

Goals For The Two of You!

Every couple faces limitations and challenges. Successful partnerships welcome obstacles to achievement, because roadblocks help strengthen resolve, build creativity and improve relationships. Most importantly, overcoming obstacles and circumstances builds confidence in each other.

DEFINING SUCCESS

Earl Nightingale's idea of "progressive realization" is a liberator, freeing us from the notion that achievement occurs only when a goal is realized. "Progressive realization" means you are just as successful today as you will be when you achieve your objective, provided you are making measurable progress toward the goal.



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What Will You Achieve Together?

As you begin to build on your dreams, the greatest challenge that lies before you is not hard work, money, or time. The greatest challenge is clarity.

More than a century ago, psychologist William James told us that before anything could be physically accomplished, it must first be mentally accomplished. Mental accomplishment requires clarity. You must know what you and your partner want to achieve before you begin the process.

Few couples really know where they want to go. Most have some vague, unformed ideas and use them to practice what some experts call "wishcraft." Dreams and wishes are

seldom translated into something tangible; they must possess clarity before they can become reality.

Dreams Become Reality

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Put The Science of Successful Relationships to work by refining the

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Principles for Success

Most success gurus advocate setting goals. The difficulty: Few people can tell you how to begin the process, or how to manage your goals once you've decided what they are.

There are two reasons for this: First, setting goals is a uniquely personal experience. Because no two people are alike, no two goals programs will be alike. The key to a successful partnership is to make your goals programs compatible.

The goal planning process has often been made absurdly complicated. Few of us have the time required to complete the reams of paperwork most goals programs require.

That's why the Top Ten process works. This process is simple, manageable, and provides measurable results. By spending a few minutes each week, you and your partner can ensure you are making progress toward clearly-identified objectives.



A *Top Ten List* helps you focus on the goals that are truly important to both of you.

There is magic in having just ten objectives ... ten is just the right number to accomplish this year.

items on your *Where We Want To Go* list. By creating a *Top Ten List*, you can accept the challenge of the future on your terms and manage your dreams together.

Use the *Top Ten List* at the end of this Segment to identify those goals you and your partner want to achieve during the next calendar year. Actually, you can use any timeframe you like, so long as it is clearly defined. A stated timeframe helps make your list manageable. Your *Top Ten List* is an incredibly powerful series of guideposts – a clear, precise blueprint for the dreams you intend to achieve as a couple.

A *Top Ten List* helps you focus on the things that are truly important to both of you. There is magic in having just ten items on your list ... ten is just the right number to accomplish in a year's time. Adding more goals than you can realistically pursue invites unnecessary distractions, while fewer goals limit your dreams.

More than anything else, a *Top Ten List* encourages clarity. You and your partner know precisely what you want to do together, and you begin working toward your dreams right away. Creating your *Top Ten List* is a vital step on your journey together.

An ancient proverb tells us, "You may only eat an elephant one bite at a time." Your biggest dreams can often be broken down into four or five separate steps. If one challenge contains many facets, break it down into several smaller tasks. These tasks become separate items on your *Top Ten List*.

Developing Your Top Ten List

If you have created a lengthy *Where We Want To Go* list, you may wonder how you and your partner will "weed out" the less-important items to select goals for your *Top Ten List*. Some of the items you originally wrote will fit very well; others will be too vague, too unformed, or too undefined.

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Self-Talk: Affirming Your Success

There are as many different types of affirmation as your creativity allows. Not all affirmations have to be written, although writing affirmations is the quickest way to make the process of self-talk work for you.

A numerical affirmation might be a sequence of numbers with special meaning to you. "150-15" might mean that you intend to earn \$150,000 between you, and save 10% of your income. "155" might be a target weight goal or the number of repetitions for a particularly helpful physical exercise.

An acronym makes for a very private affirmation. Write "ITTBUOMTN?" on a card and put the card on your desk. The acronym means "Is this the best use of my time now?"

