

Setting Effective Goals

Point of the Assignment: To learn how to set effective goals so you can actually achieve them.

Many people do not know how to set goals so they can achieve their long-term dreams. This assignment is designed to help you set effective goals so you can achieve what you set out to do.

CONCEPT #1: BRAINSTORMING GOALS

Brainstorming is a process where you allow your mind to freely explore all your available options. The secret is to just write down anything that comes to mind – whether or not it is realistic and/or relevant. This is not a time to edit your thoughts – just get your ideas down.

To brainstorm your “life goals”, take a few minutes to think about what you want for your life in the future. (*i.e. Education, job, personal life, financial, spiritual, emotional, health and travel, etc.*) Write down anything and everything you want to accomplish between now and before you die.

CONCEPT #2: ALIGNING GOALS

The next important concept to understand in order to set effective goals is the difference between long-term, mid-range, and short-term goals, and then to align them to make sure they take you in the same direction rather than different directions.

Long-term Goals: Will require at least 10 years to achieve (*Become a doctor*)
Mid-range Goals: Will take about 3 -5 years to achieve (*Get a bachelor's degree*)
Short-term Goals: Will take less than a year to achieve (*Finish this semester*)
Immediate Goals: What you should be doing right now that can be completed with an hour, day, week, or month. (*Finish this week's homework assignment*)

In order to reach your long term goals, your immediate, short-term and mid-range goals should line up so they are all taking you in the same direction rather than different directions. (*i.e. Working 80 hours per week to make a lot of money right away, vs. working less hours and sacrificing income for a few years so you can focus on being a full-time student now so you can be a doctor later. (See last page, “Aligning Goals” for a visual illustration.)*)



Figure 1: Long-term, mid-term, short-term goals are in alignment



Figure 2: Long-range, mid-range, and short-range goals are not in alignment

CONCEPT #3: S.M.A.R.T. GOALS

To achieve your goals, they need to have the following characteristics, which can be identified through the following acronym: S.M.A.R.T.:

- **Specific:** A goal needs to be very specific rather than vague.
Example: Lose 10 pounds vs. Lose weight
- **Measurable:** Effective goals must be something you can identify as having been achieved vs. something you cannot identify.
Example: Have a savings account worth at least \$5,000 vs. save money
- **Attainable:** Make sure your goal is something you can actually achieve vs. out of your control.
Example: Give my spouse expectations and consequences if expectations are not achieved (“If you come home drunk again, I will leave you.”) vs. Stop my spouse from drinking (“Make my spouse stop drinking.”)
(Remember you can’t control another persons’ behavior. You can only control how you respond to them.)
- **Realistic:** Make sure your goals are something you can reasonably achieve vs. something unlikely to happen. Realistic goals also take into account your available resources. *(For example, if you are unemployed and lack income, buying a new car is not a realistic goal for now.)*
Example: Saving money vs. winning the lottery
- **Time-based:** A goal needs have a specific deadline rather than just “someday”
Example: Save for a down payment on a house in 2 years vs. someday

Assignment Application:

Now you are going to take the time to apply these concepts to what you want for your future.

1. **Brainstorm:** Take 3 minutes to brainstorm some dreams and goals you have for your life: *(i.e. Education, job, personal life, financial, spiritual, emotional, health, and travel, etc.)* Or use, dreams/goals listed on “Timeline” assignment. Write on additional sheet of paper if necessary.
2. **Aligning Goals:** Now you are going to learn how to apply the “Aligning Goals” concept to only **ONE GOAL** you have listed in #1. Identify:
 - a. **One** of the **Long-term** goals you listed in Step #1 above (10 years to achieve).
 - b. One **Mid-range** goal needed to achieve the Long-term goal (2-5 years to achieve)
(What do you need to do to achieve this long-term goal?)
 - c. One **Short-term** goal needed to achieve that Mid-range goal (Less than one year)
(What do you need to do to achieve this mid-range goal?)

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- d. One **Immediate** goal needed to achieve that Short-term goal (Less than one week)
(*What do you need to do to achieve this short-term goal?*)

Long-term Goal: _____

(List only one Long-term goal)



Mid-range Goal: _____

(Leads toward Long-term goal)



Short-term Goal: _____

(Leads toward Mid-range goal)



Immediate Goal: _____

(Leads toward short-term goal)

3. **S.M.A.R.T. Goal:** Take your Immediate goal listed above and make it a S.M.A.R.T. goal: (i.e. "Submit first draft of Essay #1 by Monday to partner" vs. "Do my homework")

Specific: _____

Describe your immediate goal in specific detail:

Specific = "complete Essay #1" vs.
Vague = "Do homework"

Measurable: _____

How will you be able to identify that it is achieved?

