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PERSONAL GOAL SETTING

Sankara Pitchaiah Podila

Acharya Nagarjuna University, Andhra Pradesh, India

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ABSTRACT

A goal is an idea of the future or desired result that a person or a group of people envisions, plans and commits to achieve (Locke and Latham, 1990). It allows measuring one's progress. It gives long-term vision and short-term motivation to the people. The present study was an attempt to classify the personal goals and to provide the guidelines for setting proper personal goals. The author classified the goals into Primary, Secondary and Tertiary goals and the details are presented. It is opined that for proper goal setting one needs to have knowledge about the Science of human body, Emotions and health and the Life skills. All these aspects are briefly presented in this paper.

Key Words:

Personal goal setting, happiness, satisfaction, health, peace, science of human body, emotions and health, life skills.

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INTRODUCTION

'Life without a goal is lifeless'. Everybody needs a goal to lead the life in a successful path. If there is no goal, in which direction one shall have to move? So, to set a proper direction to one's life all need to choose a goal(s). Goals give you a road map to your future (<https://www.youtube.com>). Life without challenges is no life at all (<https://www.aconsciousrethink.com>). We have only one chance at this life, so treating life as a journey of personal development, with plenty of challenges along the way, has to be the best way of ensuring we get the very most out of our allotted span (<https://www.aconsciousrethink.com>).

People endeavor to reach goals within a finite time by setting deadlines. A goal is roughly similar to a purpose or aim, the anticipated result which guides reaction, or an end, which is an object, either a physical object or an abstract object, that has intrinsic value (Wikipedia). A goal is a desired result that a person plans and commits to achieve (Hudewale, <https://www.slideshare.net/>).

Goal Need

Goal helps you to achieve your highest. It allows measuring your progress because you always have a fixed endpoint or benchmark to compare with. It focuses your acquisition of knowledge, and helps you to organize your time and your

resources so that you can make the very most of your life. It gives you long-term vision and short-term motivation (Hudewale, <https://www.slide share.net/>). We can control our life to direct towards happy, healthy, peaceful and successful life. We can also focus on the important things and can make good decisions. Right goals give not only personal happiness/satisfaction, but also pave for healthy and peaceful society. Then only, the present day society becomes livable and lovable for mankind.

Setting goals can affect outcomes in four ways (Latham and Helene, 2007).

Choice: Goals may narrow someone's attention and direct their efforts toward the goal-relevant activities and fromward goal-irrelevant actions.

Effort: Goals may make someone more effortful. For example, if someone usually produces 4 widgets per hour, but wants to produce 6 widgets per hour, then they may work harder to produce more widgets than without that goal.

Persistence: Goals may make someone more willing to work through setbacks.

Cognition: Goals may cause someone to develop and change their behavior.

**Corresponding author: Sankara Pitchaiah Podila*
Acharya Nagarjuna University, Andhra Pradesh, India

Well-defined goals appear to help individuals discover and use ever more efficient strategies and modes of thought and perception (Locke & Latham, 2002; Locke, Shaw, Saari, & Latham, 1981; Smith, Locke, & Barry, 1990). Personal goals reflect consciously articulated and personally meaningful objectives that guide perception, emotion, thought, and action (Elliot, Chirkov, Kim, & Sheldon, 2001; Wiese & Freund, 2005, Dominique *et al.*, 2010).

Bryan and Hartner (1897) found that the performance of telegraph operators improved when they were working toward a specific task goal. Mace (1935) showed that the standard that was set affected a person's performance, but only when the person's ability had developed to the point where there was a reasonable expectation by the individual that the standard could be reached. Otherwise, urging people to do their best led to the highest performance. Ryan (1970) argued the importance of intentions to anticipate future obligations or to avoid them.

Goal setting plays a prominent role in social-cognitive learning models of academic achievement. According to such frameworks, successful achievement involves positive feedback loops between self-efficacy and goal commitment (Schunk, 1990; Zimmerman, Bandura, & Martinez-Pons, 1992). As a student experiences successful goal attainment, self-efficacy increases; this in turn enhances goal commitment and mobilizes the self-regulation of cognitive and motivational resources to facilitate subsequent achievement (Pintrich, 2000). Emmons and Diener (1986), for example, found that goal attainment was strongly correlated with positive affect among undergraduates (and that the lack of goal attainment was correlated with negative affect, although somewhat less strongly).

