



# Changing Lives – Building Character

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# Changing Lives – Building Character

## Lessons on Goal Setting

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### Considerations in Setting Your Goals

1. Identify your goal. Write it as if you had already accomplished your goal. The three greatest words in psychology are, “Act as if...”. If you act like a purpose driven person, you will make positive choices.
2. Identify your obstacles in achieving your goal. There will be detours but no stopping. When traveling by air, a pilot encounters a storm on his planned route. The airplane cannot stop! The pilot goes around the storm to get to the destination. The airplane lands safely; it just took a different route to get there.
3. Plan to overcome your obstacles and reach your goals. Goals without a plan are simply dreams.
4. Have a definite date to complete your goal.
5. Identify those people who can help you achieve your goal.
6. Understand the difference between short term goals and long-term goals. A long-term goal may be achieved by setting and completing short term goals. For example, your long-term goal is to lose 25 pounds. Your short-term goal would be to lose 1.5 pounds a week. Consider the following story about short and long term goals.

### Jim Corbett - The Frying Pan

Gentleman Jim Corbett, the former heavyweight boxing champion, was out running one morning when he noticed a man fishing. He stopped and watched. The man would catch a large fish and throw it back. The only fish he kept were the small ones. Thinking this odd, he asked the fisherman why he kept only the small ones and threw back the big ones. “I have a small frying pan,” was the reply.

You may think this fisherman was not very bright, but many similar “fishermen” are in this school and in schools throughout this country. People don’t get the best things in life because someone has convinced them that they only have a “small frying pan.” Many don’t expect or even want the great things because someone or something has conditioned them into believing that they do not deserve them.

It is no exaggeration to say that every human being is conditioned to some extent either by ideas he has uncritically accepted from others or ideas he has repeated to himself or

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convinced himself are true. These negative ideas have a serious impact on a person's behavior and performance.

### **Size of the Ham**

One obstacle that may be encountered along your journey is people telling you that things have always been done a certain way. Consider this story.

A daughter was getting ready to bake a special Easter ham for the holidays. Relatives were coming over and she wanted things baked and cooked perfectly. She shopped several groceries looking for the correct size ham. After several stops, she finally found one the size her mom always baked. After a delicious meal with everything completed perfectly, she asked her mom why it was important to get a ham that size. Her reply was that that was the size her mom always baked. Because the grandmother was there, she was asked why that size. Very simply, she replied that was the size her oven could accommodate. There was no reason other than that. Traditions are good but should never interfere with progress.

### **The Old Mule – “Noise”**

Another obstacle that may be encountered is the “noise” of people telling and giving you negative ideas. Consider the following story.

This is a story of a farmer who owned an old mule. The mule fell into the farmer's well. The farmer heard the mule 'braying' or whatever mules do when they fall into wells. After carefully assessing the situation, the farmer sympathized with the mule, but decided that neither the mule nor the well was worth the trouble of saving. Instead, he called his neighbors together and told them what had happened and enlisted them to help haul dirt to bury the old mule in the well and put him out of his misery. Initially, the old mule was hysterical. But as the farmer and his neighbors continued shoveling the dirt onto his back, a thought struck him. It suddenly dawned on him that every time a shovel load of dirt landed on his back, he should shake it off and step it up.

This he did, blow after blow. “Shake it off and step up. Shake it off and step up. Shake it off and step up!” he repeated to encourage himself. No matter how painful the blows or distressing the situation seemed, the old mule fought “panic” and just kept on shaking it off and stepping up!

You're right! It wasn't long before the old mule, battered and exhausted, stepped triumphantly over the wall of that well! What seemed like it would bury him actually blessed him all because of the manner in which he handled his adversity.

### **Magnifying Glass - Focus**

Take the hottest day of the year, the most powerful magnifying glass you can buy and a box of newspaper clippings. Hold the magnifying glass over the newspaper clippings. Even though you magnify the power of the sun through the glass, you will never start a fire if you keep the glass moving. However, if you hold the glass still and focus it on the paper, you will harness the power of the sun and multiply it through the glass. Then you can start a roaring fire.

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Regardless of how much power, brilliance or energy you have, if you don't harness it and focus it on a specific target and hold it there, you're never going to accomplish as much as your ability warrants. The hunter who brings back the bird doesn't shoot at the flock. He selects one bird as a specific target. Pick your 3 "birds" and shoot them today and every day.

### **\$35,000 – Objectives**

A company hired a consultant in the 1950's to give them one idea that would increase the productivity of the company. At the end of the year the consultant was paid \$35,000, a huge sum in those days. The consultant's idea was simple. Every employee was to write down 6 objectives he/she would accomplish before they left for the day.

Essentially what this did was to change the workers from being "time oriented", working by the hour, to "result oriented", working by the task. They went from just being there to being there in order to accomplish something.

### **JCPenney – A Stock Clerk with a Goal?**

The dictionary says a goal is an aim or purpose. It's a plan. Something you expect to do. Without any reservation, I'm going to say that whoever you are, wherever you are, and whatever you do, you should have goals. J.C. Penney expressed it beautifully when he said, "Give me a stock clerk with a goal and I will give you a man who will make history. Give me a man without a goal, and I will give you a stock clerk." Everyone must have goals!