Measurable = "First draft finished" vs.
Vague = "homework done")

Attainable: _____

How is this in your control?:

Your control = "Turned in to partner" vs.
Out of your control = "receive notes from partner"

Realistic: _____

How is this something you can actually achieve?:

Realistic = "Finish first draft within one week" vs.
Unrealistic = "Start and finish writing paper 30 minutes before it is due"

Time Based: _____

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When does this need to be completed by?:

Deadline = "By Monday" vs.

No deadline = "Whenever I get around to it."

4. **My S.M.A.R.T., short-term goal which will take me towards my long-term goal is:**
(One immediate goal which includes everything in Item #3 above, listed in one sentence.
Example: "Submit first draft of Essay #1 by Monday to partner")

Test your understanding:

What is the main point of this assignment?

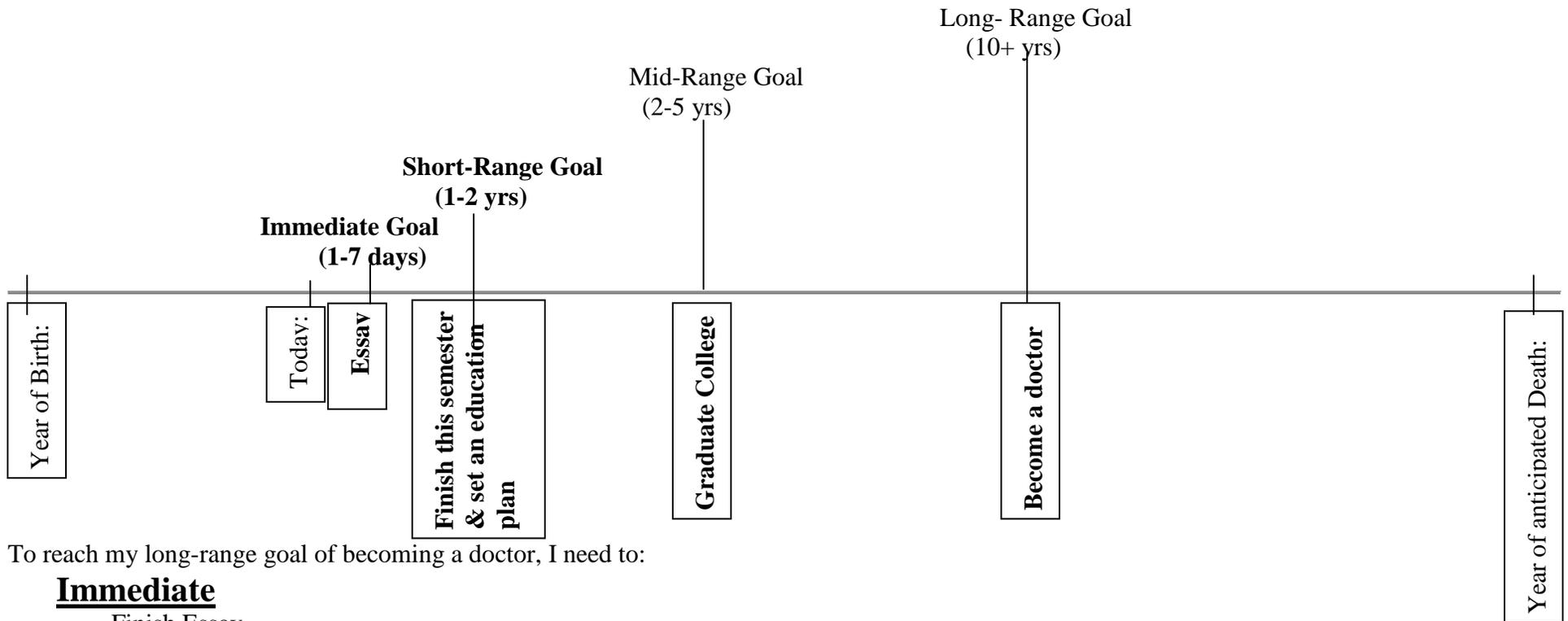
Why were you expected to do this exercise?

What type of person would need to do this exercise?

How well do you fit the profile of the person for whom this assignment was created?

Reflection: (*Write down your response after completing this assignment.*)

Aligning Short, Mid-Range, and Long Range Goals



To reach my long-range goal of becoming a doctor, I need to:

Immediate

Finish Essay

Short-Range:

Get homework done - daily

Explore possible majors of interest

Meet with advisor to develop ed plan

Mid-Range:

Finish classes I need to take here

Research transfer universities

Apply & get accepted to university

Take Upper Div. classes to graduate

Long-Range

Apply & get accepted to med school

Succeed in med school

Get medical license & get job