



ACHIEVING,
PERFORMANCE,
AMBITION AND
GOAL ORIENTATION

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1 THE OBJECTIVES – WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

In this session, you will learn:

- About the importance and role of goals in your life;
- About the role of values and character in achieving your goals;
- About some useful goal setting strategies;
- What is the importance of habits for performance and achievement and how to develop them.

2 THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING AND ACHIEVING GOALS

In life, we have many goals. They change through time and depend on different roles we have in life. Your goals reflect what is important for you in your life and what is important is determined by your values. It can be love, friendship, money, health, freedom, kindness or something else. Whatever it is it guides your actions and how you act determines your character. Character will help you select your goals and motivate you.

However, to achieve your goals, you also need the skills, knowledge and desire to do what needs to be done to achieve your goals. When you combine character, skills, knowledge and desire, you get habits.

Developing and strengthening the right habits like proactivity, knowing to think before you act and setting the right priorities in life and work, will make you productive and able to achieve your goals.

Equally important as character and right habits, is your attitude. Attitude determines how you see the world and how you react to obstacles in your way.

3 IT ALL STARTS WITH CHARACTER AND ATTITUDE

Your ability to reach your goals depends on you alone. You are the creator of your future and how your future will look depends on your view of and attitude towards the world around you.

Your attitude towards things creates your reality. If you see something as a problem, it becomes a real problem but if you see the same thing as an opportunity, it becomes a real opportunity.

Thus, in order to achieve your goals and be effective while doing so, you **must develop the right attitude**. This will allow you to see the world and its challenges as something you can manage and find ways to reach your goals effectively.

Changing your attitude is, after all, the only thing you can do because you have control over it but you do not have control over the way the world is.

However, what is the right attitude and how do you develop it?

It all starts with you.

You must develop not only your skills and knowledge but also your **character**. **Character shapes your attitude and guides you through life.**

Character determines your values: if you are fair or like to cheat, if you lie or tell the truth or if you are selfish or you try to do something good for other people. People focus on skills and knowledge and often forget about character but **most successful people have strong positive character traits like integrity, justice, humility, patience, courage, modesty** and more.

You can look at character as a map that guides you to your goal. You can have the best skill and knowledge about map reading, but you will not reach your goal if you do not have the right map. Imagine being in Paris and trying to find the Eiffel Tower while looking at the map of London by mistake. It does not matter how good you are at map reading, you will not reach your goal.

The same is true for character. If you are dishonest, impatient, unjust and greedy you will get lost in life and not reach your goals. And if you reach them, they will not be the right ones.

Character comes from within. This means you must first start working on changing and improving on the inside before you can see positive change on the outside.

4 SETTING UP GOALS

It seems like we are always chasing some goal: a big promotion at work, a new car or validation from people around us. Most of the time these goals consume so much of your time and attention and seem so normal that you do not even take time to ask yourself if this is what you really want or if it is just something that you chase because others expect you to. If you are trying to achieve what others expect you to instead of what is really important to you, you will spend a lot of time and energy for nothing and end up being disappointed. This is why you must set your goals according to your values, vision and real-life circumstances.

4.1 Knowing your values

Your values are what is important to you and what motivates you in life. Living your lives according to your values will bring you happiness and success. One of the best ways to live according to your values is to plan your goals with your values in mind. However, before you can start setting your goals according to your values you must really know them.

Maybe you are convinced that you know well what your values are and do not need to think about them. However, is it really so? Taking a good look at your values will allow you to see them in a new light and bring new clarity and purpose to your planning and goal setting.

As we said, personal values are things that are important to us. These are things like integrity, health, achievement, honesty, security, love, wealth and more. They influence your decisions so it is only natural to consider them when you are setting your goals.

EXERCISE

Here are some questions to help you define your personal values

1. What is important to you in life?
2. If you could have any career, without worrying about money or other practical constraints, what would you do?
3. When you are reading news stories, what sort of story or behaviour inspires you?
4. What type of story or behaviour makes you angry?
5. What do you want to change about the world or about yourself?
6. What are you most proud of?
7. When were you the happiest?

Brainstorm answers to the questions above and write them on a piece of paper. Use the answers to determine your personal values. If your answer to question number one is “getting along with my friends” your value is clearly friendship and if your answer to question number three is “stories about fighting injustice” your values are likely justice and integrity.

When you finish the exercise, you may have a list of ten or even more very diverse values. To know even better what is the most important for you, you can list them in order of importance.

Do this by selecting five values that you feel the strongest about. For example:

1. Health
2. Integrity
3. Security
4. Success
5. Friendship

First, you compare the first two. The most important goes on top. For example, integrity is more important to you so it moves on top. Then you compare health and security. Health is more important and stays in second place. Security is more important than success and it stays in third place. Friendship is more important to you than success and it comes in fourth place.

