you answer these questions, you'll feel terrific because you're in the "dream zone." It is only when we get to this point that we can truly realize and begin to experience what our dreams are.

## ➤ **MAKE A LIST AND PRIORITIZE**    ◀

Write down all of your dreams as you have them. Don't think of any as too outlandish or foolish—remember, you're dreaming! Let your thoughts and pen fly as you take careful record.

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Now look at your list and prioritize those dreams. Which are most important? Which are most feasible? Which would you love to do the most? Put them in the order you will actually try to attain them. Remember, we are always moving toward action, not just dreaming.

Why am I asking you to take part in this exercise? It's because life is too short not to pursue your dreams. At the end of your life, all you will be able to do is look backward. You can reflect with joy or regret. And we all know that joy from discipline weighs ounces while regret weighs tons.

Those who dream, who set goals and act on them, are those who live lives of joy and have a sense of peace when they near the end of their lives. They will have finished well and possess a sense of pride and accomplishment, not only for themselves but also for their families. That feeling is priceless!

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**Remember:** These are the dreams and goals born out of your heart and mind, goals unique to you, and they come from who you were created to be and gifted to become. Your specific goals are what you want to achieve because they will make your life joyful and bring fulfillment for both you and your family.

## ➤ SET SMART GOALS ◀

I really like the acronym SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-sensitive), one of the key aspects of goal setting I mentioned earlier, because we want to be smart when we set our goals. We want to intelligently decide what our goals will be so that we can actually accomplish them. We want to set the goals that our heart conceives, that our mind believes and that our

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bodies will carry out. Let's take an even closer look at each of the components of SMART goals.

## ➤ **SPECIFIC** ◀

Goals are no place to waffle. They are no place to be vague. Ambiguous goals produce ambiguous results. Incomplete goals produce incomplete futures.

When we are specific, we harness the power of our dreams and set forces into action that empower us to achieve our goals. We then know exactly what it is we are shooting for—there is no question.

As we establish our priorities and manage our time, we do it for a specific goal, to achieve the results we expect. There is no wondering or guessing. The future is locked into our minds, and we see it—specifically—and that is powerful! Never underestimate just how important it is to have very

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specific, concrete goals. They act as magnets that draw you toward them. A SMART goal is specific.

## ➤ **MEASURABLE** ◀

Always set goals that are measurable—I would say “specifically measurable” to take into account our principle of being specific as well. Our goals should be such that we know when we are advancing and by how much. Whether it is by hours, pounds, dollars or some other scale, we should be able to see exactly how we are measuring up as we journey through life using our goals. Imagine if you didn’t measure your goals. You would never know which way you were going, or even if you were going anywhere. A SMART goal is measurable.

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## ➤ ATTAINABLE ◀

One of the detrimental things many people do—and they do it with good intentions—is to set goals that are unattainable. While it's very important to set big goals that cause your heart to soar with excitement, it is also imperative to make sure they are attainable.

So what does it mean to be attainable? An attainable goal is one that is both realistic and doable in a shorter period of time than what you have to work with. Now, when I say "attainable," I don't mean easy. Our goals should be set so that they are just out of our reach, so that they challenge us to grow as we reach forward to achieve them. A SMART goal is attainable.

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## ➤ **REALISTIC**

The root word of *realistic* is *real*. A goal has to be something that we can reasonably make “real” or a “reality” in our lives. There are some goals that are simply not realistic. You have to be able to say, even if it is a tremendously stretched goal, that it is entirely realistic—that you could make it. You may have to say that it will take X, Y and Z to do it, but if those happen, then it can be done.

I'm in no way saying you shouldn't have a big goal, but that goal must be realistic. This is, to a great degree, up to the individual. For one person, a goal may be realistic, but for another, unrealistic. I would encourage you to be very honest with yourself as you do your planning and evaluation. It might be good to get a friend to help you, as long as that friend is by nature an optimist and not a pessimist. This can go a long way toward helping you know what is realistic.

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Knowing that perhaps you could use a bit of help differentiating between attainable and realistic, here is an example: Let's say you are overweight and need to lose 150 pounds to get to your ideal weight. Is that goal attainable? Yes, if you also make it realistic. For example, it isn't realistic to think you can do it in five months. Eighteen to 24 months would be more realistic (with hard work). Thus, losing 150 pounds in two years is both attainable and realistic, while losing 150 pounds in five months is neither attainable nor realistic. A SMART goal is realistic.

## ➤ **TIME**    ◀

Every goal should have a time frame attached to it. Life is much more productive for us as humans because there is a time frame connected to it. Could you imagine how much more procrastination would

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happen if people never died? We'd just never "get around to it." We could always put it off.

