



ANTHONY IANNARINO

# 2026

*GOALS*

workbook

Anthony Iannarino

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# SETTING GOALS



## *Outcomes*

The outcome of this workshop is to provide you with the mindset, skill sets, and tool kits to reach your goals. In this course, you will learn how to identify and set your personal sales goals, make a meaningful commitment to achieving those goals, and build a plan that will ensure that you succeed in reaching your targets.

## THE RULES FOR THIS WORKSHOP

1. You agree to accept that you are going to be challenged to think big, and you agree to give yourself permission to want what you want.
2. You agree NOT to set goals that you are certain to reach without having to make any significant changes. That is too easy and it will not benefit you.
3. You agree NOT to criticize anyone else's goals. You agree to support others in this work and to allow them to support you.
4. You are not required to share anything that you don't want to share. You will not pressure anyone to share something that they don't want to share, but you can challenge whether they are thinking big enough.
5. You agree to give your best effort to completing the exercises to the best of your ability. You also agree to go back over this work and edit and improve it after you have had time to review it in a place where you can be introspective.
6. You agree that you will design a plan that you sincerely believe will allow you to reach your goals.
7. You agree to execute your plan after this workshop. You also agree to forgive yourself when you are off course and to simply start over where you are now.
8. You agree to track your progress by updating your worksheets each week.

# MODIFICATION TO SMART GOALS

## DESIRABLE

For a goal to compel you, it has to be something for which you have a strong desire. The number one attribute of successful people, as far as I have been able to ascertain, is “hunger.” There is no other attribute that does more to ensure goal attainment. The secret of successfully achieving your goals is the strong desire that creates intrinsic motivation, the kind that moves you to continued action.

## MEANINGFUL

Not only do your goals need to include a desirable state, but they also have to provide a sense of purpose and meaning. Your motivation might be intrinsic, but reaching your goals means raising the stakes. Your goals need to be related to things that are meaningful to you. There should be rewards that you really want when you succeed, and penalties for missing your goal. Most people just accept the penalties.

## ASPIRATIONAL

There is no reason to set an achievable goal, a goal you know you can easily reach without making any serious changes. Here we need to make an improvement to this work. Instead of achievable, we need the goal to be aspirational: something on the other side of what you know you can do. The problem with achievable goals is that they have too little power to compel change.

## METRICS AND MILESTONES

The smart goals that we were taught include the idea that your goal should be measurable. That is a goal-setting idea that is still incredibly important, but we are going to expand the idea here by adding metrics and milestones. What smart goals lack is the demand that you capture your metrics and manage the milestones on the way to reach your goals. Goals are projects, and you have to treat them as such.

## TRANSFORMATIONAL

The best and most effective goals you can set are going to require you to become the version of you that comes after the person you are now. Your goals should cause you to grow. Transforming into a better, more capable person, and one who can reach for higher goals as the result of who they’ve become.

# BAD GOALS

## NOT SOMETHING YOU REALLY WANT

For a goal to be effective, it has to be something you actually want for yourself. This is why it's important that your goal is your own—even though your company has set their own goal for you.

## NOT MEANINGFUL

For a goal to provide you intrinsic motivation, it must be meaningful to you. Different people are motivated by different things. Some people are motivated by money, and other people would like more money, but it doesn't drive them. Many people want the ability to do things for others, and that compels them to achieve their goals.

Your goal needs to be important to you.

## NOT BIG ENOUGH

The challenge in setting goals that are achievable is that they don't require you to change. A good goal should require you to ask yourself, "How on Earth am I going to achieve this goal?" And that is exactly the right question you need to ask yourself. Any goal that doesn't require you to increase your effort, your activity, and improve your strategy is impotent. You need to feel a little fear.

## NO PLAN TO REACH THE GOAL

In smart goals, the M stood for measurable. That isn't as useful as metrics and milestones. Your goal needs a plan, and taking a measurement of your progress at the end of a quarter or the year leaves too much space to be effective. You can miss your goals without any time to make adjustments. You want a plan that you measure each week with milestones that pull you forward.

## NOT TRANSFORMATIONAL

Your goal need to transform you so that you can transform your results. Your goal should propel you into the next goal.

