# Take Control - Module 5

Learn How to Set Amazing Goals
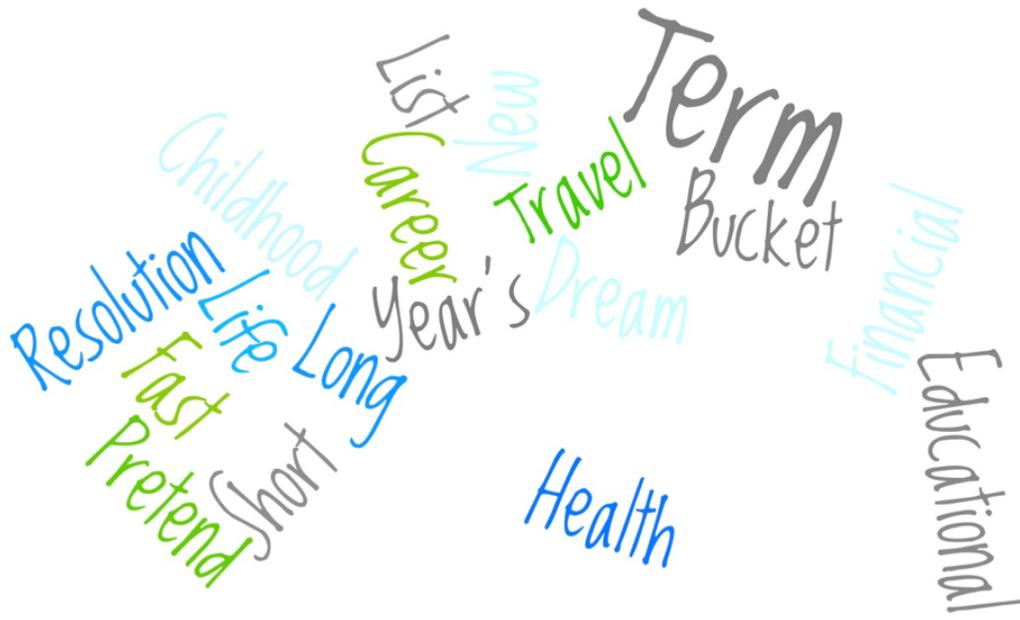
Objectives

- Define the word, 'Goal'
- Understand who benefits from writing goals
- Understand the SMART Model for defining goals
- Identify Success Superchargers
- Set 3-5 Goals for your project

"Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss, you'll land among the stars."

- Les Brown

Instruction

Goal setting can work from the bottom up or the top down, but whatever direction you come from, the steps are still the same. Now that you have begun making a plan for your project and you have set some goals to work toward, we are going to take a step back to dig deeper into goal setting. You may already be an expert goal setter. If that is the case, skim this section and move right to the tasks. If your goal setting could use a little fine tuning, then read on.

What is a Goal?

A goal is the end toward which effort is directed. You can imagine a goal in a soccer game. All the movements of the offensive team are directed at putting the ball into the goal. When you create a goal, you are defining the parameters of the direction that you are moving, what it looks like to reach your goal and how long it will take to reach your goal. A goal is always clear (imagine the goal in soccer once more!) there is no ambiguity about where you are going and what you are moving toward. The confusion, I believe, often comes in determining how to reach the goal. In addition, it can often be difficult to maintain motivation. Unlike the soccer game, where you have the opposing team trying to also score a goal, the size of the field limiting the area of the game, the clock constraining the length of the game; the same kind of parameters do not automatically exist when we set goals for ourselves. We must create them.

Who Should Create Goals and When?

When I type the search term, "time management" I come up with results for professionals and for students. The same is true for "goal setting" and when I get to "productivity" I am squarely in the realm of professionals. But, what about everyone else? What about your home life? What about moms and individuals who

don't fit into those categories. It may be most of the information on goal setting and productivity is provided for professionals, but applying the same principles to our homes and families can have a very positive effect.

 We see goals being set for businesses, for students working on school performance, and for New Year's resolutions. Most often these goals are not specific or clear. Things like 'lose weight' and 'get organized'. Even within the realm of my own business, I have asked for goals from my employees and received rather vague thoughts about improving performance or increasing client work.

