**Goal Setting**

1.Why do we need to set goals?

2.In what way do people who use goal-setting effectively differ from others?

3.What is the first step in setting personal goals?

4.Do you have your personal goals? What are they? Can you prioritize them?

5.How to set goals effectively?

6.Why is it important to set goals based on performance not outcomes?

7.What are the reasons for setting unrealistic goals?

8.What questions should you ask yourself to achieve the goals set?

Goal Setting

At its simplest level the process of setting goals and targets allows you to choose where you want to go in life. By knowing precisely what you want to achieve, you know what you have to concentrate on and improve, and what is merely a distraction. Goal setting gives you long-term vision and short-term motivation. It focusses your acquisition of knowledge and helps you to organise your resources.

Research (Damon Burton, 1983) has shown that people who use goal-setting effectively:

1. suffer less from stress and anxiety
2. concentrate better
3. show more self-confidence
4. perform better
5. are happier and more satisfied.

Deciding Your Goals

The first step in setting personal goals is to consider what you want to achieve in your lifetime - setting Lifetime goals gives you the overall perspective that shapes all other aspects of your decision making.

How to Start to Achieve Your Lifetime Goals

Once you have set your lifetime goals, now set a 25 year plan of smaller goals that should be achieved if you are to reach your lifetime plan. Then set a 5 year plan, 1 year plan, 6 month plan, and 1 month plan of progressively smaller goals that should be reached to achieve your lifetime goals. Finally set a daily to-do list of things that you should do today to achieve your lifetime goals. At this stage many goals may simply be to read books and gather information on the achievement of your goals so that you can improve the quality and realism of your goal-setting.

Finally review your plans, and make sure that they fit the way in which you want to live your life.

Staying on Course

Once you have decided your first goal plans, keep the process going by reviewing and updating your to-do list on a daily basis.

Setting Goals Effectively

The way in which you set goal strongly affects their effectiveness.

The following broad guidelines apply to setting effective goals:

1. Positive Statement: express your goals positively: 'Execute this technique well' is a much better goal than 'don't make this stupid mistake'
2. Be Precise: if you set a precise goal, putting in dates, times and amounts so that achievement can be measured, then you know the exact goal to be achieved, and can take complete satisfaction from having completely achieved it.
3. Set Priorities: where you have several goals, give each a priority. This helps you to avoid feeling overwhelmed by too many goals, and helps to direct your attention to the most important ones.
4. Write goals down to avoid confusion and give them more force.
5. Keep Operational Goals Small: Keep the goals you are working towards immediately (i.e. in this session) small and achievable. If a goal is too large, then it can seem that you are not making progress towards it. Keeping goals small and incremental gives more opportunities for reward. Today's goals should be derived from larger goals.

Important Points

You should note a number of general principles about goal setting:

Set Performance, not Outcome Goals

This is very important. You should take care to set goals over which you have as much control as possible - there is nothing as dispiriting as failing to achieve a personal goal for reasons beyond your control such as bad business environments, poor judging, bad weather, injury, or just plain bad luck. Goals based on outcomes are extremely vulnerable to failure because of things beyond your control.

If you base your goals on personal performance or skills or knowledge to be acquired, then you can keep control over the achievement of your goals and draw satisfaction from them.

Set Specific Goals

Set specific measurable goals. If you achieve all conditions of a measurable goal, then you can be confident and comfortable in its achievement. If you consistently fail to meet a measurable goal, then you can adjust it or analyse the reason for failure and take appropriate action to improve skills.

Set Realistic Goals

Goals may be set unrealistically high for the following reasons:

1. Other people: Other people (parents, media, society) can set unrealistic goals for you, based on what they want. Often this will be done in ignorance of your goals, desires and ambitions.
2. Insufficient information: If you do not have a clear, realistic understanding of what you are trying to achieve and of the skills and knowledge to be mastered, it is difficult to set effective and realistic goals.
3. Always expecting your best performance: Many people base their goals on their best performance, however long ago that was. This ignores the inevitable backsliding that can occur for good reasons, and ignores the factors that led to that best performance. It is better to set goals that raise your average performance and make it more consistent.
4. Lack of respect for self: If you do not respect your right to rest, relaxation and pleasure in life then you risk burnout.

Thinking a goal through

When you are thinking about how to achieve goals, asking the following questions can help you to focus on the sub-goals that lead to their achievement:

1. What skills do I need to achieve this?
2. What information and knowledge do I need?
3. What help, assistance, or collaboration do I need?
4. What resources do I need?
5. What can block progress?
6. Am I making any assumptions?
7. Is there a better way of doing things?