# CHARACTER TRAITS



Self-Discipline



Competitiveness



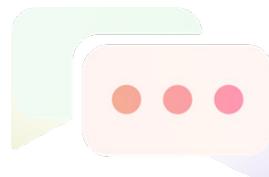
Persistence



Optimism



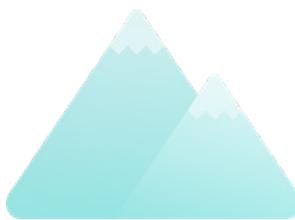
Resourcefulness



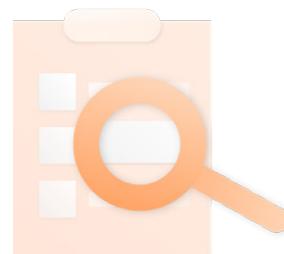
Communication



Caring



Initiative



Accountability

# SALES SKILLS



## Closing

Commitment Gaining



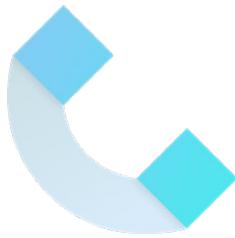
## Discovery

Diagnosis / Asking Powerful Questions



## Change Management

Building Consensus



## Prospecting

Opportunity Creation



## Negotiation

Trading Value



## Leadership

Moving Others



## Storytelling

Presentation



## Business Acumen

The Ability to Compel Change

# Why You Need Goals

I like disciplines, things you do forever because they produce a positive result that isn't really a goal. Running a marathon is a goal, but having the energy to live the life you want requires a discipline that doesn't have a finish line. That said, goals are still critically important to your growth and your success.

## Goals Provide Direction

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The most important reason you need to set goals is because they provide direction. They cause you to take action that moves you. Without goals you'll still move, but you'll be drifting, directionless. You can waste a lot of time drifting.

Goals pull you in a direction of your choosing. They bring your intentions to life. Even if you decide later to change your goals and your direction, you'll have greater momentum because you are already moving.

## Goals Measure Progress

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I practiced Aikido for a full year, believing I had made no progress, even though I had only really practiced with black belts throughout that time. When the Sensei brought in a new class, I was forced to work with people who had never been on a mat before. It was only then that I recognized my progress.

Goals work the same way: it's not the attainment that's so important but the progress. It's the improvement— the difference from where you were when you started this path. With a goal, you can look back over the ground you covered and see just how far you've come.

One of the greatest motivators available to you is growth. Goals help you grow, and they provide ways to measure that growth.

## Goals Provide Feedback

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Is what you are doing working? Is it moving you closer to what you want, or is it moving you further away?

It is important that you take disciplined action towards the goals you are trying to obtain. But are those disciplined actions working? If what you are doing is moving you away from your goals, then your strategy is not working. That feedback tells you to change something. Maybe that means putting in more effort, but it could also mean changing your approach completely.

Where are you going? How do you intend to get there? How will you need to change and grow to be the person who accomplishes what you are setting out to do?



# Setting Goals So Big They Scare You

Small goals, when they are not milestones on the way to bigger ones, can be satisfying, but they often lack the thrill, that rush of accomplishment that keeps you going. There is a magic power in setting goals so big they scare you.

## THE PROBLEM WITH SMALL GOALS

A small goal doesn't require you to transform yourself or your world. It doesn't possess the power to prompt you to take massive action. Sure, accomplishing it might be helpful, like taking out the trash so it doesn't stink up the kitchen, but you know it isn't all that important. Because the goal isn't big enough to cause you to believe something different and take new actions, it doesn't compel you to change, to transform, or to become.

Small goals are easy to reach. One of the reasons people make them is because they know success won't cost them any real effort or struggle. In some cases, people make small goals that they are all but guaranteed to reach, like the business that sets a goal for 5 percent growth when it's averaging 4.9%.

The only thing worse than having small goals is having no goals at all, allowing "The Drift" to replace your goals and take you in a direction you never wanted in the first place.

## THE VALUE IN BIG GOALS

Big goals are everything that small goals are not.

Big goals require much more of you. You must start by being intentional and planning your approach, something that may not be necessary with small goals. Since the level of planning is proportional to the size of your goal, you won't be able to just wing it and hope for the best.

You must also become the kind of person who can reach those goals—which is perhaps the best and most important outcome of setting your sights on something more substantial. Only big goals cause you to transform yourself. They require you to change your beliefs, your actions, and most importantly your disciplines. Any discipline requires intentionality and power, making big goals that much more challenging.

## BIG GOALS MEAN NOT SETTLING

We often avoid making big goals because we are afraid that we won't achieve them. We hesitate to commit to them because we know that commitment requires real change. So rather than setting big goals, failing, and still producing transformational results, we settle for easier prey.

When you limit yourself to small goals, you are settling. You are settling for being something less than you are capable of becoming. You are settling for doing less than you are capable of and producing a worse result than you might have created. You are settling for having less than you might have and contributing less than you could have.

## GOALS THAT STRETCH YOU

Big goals prevent you from settling. Instead, they force you to stretch. Instead of trying for 5 percent growth, you set a goal to double the business— an idea that any reasonable person would find outrageous.

The first response to a goal is incredulity, typically from people who are afraid of the goal. “Is that even possible?!” they ask. But take heart: all you’re hearing is another person’s belief about what they are capable of, not what you’re capable of, and certainly not what’s possible in the first place. The truth of the matter is that if someone else is already producing the result you defined as your big goal, that result is undoubtedly possible for you.

The second question people ask about big goals is better, because it captures the power of big goals: “How on earth do you propose to do that?” Indeed, how on earth do you propose to reach your big goal? Because they’ll make you struggle with everything you have to make you change everything you are.