### **Negative Goals**

Can goals be negative? The answer is emphatically "yes." Goals can be negative if one of three conditions exist. First, your goal can be negative if you don't accept the fact that you must be the architect of accomplishment and that "luck" is not involved. Second, your goal can be negative if it is unrealistically big. Third, it can be negative if it is outside your area of interest or was set to please someone else.

### **Organizing your time**

If someone deposited \$86,400 into your checking account today and the only rule was that whatever you did not spend you would lose, you would be spending every penny. Every person on this earth has 86,400 seconds today and every day of your life.

The only aspect of life that I am aware of where every person is on equal footing is the amount of time we all get each day. It does not matter where you live or your status in life; you have 24 hours in a day – 60 minutes an hour. People who use their time wisely always seem to have time to do what they want. People who do not organize their time always seem to be trying to catch up; they never seem to have enough time.

Organizing your time is simply a matter of planning. If you will take time on Monday to write down what you plan to do, your week will be organized.

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### ***Look Up!***

Back in the days of sailing ships a young sailor went to sea for the first time. The ship encountered a heavy storm in the North Atlantic. The sailor was commanded to go aloft and trim the sails. As the young sailor started to climb, he made a mistake and looked down. The roll of the ship, combined with the tossing of the waves, made for a frightening experience. The young man started to lose his balance. At that moment, an older sailor underneath him shouted, “Look up, son, look up!” The young sailor looked up and regained his balance.

When things seem bad, look to see if you’re not facing the wrong direction. When you’re looking at the sun, you see no shadows. When the “outlook” isn’t good, try the “up look.” It’s always good. Apply the principles presented, add to them the ones you discover, and you will reach your goals.

### ***Visualize your goals***

Major Nesmeth was a weekend golfer who generally shot in the nineties. Then he completely quit playing for seven years. Amazingly enough, the next time back on the course, he shot an unbelievable 74. During the seven-year sabbatical, he took no golf lessons, and his physical condition actually deteriorated. As a matter of fact, he spent those seven years in a small cage approximately four and one-half feet tall and slightly over five feet long. He was a prisoner of war in North Vietnam!

His story illustrates that we must “see the reaching” if we expect to “reach the reaching” and accomplish our goals in life. Major Nesmeth was in isolation for five and one-half years of the time he was confined as a prisoner of war. He saw no one, talked to no one and was unable to perform a normal routine of physical activities. For the first few months he did virtually nothing but hope and pray for his release. Then he realized he had to take some definite, positive steps if he was going to retain his sanity and stay alive. He selected his favorite golf course and started playing golf in his cage. In his own mind, he played a full 18 holes every day. He played them to the last-minute detail. He “saw” the exact size of the tee box, the grass, the trees, the birds and all the embellishments on a golf course. He “saw” in minute detail the exact way he held his left hand on the club and the way he put his right hand on the club. He carefully lectured himself on keeping his left arm straight. He admonished himself to keep his eye on the ball. He instructed himself about a smooth downswing and follow-through on his shot. He then visualized the flight of the ball down the center of the fairway. He watched it fly through the air, hit the ground and roll until it came to a stop at the exact spot he selected.

He took the same length of time in his own mind he would have taken on a golf course, taking each step to the ball he had just hit. In other words, he decided to become a “meaningful specific” rather than remain a “wandering generality.”

Seven days a week for seven full years he played 18 holes of perfect golf. Not once did he ever miss a shot. Not once did the ball ever stay out of the cup. Perfect. In the process of shooting mental golf, the Major was able to use four full hours of every day and maintain his sanity as a result. He was also able to do a great deal with his golf

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game. His story illustrates a major point you must see! If you want to reach your goal, you must “see the reaching” in your own mind before you actually arrive at your goal.

### **No Such Thing as Lazy**

There is no such thing as a “lazy” person. A person is either sick or uninspired. If they are sick, they need to go to the doctor; if they are uninspired, they need to get inspired.

People often refer to others as lazy. There is no comeback; there is no cure; it is the end of the story. If you think someone is lazy, find something to inspire them and I promise you they will be “cured”.

I was certain one of my students was lazy. She never failed but she never made grades that she was capable of making. I tried everything and finally just decided that she was lazy. Suddenly, it was like the light came on; she was making exceptional grades. I asked what changed. She had a talk with a counselor who asked what she wanted to do when she graduated. She told him she wanted to attend a certain school. He explained that in order to be accepted at the school she wanted to attend, she had to have a certain GPA. Her laziness was cured. All because someone asked and listened to her instead of preaching. The lesson I learned was that no one is lazy and many times we need to “shut up and listen” to find out what inspires the people around us.

### **Guidelines for setting your goals weekly**

1. Must be important to you. Completion gives you a feeling of accomplishment
2. Must be written as if already completed. Put your RAS to work, your brain will start working on the goal subconsciously even when you are not.
3. Must be specific. None of this “try”. You either do or you don’t; no such thing as try!
4. Must be realistic. Don’t write to impress; write to complete.
5. Could have levels. Give room for growth; may be one level this week and move up the next.