Items from your *Where We Want To Go* list must possess certain qualities to become goals on your *Top Ten List*. Apply the "SMART" criteria to determine whether items on your initial list actually fit the concept of a *Top Ten List*. The "SMART" acronym has evolved greatly since the early 1980's and still provides a valid test for any objective. To qualify for a place on your *Top Ten List*, your goal should be:

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Realistic

Time-limited

A *specific* goal is easy enough to create; use a *Ladder of Abstraction* to develop a clear understanding of what you and your partner want to accomplish. A sample *Ladder of Abstraction* is provided at the end of this Segment.

Every objective must be *measured* in some way. Lifetimes and partnerships are made of milestones and finish lines; you have to know when you've cleared a hurdle, gone past a milestone, or arrived at your destination.

No one but you and your partner can determine what objectives are actually *achievable*. Before Roger Bannister

ran the four-minute mile in 1954, that feat was considered beyond human endurance. Don't accept the ideas of others ... whether your goal is actually achievable is not something for the Yeabuts to decide!

The notion of a *realistic* goal helps us limit our flights of fancy. Setting a realistic goal might, for example, help you avoid moving to the high desert when you are both avid skiers!

Deadlines turn dreams into goals. Any objective you add to your *Top Ten List* is already *time-limited* by the nature of the list itself. If your *Top Ten List* items must be accomplished by the end of the year, for example, each goal is already time-limited.

Some Challenging Questions

Once you have items on your *Top Ten List*, ask yourselves:

Where do we want this action or accomplishment to lead?

Is this item a journey, or a destination?

What will the final result look like?

What will this achievement bring to our life together?

What will be the key milestones along the way?

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Idea: Your Story

Imagine, a century from now, what the world will be like because the two of you have lived. Jot down some ideas for your story – the goals you achieved, the milestones in your life – and write a Wikipedia article. This brief biography of your partnership will remind all those who follow that you lived a unique life ... a life of accomplishment and success.

What will others say about you? How will you be honored or remembered? What will be your greatest legacy?

Use the story you create as a motivator – a reason to put forth the daily effort required to achieve your goals. You might even want to create a present-tense version that you can read aloud to yourselves each morning.

Knowing where you've gone is just as important as knowing where you're going. Visualize the world when you are no longer here. You'll be motivated to make an impact.

What resources do we already have?

What else will we need?

What actions do we need to take?

In what order must we take them?

Who else must we involve in the process?

How will we celebrate successes?

These questions do not require written answers, although writing adds clarity. Instead, these additional questions require communicating with your partner. Talk through the process of achievement so that you encounter a minimum of surprises along the way.

Greater mental clarity enhances your motivation to move forward as a couple, and also helps prevent errors or mistakes. None of us is gifted with the ability to see the future, but we can all imagine it to one degree or another. By carefully imagining outcomes, you and your partner can head off distractions and focus on opportunities. You may even decide that the path to achievement lies along a different track.

Two Critical Questions

Each item on your *Top Ten List* demands careful thought and introspection. No one else can do your thinking for you!

These two questions can be answered only by you and your partner.

The first question is simple: "Is this dream important enough to us?" If not, find something that is important. Add that item to your *Top Ten List*.

The second question: "Why haven't we already achieved it?" Your answer should be honest; do not deceive yourselves with excuses for your lack of success. For example, you may have only just decided to pursue the goal. Or perhaps you haven't had the time, support, money or opportunity. What is the *real* reason?

When you know why you and your partner haven't already achieved the success you desire, you can decide how best to overcome the challenges ahead.

Belief in yourselves is an *attitude*; achievement is a *science*. You and your partner alone can determine your level of success and happiness in life. Armed with belief in yourselves and a passion for making your dreams reality, the obstacles and circumstances which have held you back are suddenly no longer valid. Working together, you will find a way or make one.

Remember to read or listen to this Segment once a day for at least five days. Listening with spaced repetition helps you incorporate the concepts presented here. Complete the exercises at the end of the Segment before your next coaching session.

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Ladder of Abstraction

How will it make us feel?

What benefits will accrue?

How will we use it?

When will we attain it?

How can we describe it?

Why do we want it?

What do we want?

Top Ten List

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