## BE AFRAID

There is no reason to set goals that don’t frighten you. If a goal doesn’t make you worry about how different you’ll have to be and how differently you’ll have to do things, then it isn’t big enough. That fear will compel you to change, and keep compelling you through all the massive new demands on your life.



# The Power of Setting Unrealistic Goals

It is easy to lower your goals to make them more achievable. In fact, you can cut out the middleman by just setting low goals in the first place. After all, consistently setting high goals would be unrealistic—and failing to meet them might make you feel bad and lose your mojo.

Needless to say, that's all complete bullshit.

A business doing \$10M in sales may set a realistic goal of \$11.2M for the following year. That goal is specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound—everything a goal is supposed to be. But the goal itself is impotent.

The business doing \$10M knows it can reach \$11.2M without really changing how it operates. That's the problem with reachable goals: you don't have to do anything different to reach them. They have no power because they don't require any new beliefs, new knowledge, new skills, or new behaviors. Why bother setting such a wimpy goal?

What if that same business set a goal of \$20M? "Iannarino," you say, "That's outrageous. How on earth can they double the size of their business in a year?" And in that very question is the power of an unrealistic goal. It forces you to take action, to change, and to stretch yourself further than you ever thought possible.

Maybe you're not satisfied. After all, what if they miss their goals? What if they come up short? Tell me, exactly what is wrong with not reaching your goals? Failure is simply a form of feedback. You need to adjust what you are doing before you try again.

As it happens, the scenario above really happened. And no, the company in question did not make their goal. They only managed to earn \$17.5M in the second year. They had to make massive changes to produce that number. It's really too bad they missed their goal.

*Are your goals unrealistic enough to require massive change and growth to reach them?*



# Focus on Your Big Goals and High Priorities Now

Reality doesn't care about your feelings, nor does it care about your plans or goals. In this regard, reality can seem rather inflexible. Over the past few months, for instance, you have given your attention over to at least one Big Important Thing that, despite being utterly and entirely out of your control, demanded your attention. Even worse, it demanded that you respond. If you are a leader, it may still be commanding your time and your attention, requiring you to make decisions without any conceptual framework or experience to base them on.

Stephen Covey once wrote that between stimulus and response, there is an opportunity to pause and consider your response. Up to this point, the Big Important Thing has stimulated you by demanding an answer without giving you a chance to pause—a sure recipe for poorer decision-making. If a tiger is chasing you, you don't sit down and ponder your choices: you just run like hell. When the tiger slows its pursuit, you can use the pause to reconsider your options.

## WHAT CONTROLS YOUR TIME?

From time to time, external events will dominate your time. When there is a real emergency, one that threatens you and the people and things you care about, your time will go toward dealing with the crisis. Once you have done all you can to dispatch the threat, though, you have to pivot, taking back control of your time and your focus.

Time is your single, finite, non-renewable resource, making it the most valuable commodity you will ever possess. You never know how much time you have or when you will have exhausted your supply. This being true, you have to respect time, choosing to invest it rather than waste it. When you spend more time on things outside your control than you do on things within your control, you make success unlikely.

There may be another crisis down the road, but you can't let crisis management dominate your mindset or what you do with your time. You must return to time management. You have to take back control of your time and your focus.

## GO BACK TO YOUR GOALS

It's easy to give up on your goals, especially after you get discouraged by lost weeks and months and quarters. But don't abandon your goals, even if it seems like you'll never reach them.

There is a power that only goals provide. Goals provide a target and a deadline, creating both a sense of direction and a sense of urgency. Goals provide clarity as to what dominates your time and your focus. Your goals are internal, and deliberately pursuing them prevents the things that are outside your control from dominating your agenda.

You may have fewer weeks available to reach your original goals, but instead of throwing in the towel, take some time to reset, restart, and reimagine your goals. How much progress can you make with the time you have available? How much lost ground can you recover?

## PRIORITIZE YOUR PRIORITIES

There is no doubt that your priorities shifted during this pandemic, as many important projects gave way to urgent ones. But unless you're still actively dealing with the crisis, it's time to go back to your original priorities, the things that were—and likely still are—critically important to you, your business, and your clients' businesses.

When you are forced to live with a great deal of uncertainty, you will find certainty and confidence by acting on your priorities. Shifting your time and attention to the things that are important to you provides a sense of control. When you find yourself in a storm, navigating through rough and threatening waters, it's best to steer the ship in the direction you want to go, working against the forces that are sending you in the wrong direction.

The last thing you want to do is to allow external forces to cause you to drift. Resisting that drift requires that you establish and pursue your priorities, giving them your full attention and minimizing the time you spend on anything else. Maybe you have fallen behind. Perhaps you are struggling to make progress.

There is nothing to be gained by falling further behind, and everything to be gained by making as much progress as you can on what is important to you—both now and in the future.

## WHO OR WHAT COMMANDS YOUR TIME?

The most successful people you will ever meet are intentional about how they spend their time. They don't let other people dictate their calendars, nor do they let external events dominate their time, their goals, or their priorities. They say no to almost everything, to ensure they maintain the space necessary to produce the results they want.

