

GOAL SETTING





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Aristotle, the ancient Greek philosopher, believed that it was the defining of our purpose that in turn created our actions. Edwin A Locke took Aristotle's theory further in understanding that having motivational goals allows us to prioritise and resource ourselves to achieve them. New understanding of the brain recognises that in setting a goal the mind actively seeks out solutions to reach that goal.

Sometimes people asking for support or development have very clear-cut priority goals, for example: changing lifestyles, getting a job, choosing a course, increasing levels of engagement, getting fitter etc. Making clear progress towards identifying these goals and creating an action plan soon afterwards can help establish mutual respect and verify the practitioner's role as a helper. People struggle with the idea of goal setting and sometimes it is beneficial to have some small goals to achieve that provide quick wins for both practitioner and person, for example providing a leaflet to read.

Why should people set goals?

- Goals prioritise what is important to the person and why
- Goals give a person targets to aim for
- Goals provide a focus on changes that will make a significant positive impact
- Goals can provide motivation to continue and overcome obstacles and challenges
- Goals help people work towards their long-term vision

THE ABILITY TO
GOAL SET AND
PROBLEM SOLVE
AROUND GOAL
SETTING ARE
ESSENTIAL SKILLS
FOR SELF-RELIANCE
AND INDEPENDENCE

The **GROW** model is based around the theory that using questions rather than instructions in a coaching or support role will foster change more readily. The acronym **GROW** stands for **Goal, Reality, Options** and **Will**. It provides a relatively simple framework for structuring a coaching session and has been adopted by many people in a range of different situations.

- **Goal.** After discussion, a target to be reached in the session should be developed.
- **Reality.** It is important that this session is grounded in reality. The person being coached should be able to assess their present situation and give concrete examples of their current attributes to date.
- **Options.** This stage offers the opportunity for the person being coached to suggest possible courses of action, and together with any that the coach puts forward, these should be evaluated and a choice arrived at.
- **Will.** The final part of the process involves the person being coached making decisions and having the willpower to commit to them. Future steps to be taken should be confirmed and the coach should agree with the person how they will be supported through the ongoing development process.

Scaling questions

Scaling questions are tools that are used to identify useful differences for the person and may help to establish goals as well. The poles of a scale can be defined in an appropriate way each time the question is asked, but typically range from the worst the problem has ever been (zero or one) to the best things could ever possibly be (ten).

The person is asked to rate their current position on the scale and questions are then used to help them identify:

- **Resources:** What stopped you from slipping one point lower down the scale?
- **Exceptions:** On a day when you were one point higher on the scale, what told you that it was a one point higher day?
- **A preferred future:** Where on the scale would be good enough? What would a day at that point on the scale look like?

The preferred future question can form the basis for goal setting.

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