You have:

- 1 Integrity
2. Health
3. Security
4. Friendship
5. Success

Then you compare the others. For example, Integrity is more important than friendship and it stays on number 1. Health is more important than friendship so it stays at number 2. Friendship is more important than Security so it becomes number 3. Success is more important than security.

The final list looks like this:

1. Integrity
2. Health
3. Friendship
4. Success
5. Security

4.2 Seeing the big picture

Before you define your specific goals, you should determine what is it that you wish to achieve in your life. The goals you will envision for yourself will be dictated by your character and values.

A good way to do this is to use your imagination and start at the end of it. This will allow you to see the big picture – what matters to you, what your values are and which specific goals you must accomplish to get to where you wish to be at the end.

To see the big picture of what you want in life do these three things:

- **Visualize your funeral** – Think about who is there, what they are saying about you, and your achievements. What do you want them to say? Can they really say what you want them to say? You can also try writing a funeral speech for yourself. Will you like what you have to say?

- **Evaluate your roles in life** – Think about and list the different roles you have in life like a parent, a spouse, a friend, an employee, an entrepreneur. Set three to five goals for each of the roles.
- **Identify the obstacles** – Think about what scares you and could prevent you reaching your goals: being criticized or not knowing how to speak foreign languages.

EXERCISE

Imagine you only have six months to live. How would that change your priorities? Start living your life according to these priorities.

4.3 Setting SMART meaningful goals

Knowing what your roles are in life and what you want to achieve in the big picture will allow you to effectively set smaller specific goals that will lead you to the desired outcome. You must also consider your personal values.

Now you can start setting your goals. You will be able to set more meaningful and achievable goals using the SMART method:

Specific	Your goal must be clear and specific. This will help you to focus your efforts and motivate you to achieve the goal.	Ask yourself: “What do I want to accomplish? Why is this goal significant? Who is involved? Where is it located? What limitations are there?”
Measurable	You must be able to measure your progress. This will help you to follow your plan and stay focused and motivated.	Ask yourself: “How much? How many? How will I know when it is accomplished?”
Achievable	Your goal needs to be realistic, something you are actually able to achieve.	Ask yourself: “How can I accomplish this goal? How realistic is the goal based on other factors, such as financial limitations?”

Relevant	The goal must be important to you and also in line with other goals you have.	Ask yourself: “Is this worthwhile? Is this the right time for this? Is it in line with my other efforts/needs? Am I the right person to reach this goal? Is it appropriate in the current socio-economic situation?”
Time-related	Your goal must have deadlines that you can work to achieve. It will help you prioritize your tasks and stay on track.	When? What can I do in six months? What can I do in six weeks? What can I do today?

Using the SMART method will help you set clear, meaningful and attainable goals, keep you motivated and able to find the help needed and support to reach your goals.

Here are some more useful rules to follow when setting goals:

- **Write down your goals** – Write out your goals to give them more clarity and power.
- **State each goal as a positive statement** – Use positive instead of negative statements. It is better to say “Remember to walk the dog” instead “Do not forget to walk the dog again”.
- **Keep operative goals small** – keep your goals leading to a completion of a bigger goal small. In this way, you will have a feeling of making progress and stay motivated.
- **Have control over your goals** – Set goals that largely depend on you to complete and not so much on other people and things you cannot control.
 For example, having a goal to “win the lottery” is not something you have any control over at all. It is based on pure luck and coincidence. You can study numbers and strategies on how to win a lottery for months or even years but it will not give you any more control over it as if you spent 5 minutes to choose random numbers. On the other hand, the goal to “learn a foreign language in the next 12 months” very much depends on you, how you will approach it, motivate yourself and stick with it.
- **Prioritize your goals** – When you have multiple goals to reach in a short period of time, assign each one a priority. This will help you have a clear picture of what needs to be done and focus on what is most important first.

5 ACHIEVING THE GOALS

To achieve the goals that you have set for yourself you need character, skills, knowledge and desire to do it. When you combine all of this, you get habits. **Developing the right habits is the key to productivity and achievement.**

5.1 Be proactive

You are the one who decides how your life will play out and what role you will have in it. If you wish to be effective and accomplish something, **you need to be proactive.**

Being proactive means to be aware that you have the ability to respond to the world around you as you choose and are thus responsible for your life.

The opposite of being proactive is being reactive. Reactive people wait for things to happen to them and think that they have no ability and responsibility to direct events in their lives. They often say things like “there is nothing I can do”. They focus on things that are outside of their control and neglect things that they can change and control. This makes them increasingly passive and unable to have influence on their own lives.

To be proactive, **you must focus your energy on things that you can control or influence.** By doing so, you will gradually be able to control or influence even more things in your lives.