What if you arranged your life, all areas of it, around goals?   And what if those goals were clear and actionable? AND, what if you accomplished them? How would that feel? How would your life be different? Can you imagine having a defined direction and purpose on which to act? You need not be a professional to set goals, nor do you need to limit productivity and time-management concepts to work or school. Amazingly enough, applying these ideas will not limit your creativity. On the contrary, *people who are organized find a freedom to create in the space that is opened when they become more organized.*

Who then should create goals? You!

When should you create them? Whenever you need to define the direction to which you are putting forth effort.

The SMART Model for Setting Goals

Goals can be as simplel as, "I will brush my teeth this morning for 2 minutes starting at 6:00am" to as grand as, "In the next 5 years I will save money for the downpayment on a house by setting aside $500 per month." Both goals fit the SMART model of being:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Actionable
- Realistic
- Time Sensitive

Let's use an example of a goal to understand this model better. First, a common goal I hear is, **"I will get organized."** This statement, as it exists now, is not a SMART goal.

Specific

It is not specific. When you make a goal specific, you make it clear where you are heading. On the soccer field, you define the location of the goal. You could make, "I will get organized" more specific by changing it to: I will organize my closet so that all of the items in it fit and have a place to live.

Measureable

The statement is not measureable. Measurable is a quantitative attribute. You can quantify if your goal is complete because you know clearly what your goal is and what 'done' looks like. You can answer the question, "Is my goal complete?" Using our example, "Do all the items in my closet have a place to live? Do they all fit in the space?"

Actionable

It is not actionable. Actionable means just what it sounds like. Can you take action on the goal that you set? You may look at this in two different ways. First, are you ABLE to take action on the goal? Do you have the resources, support, time, etc necessary to take action on the goal? Second, is the goal written using action words such that there is something to do? In the example above, "I will organized my closet so that all of the items fit and have a place to live." there is a clear action to be completed, therefore it is actionable. In fact there are several actions: organize the items, reduce the items so that all fit, and assign homes to the items.

Realistic

It is not realistic. Realistic is subjective measure that only you can answer for your specific situation, given the realities of your life. Is the goal that you created realistic? I am all for far reaching goals as long as you have a plan and we will get to that in a moment. In fact, I would rather see you stretch yourself than to set your goals too low. Research has proven that we are more excited about and motivated to complete, goals that stretch us a little. But setting goals that you cannot achieve, even with a plan, is not helpful. An example would be setting a goal to

organize your entire house in one weekend. Sometimes just adjusting the time you set aside to work on your project makes it more realistic.

Time Sensitive

The goal to "get organized" is not time sensitive. Time sensitive means that your goal has a deadline. You can either be specific about how often and in what intervals you work on your project or you can indicate when your goal will be completed. In our example above you might say either, "I will organize my closet so that all of the items in it fit and have a place to live within the next 30 days." or "I will organize my closet so that all of the items in it fit and have a place to live by working on it 15 minutes at a time until it is complete."

Success Superchargers

Here is my goal: In the next 6 months I will help 10 people understand their goals, create actionable steps and achieve those goals.

Creating a SMART goal is not quite enough. You need to put that goal into action. There are steps you can take to ensure that the goals you set for yourself are fail proof. Do you know what they are? I call these Success Superchargers because adding them to your goal makes it fail proof.

I failed at my 2013 New Year's Resolutions. Why? Because I never wrote them down. I have no idea what they were! It's hard to achieve something when you don't know what you are aiming for.

Every year I (try) to set aside time to craft meaningful resolutions. I will (usually) reflect on these 2-3 times throughout the year, and certainly at the end of the year, to see if I accomplished them. But not 2013. That year, I failed. Without having written down my thoughts I had little on which to reflect. (read the Additional Section to find out How to Create the Space To Create

Your Goals). After creating your SMART goals, add the following success super chargers to make your goals fail proof.

Write it down

Write your project goals down either on the computer or on a piece of paper. Just this step alone increases your likelihood to succeed by 10 times!