Dominique *et al.*, (2010) studied the impact of goal setting on the academic performance of undergraduate students. After a 4-month period, students who completed the goal setting intervention displayed significant improvements in academic performance compared with the control group. The goal-setting program, thus appears to be a quick, effective, and inexpensive intervention for struggling undergraduate students. An easily administered, standardized, and time-limited goal setting intervention produced improvements in academic success among struggling university students.

Value Deterioration

Values are the attitudes those need for happy, healthy, peaceful and successful life. At present, value deterioration is noticed in many countries. Our governments, educational institutions and society have been training efficient individuals, but not good citizens or humans. Thus, it has been commonly believed that there has been a rapid erosion of ethical and moral values in the society. During the past century the illegal activities, Social crimes, Indiscipline, Violation of acts, Sexual harassment, Political corruption, Insecurity, Unrest, Addictions (Smoking, Drinking, Drugs) Lying, Cheating, Exploitation, Irresponsibility are increasing in many countries.

Research shows that young people care less about morals and ethical values, and are instead focusing on themselves in order to promote their own agendas, and the agendas do not focus on morals or values (Taneri *et al.*, 2016).

As per the opinion of UNO Secretary General (<https://www.un.org>) our world is suffering from a bad case of Trust Deficit Disorder. People are feeling troubled and insecure. Trust is at a breaking point. Within countries, people are losing faith in political establishments, polarization is on the rise and populism is on the march. Among countries, cooperation is less certain and more difficult. The divisions in our Security Council are stark. The world is more connected, yet societies are becoming more fragmented. Challenges are growing outward, while many people are turning inward. Multilateralism is under fire precisely when we need it most (<https://www.un.org>). The intensity of some of the Natural disasters (cyclones, floods) increased due to climate change. Man-made disasters (climate change, nuclear wars) are threatening the human society in many ways. If this trend continues further, the planet earth may not be the suitable place for humans. So, the cure of these ailments is necessary by implementing practicable solutions.

Value deterioration, if not checked, may end the present era within a decade. It is the prime cause behind the many global challenges, like climate change, nuclear wars, corruption, etc. So human goals shall be set in such a way, which shall protect the human values for a secured life for future generations.

The present study was aimed to classify the human goals and to provide the guidelines for proper personal goal setting.

Types of Goals

Goals can be classified based on the human desires. Normally, humans expect happiness or satisfaction from every activity. Here the goals are classified into three types:

Primary Goals

Happiness/Satisfaction

Secondary Goals

Sound Health
Peace
Success

Tertiary Goals

Short-term
Intermediate
Long-term

Primary Goals

All we have five senses, - Eyes, Ears, Nose, Tongue and Skin. All the humans have been using these senses for the same purpose, i.e., eyes to see, ears to hear etc. In addition to this, mankind has been living from heart beating, respiration, digestion process, etc. Where these aspects are common for all, how the primary and secondary goals vary from person to person- answer is 'varying personality'. No doubt, the personality influences the human goals, of course, only tertiary goals, but not the primary and secondary goals. The ultimate goal of mankind is to derive happiness or satisfaction. So, the author felt these as primary goals.

The word 'happiness' is used in various ways. According to Veenhoven (1984) in the widest sense, it is an umbrella term for all that is good. In this meaning it is often used interchangeably with terms like

'wellbeing' or 'quality of life' and denotes both individual and social welfare. This use of words suggests that there is one ultimate good and disguises differences in interest between individuals and society (Veenhoven Ruut, 2012). Overall happiness is the degree to which an individual judge the overall quality of his/her own life-as-a-whole favorably. In other words: how much one likes the life one leads. This definition is explained in more detail in Veenhoven (1984).

It is often said that Socrates posed the defining question of ethics: How should I live? (Plato, 1992). Some 2400 years of subsequent philosophical inquiry into this matter have yielded few real answers, perhaps none. Psychological happiness is the single most important aspect of well-being.

According to Hedonism theory (<https://www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu>) in all its variants, it holds that happiness is a matter of raw subjective feeling. A happy life maximizes feelings of pleasure and minimizes pain. A happy person smiles a lot, is ebullient, bright eyed and bushy tailed; her pleasures are intense and many, her pains are few and far between.