Push yourself to be more proactive by doing the following:

- **Use proactive instead of reactive language** – Instead of saying “This makes me so angry” say, “I am in control of the situation”.
- **Act proactively instead of reactively** – Do not wait for others to tell you what you should do. Know what you want to do, plan your actions so that they will help you achieve your goals and implement them.

5.2 Think before you act

Acting fast is important but acting too fast is bad. In today’s world, making quick decisions and actions seems like a good thing or even a necessity but **speed is harmful to good decision making.** Acting at the right time is therefore more important than acting fast or first.

The secret to making good decisions and turning them into efficient actions is being able to understand the situation you are in and act accordingly. This means that you must think first and act second.

One of the best strategies that can help you make good decisions and actions in life and work is the OODA strategy. It has four steps:

- **Observe** – First, collect as much information as possible. Imagine you are at a meeting. First, listen to what others are saying. Observe how they are acting, what they are not saying, what their body language tells you, what the general atmosphere is and more. You gather a lot of different information but at this stage, you do not understand it very well and cannot make much sense of it. This is what the next step is for.
- **Orient** – When you have enough information you can start making sense of it. Use your previous experiences, good or bad, to put the data in context. Try to understand what others want and how this is related to your goals. Go through different scenarios in your mind: which action will lead you to your goal and which will lead you away from it? Try to stay objective and do not allow your prejudice and fear to guide you.
- **Decide** – The observation and orientation stage will leave you with a number of options. There could be only two options or there can be ten or more. Now you have to make a decision based on the information you have. You must choose the option that is most likely to lead you to your goal. This means you must see what will happen in each of the options that are available to you and decide on the best one based on the information you have. Sometimes that means making the best possible guess.
- **Act** – Then you act based on your decision in step three. However, action is not really the last step. You must observe and evaluate the results of your action and if they are not optimal go back and repeat the steps to reach better decisions and final results.

This strategy is very effective because it stays in your subconscious. If you use it repeatedly on tasks or problems, it will in time help you perfect your decision-making and action-taking process until it becomes very quick and almost automatic.

5.3 Having the right priorities

To be productive and effective you must know how to set priorities and do the most important thing first. This will help you manage your time and work and lead to much better results than simply trying to do everything at once by putting in more work and energy.

People often give priorities to the most urgent things first, but this is not the best approach. Instead, you **must know what the most important thing is at a given moment and make it a number one priority**. However, how can you know what is the most important thing?

To be able to decide what is most important you must know how to categorize your tasks. One of the best tools to help you do that is the **ABCDE method**:

When you feel you have too much to do, take a piece of paper and a pen. Sit, take a deep breath and list all the tasks you have to do. Remember that even if you do not have enough time to do everything you always have enough time to do the most important tasks and to do them well.

Next, think about your list and put one of the letters A, B, C, D or E in front of each task

A – For **very important** tasks. If this is not done, there can be serious negative consequences.

B – For **important** tasks. This is something you should do but it is not as important as A. There will be minor negative consequences if this is not done.

C – For **nice-to-do** tasks. This would be nice to do but it is not as important as A or B. There will be no negative consequences if this is not done.

D – For tasks you can **delegate**. You can give this task to someone else to do instead of you.

E – For tasks you should **eliminate** whenever possible. Tasks under E should be eliminated to make more time for important tasks.

This process will help you easily recognize the most important tasks. Once you have found one or two tasks that need to be done ignore all other distractions and focus your time and energy on completing them.

This will not only increase your effectiveness but also decrease your stress as research shows that working on unimportant things causes you a lot of stress and shifting our focus on important things decreases it.

Another way to set your priorities is the **1 – 3 – 5 rule**. This rule says that you can only accomplish nine tasks per day: one big, three medium and five small. In this way, you must choose what is the most important on any given day. You make a list with nine tasks:

One big task: Prepare your garden for spring.

Three medium tasks: Update work papers, watch a video about gardening, wash the car.

Five small tasks: Wash the dishes after dinner, go to the grocery store, repair the light in the kitchen, cancel a meeting with a friend, and finish reading a book.

6 OVERCOMING YOUR FEARS

It is normal to experience fear, and we all do. Today most of our fears are psychological like fear of public speaking or fear of being criticized, fear of failure or even fear of success. Fears like that make us pessimistic and unable to make good decisions and that hurts our productivity and ability to reach our goals.

Often we are secretly afraid of success and do not even know it. Becoming aware of your fears will help you understand and overcome them and even use them to your advantage.

6.1 Understanding the fear of success

To be afraid of success? It sounds strange and illogical, **but fear of success is real**. Often we see people complaining that they want to be more successful but cannot achieve what they want. It is possible that they are afraid of being successful and are actually preventing themselves from finding success.

If this is the story of your life, maybe you are afraid of success as well but cannot see it, as fear of success is very sneaky and hard to spot in yourself.

So, what are the signs of being afraid of success and why do you have it?