If you don't control what you do with your time and focus, someone or something else will decide for you, a surrender that rarely leads to successful outcomes. A crisis can be all-consuming, particularly when the media works overtime to create fear, dread, and obsession—all of which shift your focus to what you don't know and can't control.

You are going to have to work diligently to focus your attention on what you want, while avoiding focusing on what you don't want. You have the personal power to decide what you want, what is a priority, and what you do with your time and energy. Make good choices, and do good work.



# Your Goals and Your Effort

As a young child, I went to Catholic school. For a while I did fine, but when I reached my rebellious teenage years, my grades began to suffer. At my school, each student received two grades. The first was your letter grade, the mark that you achieved. The second grade was a number between 1 and 4, measuring how much effort you put in.



My grades consisted of a lot of C4's, which meant I earned a C and put forth the absolutely lowest possible effort to do so. I didn't get in trouble for the C. I got in trouble for the 4. My mom would have taken a C1—an average score with the maximum effort. She would not accept a C4, even though I got plenty of them, because she knew I wasn't reaching my potential.

If you are doing just enough to reach your activity quota, you likewise aren't working to your capacity. How do I know that? Because your quota is at—or just under—what someone else has required of you. That activity goal is not a goal you set for yourself. Instead, it is what someone else expects of you, likely determined by what is average, what is acceptable.

If the activity quota had been greater when you started, then you would already be doing more than you are now, even if you're the kind of person who does only what is expected of them. You'd also be producing the better results that would accompany greater effort. Here's the point: what someone else finds acceptable for you should not be what you find acceptable. Set higher standards for yourself, both so you can work to your potential and so you can take ownership of your goals.

Your goals, after all, are your own. Your personal quota is not your company's quota. It is what you determine you want for yourself. If you want greater income, then you can't target the minimally acceptable performance. If you want to work to your full potential, you have to put forth the full effort of which you are capable, not just what someone else will accept from you.

If you gave your effort an honest grade, how often would you get a 1? Are you always pushing yourself, or are you coasting through your career, doing just enough to get by?

# Your Effort Exactly Matches Your Real Goals

There is a difference between wanting things and having goals.

For example, everyone wants more money. A small percentage are motivated enough to take action to produce more income. Likewise, everyone wants to be in excellent physical condition, but few are willing to invest their time and energy to do the work that produces that outcome.

Your current efforts are producing your current results. If you put even less effort into the results you want, you will produce even less of them, right? And, naturally, if you put more effort into what you want, you will progress towards those things.

But results are only one piece of the puzzle: your efforts also match up precisely with your real goals. The effort you put forth to get something indicates how badly you want it. Even if you say that you really, really, really want something, your effort exposes the truth. You are motivated enough to have exactly the result you have now, mainly because you are comfortable.

More effort might make you uncomfortable, and you may have to give up what you know and believe to gain something different. You might have to invest double the time and energy, something that might make you tired just thinking about it. More to the point, becoming the person that comes after the person you are now might be a scary prospect, especially if it means you might lose membership in your tribe.

When you want a goal badly enough to put forth the effort to achieve it, you will almost certainly attain that goal. Given enough time and a consistent application of effort, obstacles eventually give way. Those obstacles are what prevent all who merely “want” things from having them, and they are the proving grounds for those who achieve their goals.

Your effort tells the truth about your real goals. It’s okay if comfort is one of them, but where’s the fun in that?







# How to Use Optimism to Attain Goals

Optimism is valuable when it comes to attaining your goals. Pessimists pay for their negativity by being less likely to reach their goals, in large part because their beliefs make it more difficult. Your ideas drive your actions, and your actions produce your results. If you believe this is true, starting with an optimistic attitude is step one for attaining your goals.

## **THERE WILL BE PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES**

Optimists understand that they are going to experience problems and challenges as they pursue their goals. They expect to struggle with the same issues and challenges as pessimists, but they do so while believing that any obstacle can be overcome.

Some pessimists try to present themselves as “realists,” but that’s just a disguise. You either believe that there are problems and challenges and that you will overcome them, or you believe that there are problems and challenges that will prevent you from reaching your goal.

Optimism is positive, future-oriented, and empowered. These characteristics allow optimists to persist in the face of obstacles, holding firm to their belief that they can overcome any barriers.

## **THERE IS A WAY FORWARD**

There is always a way forward. Those with an empowered mindset believe they’ll find that way, so they keep moving towards what they want. Pessimists believe that there is no way forward— and that even if there were, it would be too difficult. The belief that there is a way forward allows the optimist to continue to act, even when things are complicated, and even when there is little noticeable progress. They keep pushing forward and keep trying, never giving up.

Optimists are not stupid: if an optimist believed there was no possibility of success, they would quit. But quitting would still go against their nature. When things are dark, optimism provides a source of light.