Desire theories hold that happiness is a matter of getting what you want (Griffin, 1986), with the content of the want left up to the person who does the wanting. 'Happiness' is currently conceived as subjective well-being. In a narrow sense 'happiness' is regarded as one component of subjective well-being, that is: the overall appreciation of life-as-a-whole (Wolfgang, 2000). Some individuals can be satisfied though they are exposed to a lot of misery. Overall happiness depends much on satisfaction in different life domains.

Happiness is the most direct word and most commonly used. The meaning of happiness is clear and precise and misunderstanding is minimal. Since happiness is the ultimate objective in life, life satisfaction is very closely related to happiness. This is supported by the fact that surveys give very similar results whether happiness or life satisfaction is used. However, life satisfaction may yet differ from happiness. According to Kwang Yew-Ng (2015), happiness should be preferred in most cases, particularly with respect to what individuals and the society should really be interested in ultimately. In the past decade or so, happiness studies have made significant advances, including many new and significant findings, much more interdisciplinary. Happiness (for oneself or for others) is the ultimate objective of rational individuals. We make money in order to buy goods; we consume goods to stay alive and to enjoy life. It means happiness and satisfaction are the primary goals of the humans.

Secondary Goals

We need sound health for carrying daily work and for a happy life. Without health, there is no peace in life. For the successful life, health and peace are essential. As such, the author proposed sound health and peace as secondary goals.

Tertiary Goals

Almost all human's have personal goal(s) and here specified them as tertiary goals. The priority or preference of a personal goal may vary with person to person. However, the tertiary goals shall be set in such a way, that they shall not disturb the

primary and secondary goals. While it means working for the personal goals, these goals shall not disturb ones health and peace during the process of achievement. Some of the personal goals are; Career, Financial, Making a good family, Personality development, Spiritual intelligence, etc.

Based on the time required to achieve them these goals can be classified into three types-short term, intermediate and long-term goals (Jennifer and Lesley, 2008).

Short –Term Goals

These goals exist for a short time. They change frequently and sometimes every day. Ex. Finishing certain work on the same day, attending a function, preparation for a slip test, payment of a current bill, etc. Short-term goals can be an effective predecessor to intermediate and long-term goals, because they offer instant feedback, and help improve self-confidence. Visible reference base this will provide an agenda as well as a record for accountability when it comes time to evaluate the goal status (Nikitina, 2012).

Intermediate Goals

These goals take more time compared to short term goals. For example, one may choose IT profession as a career goal. To achieve it, one has to cross school level. It is an intermediate goal for a student. Similarly, if somebody puts a goal to earn two million dollars within a 15 years period, there shall be an intermediate goal, by bifurcating it into 0.5 million for first 5 years, 1.0 for 10 years and so on.

Long - Term Goals

Long term goals may take a few years to several years or even decades. They can be career, family related, financial, spiritual and so on. A long- term goal acts as a driving force to achieve short- term and intermediate goals and vice – versa.

Long-term goals are used to create a mental image of one's end result of the goal. They may ultimately be harder to narrow down to specifics of path and deadlines. Keeping the big picture in mind can help maintain the value and motivation in pursuit of the long-term goals. While the long-term goals often hold the value for the pursuant, breaking them down into smaller, more obtainable goals with a specific time frame can make them more effective (MindTools.com, 1996). The process of breaking down of long-term goals into realistic, short-term accomplishments can help build self-esteem, offer instant feedback, and provide check points to the individual to keep them on task (See realistic goals and meet them, 2011). The short – term, intermediate and long – term goals shall set, in such a way, to achieve the primary and secondary goals.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Maslow's theory suggests that the most basic level of needs must be met before the individual will strongly desire the secondary or higher level needs (<https://en.wikipedia.org>). Maslow stated that a certain need "dominates" the human organism at any given time (Maslow, 1954).

Physiological needs: Physiological needs are the physical requirements for human survival. They include; Breathing, Water, Food, Sleep, Clothing, Shelter and Sex.

