



NLP Canada Training Inc.

Focus on Goals



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the basics

Setting goals implies that changing our mind can change both our behaviours and our circumstances. It makes sense to begin the process by thinking about how the brain creates, processes and stores information. For our purposes in goal setting, we want to answer three questions:

1. How does information from multiple channels get combined into what we experience?
2. What happens when we access a memory?
3. How do we know the difference between real and imagined experience?

Let's summarize the answers in oversimplified, but useful form. We experience life as a continuous, inseparable mixture of sensory information, physiological information, and thoughts. Each experience includes all the information present at that time, and any part of the information can be used to retrieve the entire experience if the paths that hold it together are deep enough. We can remember things that have happened and plans we have made: lived experience tends to have a richer web of associations than imagined experience.

What does this mean when you want to set goals?

1. Everything that is part of your experience while you set the goal will become part of that goal in your memory.
2. You can set your goals through repetition, through emotion, or through a combination of the two.
3. Goals that you set with rich, complicated associations will seem more like lived experience than those that contain less information.

the missing link

Lots of people will tell you how to set goals: much of what they tell you will be useful. Practitioners of NLP developed criteria for well-formed outcomes, criteria we will explore this evening that allow you to remember goals before you have achieved them. First, however, step back a little. Notice that whatever mood you are in when you set a goal will become part of that goal. The circumstances in your mind when you set a goal will also become part of that goal as you remember it.

Have you ever set goals specifically because you felt bad about yourself and hoped you would feel better? Have you felt that you back was against a wall and tried to set goals to create a way out? Have you ever written a wish list that amounted to “anything but the status quo?”

Timing matters in goal-setting as much as it does in goal-getting. The time to make a goal is when it will be automatically associated with energy, focus, determination and fun. That way, every time you remember your goal, you’ll also have a head start on drawing on the resources you need to achieve it.

Begin by associating new goals with experiences that you like. Think about a time when you achieved something you wanted. Trace all the associations you have connected to that achievement: the sights, sounds, feelings, beliefs, values, strengths, skills and relationships that were part of getting you what you want. Spend time and spend attention reliving your experience of achievement.

Then let your mind go back, back through all the effort and activity that led to that achievement. Keep working back through what you did until you reach the moment when you knew that you wanted that achievement - the moment you committed yourself to wanting it. It might be the moment you set the goal, or it might have come later or earlier. Find that moment, and experience it as though it is happening now.

a great place to set goals

When you are you relaxed, energized, playful and ready for adventure? Many people find that beautiful weather and moving water reminds them of the flow of life and energy. Before you set a goal, take yourself someplace wonderful and allow yourself to put in place of web of resources that will support that goal.

Imagine yourself seated comfortably and looking out at a lake, river or ocean view. If you love the winter, sit in a sun-room and look out at fresh white, snow, and notice where the water bubbles through the ice. If you love the summer, sit on a deck, looking down at a dock, or a pile of big rocks by the shore. Down by the water, winter or summer, notice someone who looks and sounds like you. This person is about to make a choice about what s/he wants.

As you sit looking at the water, you will be visited by three people who have qualities or experiences that would allow that person to make a great choice, qualities that would allow that person to commit to a goal with strength, energy, and clear thinking. These may be people you know or people you have never met: the game works best when you allow yourself to sense them as they appear rather than summoning them.

When the first person appears, s/he will approach, stand in front of you, then slip out of his/her shoes. Stand up, and stand in those shoes. Feel yourself take on all the strengths, skills & experience of that person. Enjoy the experience until the second person arrives and offers you his/her shoes. Repeat when the third person arrives.

Now look down by the water, and call that person who looks and sounds like you. Invite that person to join you where you are. As s/he approaches, reach out and pull that person back inside of you, noticing what changes when that person is integrated into the strengths, skills and experiences of your visitors.

writing goals and outcomes

NLP began teaching that outcomes were goals that would be achieved at a particular time and place. Well-formed outcomes are within your control, coded in sensory experience, and verified by an ecology check. We know that you also have goals that will not be achieved at a particular place and time, goals that describe a process over time or qualities of your identity. These goals are also more attainable when you code them in sensory experience and run an ecology check. When you write your goals as you formulate them, you automatically begin to associate them with all your senses: you see the words you write; you hear them as you think and reread them; your hand moves over a keyboard or across a page. The more senses you associate with your goal, the more like lived experience your memory of that goal will be.

hindsight is 20/20

You've heard it said, sometimes with regret: we see more clearly looking backwards than forwards. So why not set your goals backwards? Instead of looking forward at a plan, look back at an achievement. This time, before you run the Dock of the Bay exercises, fast-forward to at time when you have achieved your outcome or made progress towards your goal. Tonight, we'll pick a day six months from now. When you visit the Dock, visit it on July 4, 2007.

Notice someone by the water who looks and sounds like you, someone who is enjoying the achievement of the outcome or goal you set tonight. Let yourself to be visited by three people who had strengths, skills and capabilities that made that achievement possible. Integrate those qualities into yourself. Call that person who looks and sounds like you (and who has already achieved what you want to achieve) and integrate your current and future selves.

Our Own Goals and Beliefs

We create workshops, courses and experiences for people who want to do more by thinking more effectively. Integrated thinking allows people to focus attention on the way different parts of themselves come together in achievement. It also allows them to pay attention to how they can maintain integrity as they are integrated into other systems in their lives.

Building on practices from NLP and Ericksonian hypnosis and information from psychology, business, literature and neuroscience, we are personal trainers for the mind. Our training provides clients with the opportunities to create, achieve and enjoy more. We allow people to experience themselves and one another at their best.

You might be preparing for transition, in the middle of life change, or ready to move faster and farther. In our training, you can practice accessing different states, building integrity, setting goals, and making the connections that make a difference. You will discover the parts of you that are creative, energizing, and good with people. You will think strategically and perform effectively.

Visit us when you want to focus, to recharge or to refine your strengths. Then take those strengths into the world and put them to work. Take the ideas and practices you learn with us and share them widely. Become involved in the success of the people around you. Our goal is to set the ripples moving outward. We want to create experiences which move you so that you can move others.

We have evening events about eight times a year, intensive training about twice a year, and new practitioner trainings beginning almost every month. We are working on several books, a second CD, and new weekday courses. Come and train with us again soon,

Linda Ferguson & Chris Keeler