## FAILURE IS NOT IDENTITY

Optimists don't hold negative beliefs about themselves. They don't believe the root cause of any stumbling block is that they have some fatal flaw that prevents success. They're confident enough to fail, adjust their approach, and try again. In short, deficiency doesn't make one a failure; it's merely an event. Both optimism and pessimism are identities, and identities transcend circumstances.

Those who harbor pessimistic beliefs believe that any failure says something about them personally—that they aren't good enough, that they lack something, and most importantly that the failure in some way defines them. One of the most empowering beliefs you can choose to hold is that your failure does not define you and that you have no flaw that will preclude goal attainment.

## FAILURE IS NOT PERMANENT

One of the most frequent questions B2B salespeople ask me is "When do you give up on your dream client?" Often they are frustrated because a prospective client has refused to agree to a meeting so many times that they want to move on. The salesperson sees the situation as permanent.

Instead, optimism requires believing that any failure is temporary, and that over time, you'll achieve a different

and better outcome. The belief that the present result isn't lasting undergirds the optimist's continued attempts to succeed.

## FAILURE IS FEEDBACK

There are many ways to interpret a failure. You can choose to believe it is your fault, or that success is impossible, or that anyone who did succeed had some unfair advantage. This is how the cynical, skeptical, and pessimistic person frames failing.

People with a positive belief system see failure as feedback. When something doesn't work out, they still want it to work, so they don't give up. Instead, they look for lessons. Failing provides you with insights about what didn't work, why it didn't work, and what you might do differently. Those with a positive view of things empower themselves to put that feedback to work, improving their next attempt.

## I WILL SUCCEED, EVENTUALLY

If there is a defining belief of the optimist, it is that they will eventually succeed. The notion that you will succeed in the future sanctions the second, third, and forty-third attempt. The best way to guarantee that you won't achieve your goals is to believe that they are impossible to achieve—and to use that belief as an excuse for half-hearted effort.

Even if you don't succeed, you will learn something that improves your next attempt. The optimist pursues their goals on a longer timeline than the pessimist. The ability to decide what you want in the future, hold the vision in your mind, delay gratification, and consistently act toward your goals will lead to success, even if it takes time.

## ADVERSITY IS GROWTH

The pessimist sees difficulty as something negative to avoid at all costs, while those who reach their goals see difficulty as an opportunity for growth. The magic of big goals is that pursuing them requires you to grow.

Adversity is something to push against. In exerting yourself to pursue what you want, you become stronger, allowing you to make the kind of distinctions that improve your results. Your positive vision and mindset don't perceive adversity as something negative. Instead, you come to expect difficulty and frame it as an opportunity for the growth necessary to reach your goals.

## PROGRESS OVER PERFECTION

Positive, future-oriented, and empowered people look for progress over perfection. Progress is movement in the right direction, which sustains optimists through long periods on the plateau. Even when there's little to no discernible improvement, they trust the process.

Those who are negative go from one thing to the next, never reaching their goal because they expect immediate results in place of meaningful progress. When the result isn't quickly produced, they change their goals, adjust the vehicle they were using to pursue those goals, and start over again, only to repeat the pattern forever.



# You Reach Your Goals When You Adhere to Disciplines

The note-taking application Evernote has a function called Spaces, which is sort of like a crude project space and file manager. One of my Spaces is called Goals, so I keep different notebooks there for each of my goals. Each notebook includes a spreadsheet where I keep score on my goals.

I have a sheet dedicated to my physical goals, so each morning I track my weight, body fat, time spent walking or running, and exercises. I create a sense of accountability to the goal by having to enter the metric daily. I also have to look at the numbers.

I have another sheet for my financial goals. Just writing this brings to mind how much better it might be to consolidate the spreadsheets, but for now each one stands on its own. Capturing the result of my disciplines, the things I do without fail to produce a result (or goal), creates an adherence to each discipline. Seeing the results, good or bad, is motivating.

## YOU CAN'T HIDE FROM YOURSELF

I have long argued that sales managers who use dashboards are reducing their team's accountability. It's one thing to know your sales manager is looking at your numbers, but it's a different experience to have to report those results out loud. If you did nothing in the prior week, having to admit it in a meeting would cause a good bit of discomfort.

The last person you want to hide from, though, is yourself. Not looking at something that needs attention doesn't do anything to improve it. Problems don't age well, and before

you know it tiny annoyances will grow up to be giant monsters. You want to dispatch them as soon as possible—and before they do real damage.

If you have a goal, you have a gap between your current state and your desired future state. Maybe you've never thought about goals using that lens, but I bring it up because it allows you to think about what you need to do to close that gap. It also allows you to do two things: 1) measure your progress, and 2) define the disciplines it will take to produce that result.

## THE POWER OF ADHERENCE

When I turn on my laptop, Evernote launches automatically. I open several spreadsheets and record some data points. I remind myself of my goals and the disciplines I must follow to produce them. I also check to see how I am progressing towards them.