Share it

Tell a friend, post your goals on facebook, pin them up next to the water cooler. Sharing your goals makes you more likely to achieve them.

Create a support system

This step can mean reaching out to other people to support you or it can mean creating an environment that is supportive of your goals. One support system might be adding an "X" to the calendar for each day that you accomplish a task towards your goal. For more on this technique check out Jerry Sienfeld's method.

Identify the smallest step

Even goals that are SMART can feel difficult to approach. Use the technique of finding the smallest possible step as you begin. Whatever small steps you complete consistently over time will contribute to big changes. It is important to make the small steps so small that you know you will complete them without any hesitation. Here are a few examples:

- Toss 1 piece of trash
- Donate 1 item
- Sit in my space and ask, "What will this space look like when it is organized?"
- Toss a sheet over your most cluttered table, pull back one corner every day and make decisions on the items you touch. Spend only 5 min.

Determine obstacles and how you will handle them

Every goal has difficulties. I bet you already know some of the challenges that you might have to face in completing your goal. If you think about these now, and your response to them, then you will be prepared when they come up.

Add accountability

Accountability works wonders towards accomplishing your goals. One suggestion is to email a friend in the morning what you will be working on and in the evening what you accomplished. Just knowing that someone else is expecting you to complete your task is enough to spur you into action. In addition, your accountability partner can help you determine if your task is realistic to complete.

Create Sub Goals

If your first goal is large or long term, such as 6 mos or more, create smaller sub goals or steps toward completing your goal.

Align Your Goals with Your Vision & Your Priorities

Goals that compete with, or are in discord with, other goals, priorities or vision will be much more difficult to complete. Say, for instance, your vision is to be a world traveler starting today, but you have also set a goal to declutter your home by the end of the year. It will be difficult for both to be true. However, if you set a goal to travel with the money that you earn from selling your possessions, then you are on the right track.

Make them Positive

Goals that are positive and approachable are more likely to be achieved. Goals should never be punishing.

Goal Setting Worksheet

In the next __ days/months/years I will:

Double Check! Is your goal:

- ❏ Specific
- ❏ Measureable
- ❏ Actionable
- ❏ Realistic
- ❏ Time-Sensitive

Add Success Super Chargers:

- ❏ I wrote it down
- ❏ I shared it with:
- ❏ I need the following supports:

- ❏ The small step I will take to begin is:
- ❏ These are the obstacles I will likely encounter:

- ❏ When I encounter these obstacles I will:

- ❏ My accountability partner is:
- ❏ If my goal is big, these are the sub goals or steps I will take to complete it:

- ❏ I will be consistent by doing this task_____, every day
- ❏ My goal aligns with my priorities & vision
- ❏ My goal is positive

Signature: **Date:**

Additional Section: Creating the Space to Create Your Goals

Pull up to a quiet corner and a cup of tea. When you create goals, take the following steps to ensure that you achieve (or at least know) where you are aiming:
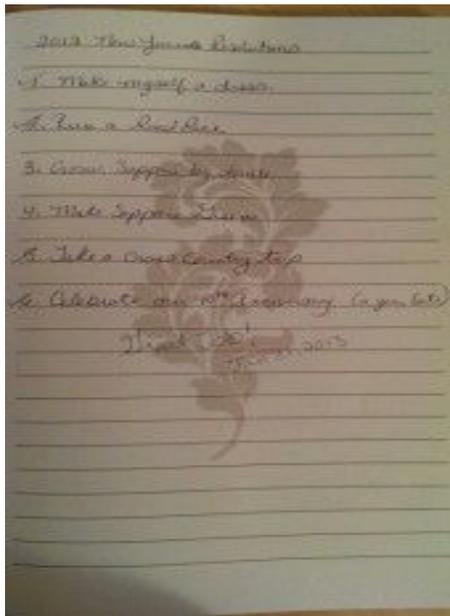
1. Reflect

What did you set forth to do last year? What DID you do? If you are the kind of person who likes to write Christmas letters, this activity gives you the perfect opportunity to reflect on the accomplishments of the past year. You want to answer the question, "Did I accomplish what I set out to do? Why or Why not?" Reviewing your resolutions and your activities of the year can help. Also, reviewing the entries in a gratitude journal or jar[1], like this one, can refresh your memory of went went well and put you in the mindset to look forward to the future.