Table 1 Steps to Modify Human Attitude

Step	Topic	Sub-Topics	•	Details
1	Science of Human body	Some facts about humans	•	No choice to choose our parents, Physique, health, wealth, intelligence, height, weight, Heartbeat, Respiration, etc. Life events/incidents, not in our hands, Birth and Death not in our hands. There is a direct link between number of breaths / minute and length of life span.
			•	Except attempt, others not in our hands.
		Which controls human beings? Cause and Effect How to understand the nature?	•	Some Natural Power is controlling
			•	Without cause nothing will happen in the nature, in our life too.
		Influence of Negative attitudes	•	Meditation on breathing, improve the analytical ability and physical and mental health. It also develops logic and ability to differentiate right and wrong.
			•	Ego -Poor emotional intelligence, Poor adjustment, Face problems frequently, Get defame and Disturbed life.
			•	Selfish - Corrupted, Away from humanity.
			•	Domination -Try to control others can't be a good administrator, Poor interpersonal relations.
			•	Bias -Do harm to others, loose people's faith.
			•	Greedy for money -Involve in illegal activities, Poor life satisfaction.
Value Deterioration	•	For Power - Illegal activities, corruption, encourage violence, life threat.		
	•	For Sex -Womanizer, Health Problems.		
	•	For easy life -Search for short cuts, Face multiple problems, spoils Life.		
	•	Systematic process has been operating in human body among senses, mind, personality, brain, emotions, nervous system, hormones, neurotransmitters and health,		
2	Emotions and Health	Mental Health	•	Positive emotion generates health promoting hormones/ neurotransmitters, in case if negative emotions, release health deteriorating hormones/neurotransmitters.
			•	Out of 190 countries more than 100 countries have average to poor health systems (The Patient factor, 2017)
		Brain Waves	•	Produced by synchronised electrical pulses from masses of neurons communicating with each other. Our brainwaves change according to what we are doing and feeling. Instabilities in brain rhythms correlate with tics, obsessive-compulsive disorder, aggressive behaviour, rage, bruxism, panic attacks, bipolar disorder, migraines, narcolepsy, epilepsy, sleep apnea, vertigo, tinnitus, anorexia/bulimia, PMT, diabetes, hypoglycaemia and explosive behaviour.
			•	Emotion is an agitated or excited state of our mind and body, our emotions play a quite a significant role in guiding and directing our behaviour.
		Positive emotions	•	<i>Ex.</i> Love, Kindness, Gratitude, Appreciation, etc. The person with a positive outlook is more likely to feel overall life satisfaction, not because they have more money, beauty or status, –but because they journey through life with mindfulness, a sense of purpose, and gratitude for what they have.
			•	<i>Ex.</i> Anger, Sadness, Jealousy, Frustration, Depression, etc. Negative emotions cause chronic stress. Chronic stress keeps your system unnaturally flooded with cortisol and adrenaline and results in inflammation. Person with a negative outlook may feel unsatisfied.
		Negative Emotions	•	Utilizing HRV analysis, it is demonstrated that distinct heart rhythm patterns characterize different emotional states. In general, emotional stress—including emotions such as anger, frustration, and anxiety—leads to heart rhythm patterns that appear incoherent (McCarty and Rees, 2009). In contrast, sustained positive emotions, such as appreciation, compassion, and love, generate a smooth, ordered, sine wave-like pattern in the heart's rhythms. This reflects increased synchronization in higher-level brain systems and in the activity occurring in the two branches of the ANS as well as a shift in autonomic balance toward increased parasympathetic activity.
			•	Hormones are used for <u>physiological</u> regulation and <u>behavioural</u> activities.
		Emotions and heart rate	•	Neurotransmitters are <u>endogenous chemicals</u> that enable <u>neurotransmission</u> .
			•	A neurotransmitter imbalance can caused depression, anxiety, panic attacks, insomnia, irritable bowel, hormone dysfunction, eating disorders and even early death.
Hormones	•	Interactions between neurotransmitters, hormones, and the brain chemicals have a profound influence on overall health and well-being.		
	•	If anybody uses a vehicle without learning the driving and related matters, an accident may occur. In that accident, we or opposite party may lose life or body parts or wounded.		
3	Life Skills	Life Driving	•	In daily life also, driving without learning we met with accidents. Here, we may lose relations, may face miserable condition and commit mistake or suicide.
			•	When we focus our attention on ourselves, we evaluate and compare our current behavior to our internal standards and values. We become self-conscious as objective evaluators of ourselves.
		Know Yourself	•	We can quote few names of life winners, those living in millions of hearts (Category 1).
			•	We can give names of millions of people, those spent their lives for the sake of family/job/business/to discharge personal responsibilities (Category 2).
		Value of Life	•	We can list out lakhs of names of terrorists, corrupted, cheaters and anti-social elements (Category 3). From these three categories undoubtedly, we can say Category 1 life is valuable.
			•	To reach the set goal time shall be spent cautiously. For this, one shall understand the time value, i.e., invaluable
		Time Value	•	We do not think about our body parts unless some problem arises. Let us try to live without using one hand or leg for one week, and then we will understand its value. We can reach the goal easily, but cannot value the body parts.
			•	Physical and mental health are basic needs, sufficient care required.
		Body Value	•	Problems are common in human life. Humans shall develop problem solving and decision making abilities. To face serious problems with stability in future.
			•	SI is “the ability to behave with wisdom and compassion, while maintaining inner and outer peace, regardless of the situation” (Wigglesworth, 2012).
Health Problem solving and Decision making	•	Spiritual intelligence is knowing self and live by the adoption and promotion of values. Values are nothing but positive emotions.		
	•	A man with high Spiritual Quotient (SQ) not only responds appropriately in a particular situation or circumstance, but he also analyses as to why he is in that situation and how can better that situation. High SQ enables a person to operate beyond the boundaries. Increase of spiritual intelligence increase happiness (Yaghobi <i>et al.</i> , 2008)		
Spiritual Intelligence (SI)	•			
	•			