The gap between your results and someone else's results is not a matter of ability but a matter of will. People who are right now producing some result that you want can do so because they adhere to a set of disciplines that produce that result. They consistently do what is necessary for that goal or outcome. Provided your strategies are effective, if you

consistently invest enough time and energy in removing some obstacle, the obstacle will eventually yield. Chances are, you already know what you have to do, but you're not yet adhering to the necessary disciplines.

The first publisher that considered my first book, *The Only Sales Guide You'll Ever Need*, called me to share his thoughts. He opened with two questions: "Why on earth would you start a sales book with self-discipline when everyone hates that? And what does caring have to do with sales?" It was a short conversation.

My best advice is to start your day by doing what you perceive as the worst thing you need to do, because that's when your energy and psychic RAM is at its peak. By doing so, you will eliminate your tendency to procrastinate and rationalize not doing what you know you need to do. Reality is going to produce a scorecard for you in the form of specific outcomes. To make sure you have the results you want, you can start by holding yourself accountable for adhering to the right disciplines.



# The Real Threat to Your Goals and Ambitions

The real threats to not producing the results you want are not external. They are not lurking somewhere “out there” on the horizon, keeping you up at night. You might believe that your success is at risk from your irrational competitor, the nefarious government, changes in the general economy, global pandemics, or black swans. While there is no reason to ignore what’s going on around you, that still leaves you responsible for doing something about it.

*All the real threats to your goals are right here, right now, and right there in the mirror.*

The underlying problem is failing to do what you need to do, when you need to do it. It's allowing small things to take away your time and attention from the few, critical, big things you need to do. It's not putting outsized effort into your real priorities. Knowing what you need to do and not doing it is a failure to execute, one of the easiest ways to miss your targets. For all intents and purposes, knowing what you need to do but not doing it is the same as not knowing in the first place.

The way you fail to generate the outcomes you want is by refusing to deal with the constraints, believing that your strategy and your effort will be enough to reach your goal. You are not vulnerable because of your competitor's irrational pricing strategy, or even because of your client's irrational preference for that competitor, but because you failed to execute your own strategy. Strategy is about avoiding mistakes, yes, but it's also about knowing what you are going to give up. Getting what you need often requires accepting less of something that you want, so you can focus on the stuff that moves you forward.

Looking outside for threats instead of looking inside for obstacles is an ineffective use of your time and energy. Once you are aware of those external threats, you'll soon realize that they aren't as dangerous as you once imagined. Turn your attention inwards and do the work you need to do to get what you want.



# Do Something About the Obstacle Between You and Your Goals

The single biggest obstacle standing between you and your goals—your unique definition of success—stares back at you in the mirror every morning. Unless and until you do something about that obstacle, what you want will evade your grasp.

There is a tendency to blame external things, often those beyond our control, when we struggle to reach our goals or produce the results we want. But external factors have little to no impact on your results, so blaming them is mostly your mind's attempt to protect your ego. After all, you can't be to blame—that would mean you are responsible for the failure, and that you are somehow less competent, savvy, intelligent, or professional than you want to believe you are.

The things outside of your control are excuses, not reasons. Maybe the reason you didn't reach your sales goal is because your irrational competitors cheated and won on price. Or maybe you didn't differentiate yourself and your offering, or you failed to justify the delta in some meaningful way. Maybe your relationships didn't work out the way you wanted them to, despite months or even years of trying. The specifics may change, but if you are introspective and honest enough to face the truth, you'll realize that the one thing all your challenges and obstacles and unachieved goals have in common is you.

Recently, a workshop participant challenged my claim that “everything is your fault.” He suggested that this was a bridge too far, saying that surely, I didn’t mean

“everything.” In his view, some failures had to be caused by something or someone else. Even if that belief were true, holding it wouldn’t help. In fact, blaming outside factors consistently disempowers you, since it allows you to behave as if there is nothing you can do, no difference you can make.

That excuse can creep into every area of your life, providing a defense for your ego and indulging the comfort of “knowing” you are not to blame for your results—that external forces dominate. Fortunately, this is not true. The results that you produce in your life are wholly within your control, and external events have little to do with achieving what you want.

By contrast, believing that you control the results you produce, and thus that you are responsible for reaching your goals, is empowering. It puts control in your hands, where it belongs. If you want to reach your goals and achieve your vision of success, you have to start by getting out of your own way.



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Don't turn off your PC. This will take a while.

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# When You Need to Reboot Your Goals

You had good intentions when you defined your goals for the year. Over time, maybe life got in the way, or perhaps your enthusiasm waned. Maybe you didn't develop the disciplines to keep yourself on-task after your excitement died down. Whatever the reason, if your desires haven't changed, then you need to reboot your personal goals and try again.

## DON'T QUIT ON YOURSELF

When some people fail to reach their goals, they give up on attaining them. But they are not giving up their objective so much as giving up on themselves. While you may not ever achieve the outcome you fantasized about, you should never quit on yourself.

Perhaps the goal was more complicated than you expected when you committed to it, so you underestimated the amount of time and energy it would require. But even that miscalculation is a form of feedback, one that should inform your future attempts (yes, plural attempts—persistence is necessary). Maybe you lacked the discipline to overcome your old habits and patterns. Congratulations, you're human—the very reason you shouldn't quit.