2. Plan

What is it you would like to do in the coming year? What is important to you? Let your mind wander and flow freely in this stage. Do not restrict your thinking. You may remember brainstorming or mind mapping or stream of consciousness journaling, whatever you call it, record your thoughts as they come to you. If you are having trouble getting started, answer questions that will get you thinking such as:

- In the next 30 days I plan to...
- 1 year from now I hope to be...
- This year will be complete when I...
- If someone wrote an article about me this year, they would say...
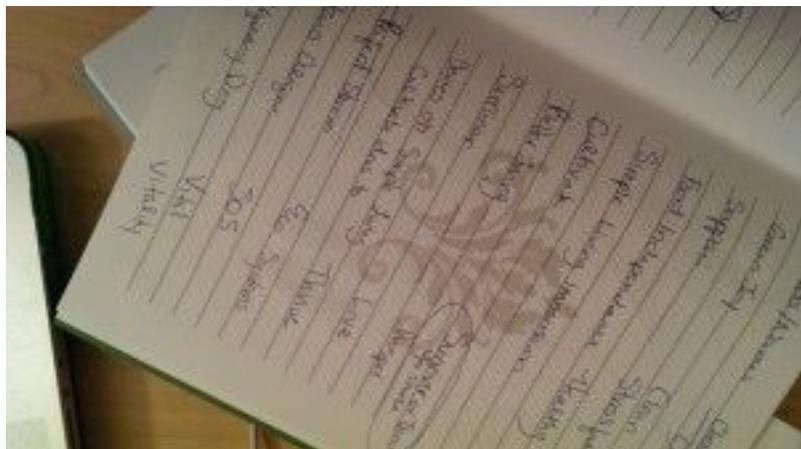
[1] A gratitude journal or jar is a space where you write down at least one positive action or thing from your life that day.

Do not limit your thinking! Write it all down. You can cull the ideas later (in the next step) but not now. It is in this creative flow of ideas that you are inspired!

3. Select

Now you may choose 5 ideas from your plan that motivate you and are meaningful to you. This is the time to be picky. You may wish to select a resolution that is very doable, a few that stretch you and one that has you really aiming high. Even if you do not select all your ideas from your brainstorming session, you may wish to add a few to your life list and come back to that next year.

4. Create the Smallest Possible Step

This is the time when the proverbial rubber hits the road. If you write your resolutions and they are not actionable, you will not achieve them. Studies have shown that resolvers are ten times more likely to achieve their goals than non-resolvers. So just getting to this point you are ten times more likely to accomplish what you set out to do than someone who did not set New Year's Resolutions. But if you want to actually be successful this year, you MUST complete this next step. **For every resolution that you set, write down the smallest possible step you can take to begin working on that goal.**

Here is an example from my Resolutions 2012 (remember, I didn't write down my resolutions in 2013!)
In the next twelve months I will double my business revenue.
In determining the next smallest possible step to take, I had to drill down into what needed to be done to double my business revenue and then drill down even further to find a step I was absolutely positive I could take. It looked something like this:
Today I will prepare a list of open leads.
This was just one example. I could have gone many different directions, but I needed to put something so doable that I would have no reason not to take the step.

5. Write It All Down

I probably should have said this first but, write it all down. Keep a journal as you are reflecting, planning, selecting and creating your resolutions and steps. Then, in the end write down your five resolutions and post them in an obvious place to give you the opportunity to see and act on them frequently. Write your small steps on your to-do list or schedule them as appointments on your calendar (even better!) so that you will arrive at the next year a success!

Tasks

- ❏ Complete the Goal Setting Worksheet on page 8. Print at least 3-5 and do one for each goal.
- ❏ You are halfway through! Well done! Skim back over your notes to review what you have learned so far and compile any questions or items to explore further.
- ❏ Complete the Review of Module 5 and meet with your coach