Safety needs: Personal security, Emotional Security, Financial Security, Health and well-being and Safety needs against accidents/illness and their adverse impacts

Social belonging: Friendships, Intimacy and Family Esteem: Esteem needs are ego needs or status needs develop a concern with getting recognition, status, importance, and respect from others. These activities give the person a sense of contribution or value.

Self-actualization: A person's motivation to reach his or her full potential.

Self-transcendence: Transcendence refers to the very highest and most inclusive or holistic levels of human consciousness, behaving and relating, as ends rather than means, to oneself, to significant others, to human beings in general, to other species, to nature, and to the cosmos" (Farther Reaches of Human Nature, New York 1971). In his later years, Abraham Maslow explored a further dimension of needs, while criticizing his own vision on self-actualization. By this later theory, the self only finds its actualization in giving it to some higher outside goal, in altruism and spirituality. He equated this with the desire to reach the infinite.

Personal Goal Setting

The goal setting should be aimed at creating meaning for the life. It shall not be based on the will and pleasure of the individuals. Personally, people expect cooperation and support from others. All we shall understand that the others also expect the same from us. So, one's goal shall aim towards extending cooperation and support to others for happy and peaceful society.

The goal setting shall be based on the scientific facts about the human body. The human body is in the midst of the Nature. The Nature and its components (Planets, Continents, Oceans, Atmosphere, etc.) were explained scientifically to some extent. The human body, its parts their structure and functioning were also explained to some extent. Based on the available data the human body responds positively to certain things (good food, positive emotions, melodies, etc.) and differently to some other (bad food, negative emotions, pop music, etc.).

Before constructing personal goals one should consider how meaningful their objective is so it can establish a sense of value for the person pursuing the goal. Adding value induces a motivational component that is needed to achieve the goal (Davis *et al.*, 2016).

Earlier, Goal-setting theory was formulated based on empirical research and has been called one of the most important theories in organizational psychology (Miner, 2003). Locke and Latham (2002) provided a comprehensive review of the core findings of the theory. In summary, Locke and Latham found that specific, difficult goals lead to higher performance than either easy goals or instructions to "do your best", as long as feedback about progress is provided, the person is committed to the goal, and the person has the ability and knowledge to perform the task (Stajkovic *et al.*, 2006).

According to Locke and Latham (2002), goals affect performance in the following ways

1. goals direct attention and effort toward goal-

- relevant activities,
2. difficult goals lead to greater effort,
3. goals increase persistence, with difficult goals prolonging effort, and
4. goals indirectly lead to arousal, and to discovery and use of task-relevant knowledge and strategies.

A positive relationship between goals and performance depends on several factors. First, the goal must be considered important and the individual must be committed.

Essentials of Goal Setting

The author opined that knowledge about the following aspects is essential for personal goal setting.

1. Science of Human body
2. Emotions and Health and
3. Life skills

The details are briefly shown in table 1

CONCLUSION

Goals add a meaning and a purpose to the human's life. Personal goals, based on their nature, i.e., positive or negative, influence one's future, associated persons, society, sometimes the entire world. For proper personal goal setting one shall have the knowledge regarding science of human body, relation between the emotions and health and life skills. By learning the life skills, we can set a right goal and enjoy real happiness or satisfaction and lead healthy and peaceful. It is suggested to incorporate the matter in the morals and ethics paper from school level. Social media shall propagate the information into the public for proper personal goal setting.

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