Many before you have failed to reach their performance goals on the first, second, or thirty-third attempt, only to set and achieve even greater goals later. Quitting on yourself only ensures that you'll never get what you want. Pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and get after it.

## DON'T WORRY WHAT OTHERS THINK

There are two schools of thought around goals. One suggests never telling anyone your specific goals, since public failures might embarrass you and cause you to give up. The other indicates that making your goals public creates a sense of accountability. My advice would be to stop

worrying altogether about what other people think about you. No one's opinion of your goal setting, your failure to attain them, or even your success can matter more than your own opinion—especially when the commentators will not attend your funeral.

It doesn't matter if you failed to reach your goal in a spectacular fashion that attracted some unwanted attention. There is no shame in failing, especially when the outcome you want is difficult to achieve. What is worth doing that doesn't require you to stretch yourself, grow, and become the kind of person who could reach your goal? Failure is an ingredient of success, not its absence.

## RECOGNIZE WHERE AND HOW YOU NEGOTIATE WITH YOURSELF

When we miss our goals, a lot of the time it is because we are weak negotiators. We negotiate with ourselves, promising that we'll do something later that will contribute to our goals, so we don't have to postpone something more interesting or more pleasurable. But when later arrives, we fail to do what we had promised ourselves.

You have to start by noticing when and how you negotiate with yourself. When the small voice in your head starts to suggest that it won't hurt anything to follow this urge or that one, or that there will be plenty of time later, you have to refuse the offer—and keep refusing until the small voice disappears forever.

If you want something, you must make it non-negotiable. The more significant voice inside of you, the part of you that wants your goal, has to be the dominant decision-maker, rejecting any effort to seek comfort over effort, play over work, and Netflix over sweat.

## RECOMMIT AND DO THE WORK

Recommit to your goal. Remind yourself why you set the goal in the first place. What does reaching your goal do for you, and what does it let you avoid? Write down your short-term and long-term goals. If you want better adherence and greater certainty, you should also draft the action plans necessary to achieve each goal.

When it comes to commitments, there's no better place to start than with a list of the daily, weekly, monthly, and quarterly disciplines necessary for reaching your goal. Maintaining those disciplines until they become second nature will sustain you much longer than your inspiration or your motivation.

Your commitment to the work is proof of your commitment to the goal. I may not know what your goal is, but I do know you haven't yet put in the work to reach it. Ideally, you should be committed to the task even without the goal, since it's work—not wishing—that produces results.

## START OVER

Today is day one. Nothing you did in the past matters. You have a clean slate to do with what you will. All your past successes and failures are nothing more than the education that has brought you to this place, at this time. You have learned what worked, what helped you make progress, but also what got you distracted or caused you to fail.

Take a lesson from tech support: reboot. Push the power button. Push it again. Start over.

# How to Never Compromise on Your Goals

It is easier to want something than to work to bring it to life.

One way to measure how important a goal is to you is how much time and serious effort you invest in the specific activities necessary to achieve it. Spending more time on what's most important is proof that you are willing to do the work necessary to reach your goal. Conversely, spending time on things that don't move you towards what Future You wants—or worse, things that move you further away from your goals—means you are not committed to the outcome.

Your finite time requires you to choose your priorities. If you are not intentional about deciding what to do, you will invariably find yourself caught up in “The Drift,” never advancing and often responding to anything and everything that grabs your attention. Most of what vies for your time will have nothing to do with your goals.

# Recognize Your Distractions

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The most significant sources of distraction include your email inbox, social networking sites, and the constant barrage of media clickbait, mostly with provocative or negative information.

## INBOX

Very little of what shows up in your inbox has any relevance or value for your goals. Most of what you find there are other people's priorities and requests, along with unbelievably vast amounts of data that provides zero value in trade for your time. The time you spend here is expensive, and it comes at the cost of your goals. The sheer volume of emails can paralyze you, and at best they move you away from the work you need to do. That's why you should avoid opening your inbox until you have made progress on your actual goals.

## SOCIAL NETWORKING

Social networking sites have ushered in a communications revolution, making everyone a content creator at different levels. It has also made each of us consume far more content. These sites are designed to keep you on the platform: the more you scroll, the more valuable you are to their business model, a model that depends on you

staying online and clicking on advertisements. It's custom-made for "The Drift": one link leads to the next, and soon you find yourself clicking your way through an unhealthily substantial part of your day—at a cost that is much too high.

## MEDIA

If you care about sports, entertainment, politics, global affairs, or some popular television show, there are endless options for indulging in details that have nothing to do with your goals. Add to this a media that is mostly designed to provoke you, create an emotional response, and capture your attention, and you have the perfect storm of distractions. Unless you work in media and those things directly relate to your goals, you're just wasting time here.