- **You are worried that success will complicate your life** – You think that success means more work and less free time. This is usually not true as more success means not only more income but also actually greater ability to manage your time as you see fit.
- **You are worried about people's opinions** – You worry that success will make you a target of criticism, judgement and envy from other people, especially in time of social

media. This is possible. However, in reality, it does not happen very often and there will be many more people who will appreciate your success.

- **You are afraid of responsibilities** – You think that more success means more responsibilities like being responsible for and taking care of others, being responsible for your business or how you handle money.

For the most part, fears of success are unfounded and are preventing you from reaching our goals. If you look at them rationally, you will realize that and start working on overcoming them or even use them to your advantage.

6.2 Using fear to your advantage

Is fear a good or a bad thing? It depends on how you approach it. As we said earlier in this session, your **attitude towards things creates your reality**. This also applies to fear.

If you allow fear to control you, it will prevent you from taking the needed steps towards improvement and success but if you approach it with understanding, it can become your teacher and ally.

We usually think of fear as something negative, but it is actually very useful because it reminds us of possible dangers ahead and motivates us to prepare for them.

To understand fear and learn from it you must embrace it. You can learn how to embrace it by using **the VIEW strategy**:

- **Visualize what frightens you** – Be honest with yourself and visualize all the dangers and obstacles on the way to your goal, they may be real or imagined. Now visualize possible strategies and solutions to all the problems you fear. This will make you more able to deal with the problems when they come and less afraid to face them.
- **Isolate yourself from your fear** – Sometimes you are unable to deal with your fear alone as it influences your ability to think rationally. Then it is best to isolate yourself from your fear by asking others to help you understand it. Tell other people what frightens you and ask them to give you their feedback about it. This way you will be able to see your fear from a different perspective and understand it better. Be aware that other people's opinions are not completely accurate, but they can be very useful.
- **Embrace your fear** – Sometimes it is necessary to confront your fear. Only then will you be able to understand and overcome it. Maybe you will also learn something

about yourself in the process. It is like being thrown in a pool to learn how to swim. If you cannot confront your fear alone, ask someone to help you do it.

- **Why do you want to embrace and conquer fear** – Once you decide to embrace and ultimately defeat your fear, ask yourself maybe the most important question “Why do I want” to defeat my fear? The answers to this question will help you clearly see the benefits of reaching your goals and motivate you even more to do it, making your fears even less of an obstacle on your way.

6.3 Using your fear to stay active and achieve your goals

If you wish to improve yourself and reach your goals, you should always be afraid of being too comfortable in life. Being in your **comfort zone** may seem like a good thing but it is actually not. Why, you ask?

Because when you are in your comfort zone you feel like you achieved everything and this makes you passive. Your **comfort zone is actually your danger zone. It is a place where nothing happens so if you wish to learn, grow and fulfil your life’s purpose you must be afraid of it.**

The fear of being too comfortable will push you to act and move from the comfort zone to **the fear zone.** Fear zone will be the fear zone only as long as you make excuses to not become active, learn and pursue your goals. Once you decide to move and act, the fear zone will become **the learning zone.**

In the learning zone, you think about who you want to become and what you want to achieve. Then you start learning, getting experiences and skills needed to achieve your goals.

You must be careful not to stay in the learning zone for too long, or it will become your new comfort zone. You must allow your fear of comfort to move you forward into **the growth zone.**

The growth zone is the zone of action and doing. You will move into the growth zone only when you start actively using the knowledge and skills you have to achieve your goals.

After you achieve your goals, you must again not become comfortable in the growth zone. You must again allow the fear of being comfortable to push you forward to set new goals for you and start learning and growing again.

7 CONCLUSION

Being goal oriented means having the right attitude and desire to achieve your goals. Your goals depend mostly on your character and values but also on different roles you have in life. Most successful people have strong positive character traits like integrity, justice, humility, patience, courage, modesty and more. Character comes from within. This means you must first start working on changing and improving on the inside before you can see positive change on the outside.

If you are trying to achieve what others expect you to instead of what is really important to you, you will spend a lot of time and energy for nothing and end up being disappointed. You must set your goals according to your values, vision and real-life circumstances. When you are setting your goals, you need to know your values – what is important to you, and see the big picture - what you want to achieve in life.

Your goals need to be specific enough, measurable, realistic, and relevant to your life and have a time limit.

To achieve your goals, you need the right habits. Habits are a combination of your character, desire, skills and knowledge. Essential skills for achieving your goals effectively and efficiently are proactivity, ability to think before you act and knowing to set the right priorities. Often your fear of success is preventing you from achieving your goals. You can use your fear to your advantage if you know it and learn from it. You must always be afraid of being in your comfort zone because there you feel satisfied and do not improve. Your fear of comfort can push you from comfort zone to learning zone and finally to growth zone where you use your skills and knowledge to grow and achieve your goals.

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