One of the powerful aspects of a great goal is that it has an end, a time in which you are shooting to accomplish it. You start working because you know there is an end, and as time goes by, you work because you don't want to get behind. As the deadline approaches, you work diligently because you want to meet that deadline. It's a good idea to break a big goal down into measured time frames. Set smaller goals and work them out in their own time. A SMART goal has a timeline.

## ➤ **ACCOUNTABILITY** ◀

Now let's look at how to apply the SMART test to your goals and ensure they are powerful.

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As a contract with yourself or someone else, accountability is a vital key in the goal-setting process. In those early days, Mr. Shoaff held me accountable for my progress on the goals I had set. He asked those hard questions that helped motivate me to continuously work on achieving my dreams. Accountability puts some teeth into the process. If a goal is set and only one person knows it, does it really have any power? Many times it doesn't. At the very least, it isn't as powerful as if you had one or more people who will hold you accountable to your goal.

Accountable means to give an account of your actions to yourself or another person. *Accountability* is a very broad word, yet accountability is essentially follow-up. When someone knows what your goals are, they follow up and hold you accountable by asking you to "give an account" of where you are in the process. Human nature is such that when

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we know someone else is going to ask us about it, we are much more motivated to get it done—if for no other reason than we don't want to look lazy and uncommitted to those we are accountable to. This is why having an accountability partner is so important.

In the basic sense, there are two kinds of accountability: internal and external.

## ➤ **INTERNAL ACCOUNTABILITY** ◀

Internal accountability is essentially the level of integrity you maintain not only throughout the evaluation process but also in life. It means that when you look at yourself, you judge yourself with honesty. This is where you hold yourself accountable to doing what you said you would do. If you've messed up, say, "I've messed up," but if you've done well, then you can celebrate your progress. Let the

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internal accountability prod you and spur you on to greater action in pursuit of your achievements.

So, first and foremost, it is our responsibility to hold ourselves accountable. We answer to ourselves. We take charge of ourselves. How do we do that? Here are a few ideas:

- 1.** Write down your goals so they become "objective." You can't go back and say, "That wasn't really my goal."
- 2.** Be ruthlessly honest with yourself when you assess whether or not you have met the goal. Of course, if you were specific in setting your SMART goals, you won't have much wiggle room here anyway.
- 3.** If you fall short of your goal, or if you are falling short while on the way, knuckle down and hold yourself accountable to do what it takes to make up the ground so that you can hit that goal!

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- 4. Set a time frame in which you will evaluate your progress and hold yourself accountable.

## ➤ **EXTERNAL ACCOUNTABILITY**    ◀

The second aspect of accountability is that it is external. Find someone else or a group of others to hold you accountable. When we commit to giving an account to someone else for our actions and goals, we take it to the next level.

Now let me say that the external part of accountability will not work without the internal aspect. If you are not honest with yourself, then you will probably not be honest with others. Asking someone to hold you accountable and then knowing you won't be completely honest with them will never work.

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Having an accountability partner or an outside source of accountability is a powerful force if done right. Here are a few things to keep in mind as you set up an accountability partner:

- 1.** Choose someone who cares about you but can be tough and honest with you. They need to care about you—and you have to know and feel that care—because you become vulnerable by making yourself accountable to them. They need to be tough and honest, though, because you don't want to have them shy away from telling you to get on the ball when you're slacking, getting behind or not doing the job. I think the expression "tough love" would fit appropriately here. In essence, they love us enough to be honest with us about our progress.
- 2.** Tell them specifically what your goals are.
- 3.** Commit to being honest with them.

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- 4.** Give them permission to speak words of encouragement, as well as words of challenge when the situation calls for it.
  - 5.** Agree on a reasonable time frame in which you will allow them to evaluate your progress and hold you accountable.
  - 6.** Follow up on their words when they challenge you or call you to action.

Accountability can be a tremendous thing. There is an old proverb that says one can put a thousand to flight, but two can put 10,000 to flight. When we have someone holding us accountable, we bring others onto our team who will make us stronger, who will make us soar higher and who will cause our lives to be much richer because of their involvement.

Take a moment and really consider who you will make yourself accountable to in the pursuit of your goals. Now, go back through the words above and

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begin to work this process out in your own life. You will be extraordinarily glad you did.

## ➤ THE CHALLENGE

Let your goals challenge you to become a unique person of incredible dimensions, not necessarily in anyone else's eyes, but in your own eyes.

It doesn't matter whether someone thinks I'm short or tall, but it matters if I stand tall in my own eyes—because I know my disciplines, I know what I'm doing, I know whether I'm doing it or not doing it. It doesn't have to be published in some local paper, as long as I know that I'm paying the price and that I deserve the applause and I deserve the prize. That's what's exciting. That's why this goal setting is so important. It challenges you to grow. It challenges you to become more than you are, to move up to the next level. And that's key.



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