***You can have your goals or you can have your distractions. You cannot have both.***

# Choosing Critical Activities

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Because time will manage you if you don't manage it, you have the power to decide what you will do, and more importantly, what you will not do with your time. The best approach is to let Future You, the better you that you imagine and are working towards creating, make the decision. Future You is a more disciplined version of yourself, the version that wants something more and is becoming something more.

Most goals only require a few critical activities. These few things must dominate your time. The greater your investment of your time and ability, the more effectively you will achieve your goal. You can think of this as a "time against goal" metric.

If you want to reach a sales goal, for instance, spending more time prospecting and in client meetings is one way to measure your effort, your willingness to do the right work, and the likelihood you reach your goal. Time (at work) spent on things that do not produce new opportunities or allow you to win them deprive you of that progress. One of the most common reasons salespeople miss their goals is because they don't spend enough of their time selling.

If you want a better relationship with someone, spending time with them indicates how important that goal is to you. Basic communication is easy. Real communication, which demands your full focus and full presence, is more complicated. There may be no bigger gift you can give another person than your full presence. If you seek work-life balance, think less in terms of quantity and more in terms of quality.

Whatever your goals, the work necessary to achieve them needs to dominate your calendar. When you allow something less than your highest priorities to command your time and energy, it takes more time to reach your goals—if you reach them at all.

## Value-Based Decisions

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Your goals require that you make value-based decisions— that X is better than Y. All things cannot be equal, and because time requires you to choose, you have to determine your priorities to maintain focus and avoid drifting away.

Without clarity about what is most important, you allow everything to come into your world, making demands on your time, your attention, and your energy. You should dedicate your time to what you want, not just what shows up. To meet your goals and outcomes, you need filters tight enough to starve those things that are meaningless while prioritizing what is critical to what you want in the future.

# Your Goals Are Your Own

Your strengths are different from your competitors' strengths. So are your weaknesses. Even though you may sell exactly the same thing, many of your processes are different. You have different capabilities and different limitations. You produce different results, sometimes markedly different, because you create value differently (think Walmart and Tiffany's).

The people within your organizations are very different. You have a different view of the industry (think Southwest Airlines and Virgin Airlines). Your leadership is different (think Steve Jobs and Steve Ballmer). Your management is different. Your sales force is different. The guys that unload the trucks at the back door are different.

Your company has a different culture (think Goldman Sachs and Google). You have different beliefs about what matters (think Democrats and Republicans). Your companies have different personalities, different goals, and different ambitions.

With so many—and such important—differences, why on earth would you compare your goals, your ambitions, your pricing, your strategy, your benchmarks, your key performance indicators, your sales process, or your messaging with your competitors?

**YOUR GOALS ARE YOUR OWN. MEASURE YOUR PROGRESS IN REACHING YOUR GOALS, NOT SOMEONE ELSE'S.**



## NOTES



# Thank You!

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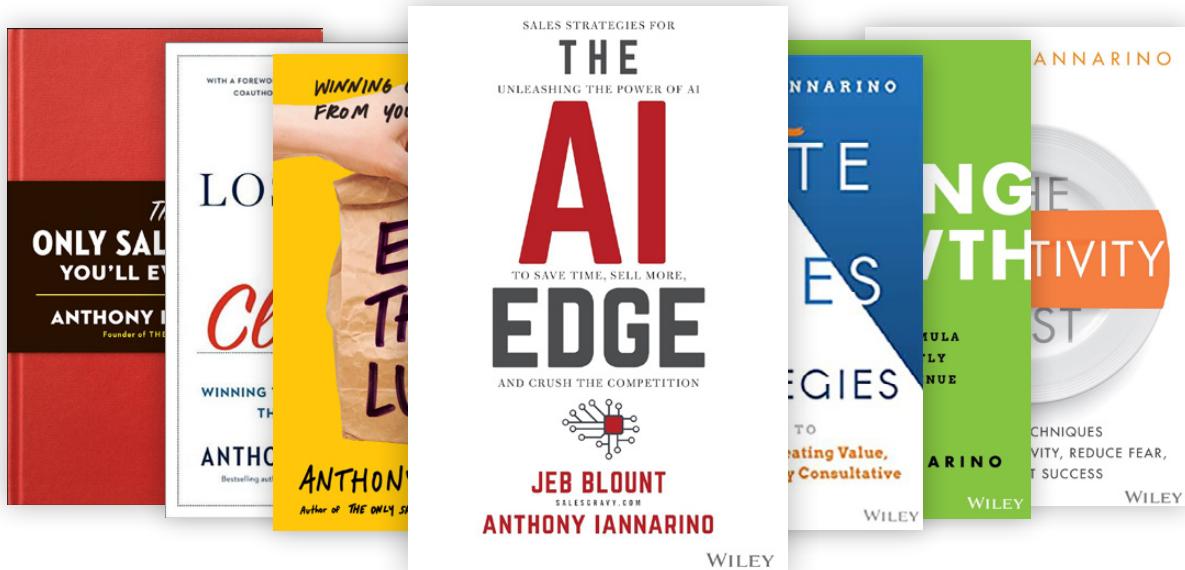


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