### **Acapulco – Get Ready?**

Suppose you were to receive a phone call tomorrow from a friend who says, “I have good news for you. You can take a three-day trip to Acapulco with me and it won’t cost you a dime. We leave tomorrow morning at 8:00 a.m., and we have room for you and a friend of yours. My boss is flying us down in his private jet, and we will stay at his villa right on the beach.” Your first reaction might be, “That would be wonderful, but I have so much to do, I don’t see how I could get ready and do the things I need to do before I could go anywhere.” So, you ask your friend if you can call him back.

The minute you hang up, you start thinking and planning. First you ask, “What do I have to do?” Out comes pen and paper, and you commit to writing all the things you must get done. You list them in order of their importance. Then you call your friend and say, “Hey you know, I’ve been checking the schedule and I can make the trip after all.”

You would accomplish more in the next 24 hours than you normally do in several days.

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Why don't you go to Acapulco tomorrow-every day? Why don't you list the things you need to do during this week?

People often complain about lack of time when the lack of direction is the real problem. Some say we should be arrested for murder when we "kill" time. Close examination makes it obvious that killing time is not murder but rather suicide. Time is either our friend or our enemy. What it becomes is entirely up to you, your goals and your determination to use every available minute.

### **Howard Hill - Archer**

Howard Hill was probably the greatest archer who ever drew a bowstring. He was so accurate that he killed a bull elephant, a Bengal tiger and a Cape Buffalo with a bow and arrow. Howard Hill could repeatedly hit the target dead center and, after sending the first arrow to the center of the bull's eye, he would then literally split that arrow with his next shot.

You, if your health is good, could hit the bull's-eye more often than Howard Hill on the best day he ever had, IF you blindfolded Howard Hill and turned him around a time or two so he didn't know the location of the target. Then I guarantee that you would have hit the bull's eye more consistently than he.

The analogy is ridiculous, and you are probably saying, "Of course I could beat Howard Hill! How could a man hit a target he couldn't see?" That's a good question. Here's a better question: If Howard Hill couldn't hit a target he couldn't see, how can you hit a target you don't have? Do you set specific goals/objectives each day?

You must have specific goals because it's just as difficult to reach a destination you don't have as it is to come back from a place you've never been.

### **Two Shot Putters – Comparing?**

I once worked for a track coach who taught the athlete to never compare themselves to other athletes. Once our season was to start, he had athletes write down their goals for each week of the season.

That year we had a sophomore shot putter and an excellent experienced senior shot putter. Each had to write their individual goals for each meet.

At one of our first meets, the sophomore had as his goal 39 feet and the senior had as his goal 50 feet. The sophomore hit his goal on his final throw in the prelims and came back to a cheering group of teammates.

Unfortunately, his throw did not qualify him for the finals. Our senior was in first place after the prelims with a throw over 48 feet. His teammates were encouraging but were pushing him to reach his goal. I have always imagined what the other teams and coaches were thinking, "Those guys are cheering for a 39-foot shot putt and chastising the guy who is winning the competition!?"

The Monday following the meet, our head track coach would gather all the team members and recognize those who had met their personal goals. He did not mention



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what place or how many points they received. It was his way of making sure they were working to be the best they could be.

He was an ultra-successful coach and I know he did more than anyone I ever worked with in making each athlete the best they could be without trying to compare themselves to others.

### **Life Saving Goals**

An interesting phenomenon takes place in retirement and nursing homes around the country. The death rate declines dramatically before holidays and special days, such as wedding anniversaries and birthdays. Many of the people set a goal to live for one more Christmas, one more anniversary, one more Fourth of July, etc. Immediately after the event, when the goal is reached, the will to live declines and the death rate shoots upward.

Yes, life is valuable and is sustained only so long as life has something valuable as its object. Goals for life are important and virtually everyone knows this. However, by choice the average man on the street continues to lack the discipline and motivation to set goals.

### **Definition of a goal**

A dream is a vision with no work or plan attached to it.

Drudgery is work with no vision.

A goal is a vision with a plan attached to it.

### **Canada Geese**

Canada Geese instinctively know the value of cooperation. You have undoubtedly noticed that they always fly in a V formation and one leg of the V is longer than the other. These geese regularly change leadership because the lead goose, in fighting the headwind, helps create a partial vacuum for the geese on his right as well as the geese on his left. Scientists have discovered in wind tunnel tests that the flock can fly 72% further than an individual goose can fly. People, too, can fly higher, further and faster by cooperating with, instead of fighting against those around them.

### **Goals – “Go Up” or “Give Up”?**

#### **“GO UP” goals**

You share these goals with only those people who want you to go up.

Examples: make the highest score on test, sell the most units for the month

#### **“GIVE UP” goals**

You share these with everyone. They will all help, some in a positive manner and some in a negative manner.

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Examples: give up smoking, lose 20 pounds