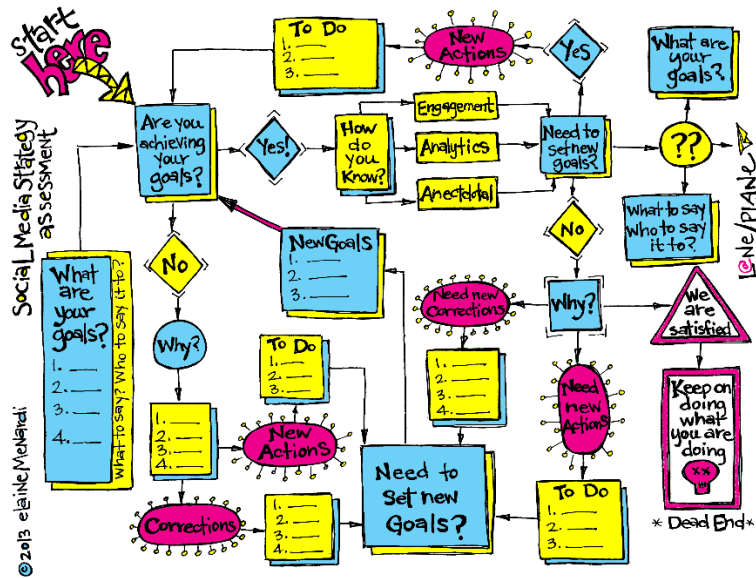


Goal Setting

It is January, the New Year has come is. Everyone, yes everyone is in planning mode, even though some do not realise it. Planning is on for everyone either deliberately or unintentionally.

Be it revision of target for operation, the margin of profitability for the board, plan to save from the current income, balance work and life in a better way, plan up for the next vacation, revision strategy for the term end, plans for new session.... The list is endless.



In little short of a minute, have established that no matter where one is or what one does, planning is common to all.

The key to success is not just planning, but planning effectively. This is one of the most difficult task ever. Let's see few real life scenarios.

A CEO wants to double the sales target, and everybody is running like headless chicken to attain it. First quarter there were loads of problem and target was met only once or twice. Half of the people realize the current strategies will not hold good for coming months. Next quarter, people try to talk about unachievable target, rework on the plans so far, and roll back few bold steps taken. The next quarter is story of revising the targets so that at least for one quarter, faces can be saved and on yearly figures somehow the target is met.



Then in the last quarter, all the time goes to find out what went wrong and get list of excuses ready for not being able to deliver. At the same time plan is on for the next year's target, which would be definitely higher because somehow the lesson was not learnt and this year's loss are to be recovered. The endless loop continues.

Take a walk home. The ever smiling neighbour, who never went jogging, this year wants to lose some 25 kg to become size 0. First few months, well it is all strict diet and exercise. Then there is temptation for few tasty bites. Then a party with old friends and a movie. Gone all the resistance of last few months. Okay, will exercise a bit more to get rid of the effect of giving in to the temptations. It holds true for few more weeks or for a month or so. Then the extra time on exercise goes out of the window. Nearly half of the year has passed, still no result, there is no change at all. Stress comes in, bringing along with it more of mood swings, and comfort eating. Then goes the strict diet plan out of the window. The year ends with perhaps little more on the weighting scales. And the same loop continues.



Let us go to the schools. One term went okay, the student wants to turn a brand new leaf altogether. The scores to be increased by huge percentage, participate in more (or lesser) events as the case may be and address the most difficult problem in a month. Then from there improvement begins. Most of the time, it does not go as it was planned. The most difficult problem thought turns out to be trivial. Something else which was unknown until now has appeared as biggest challenge. The endless story of rediscovery and redefining happens and then it is back to the beginning.



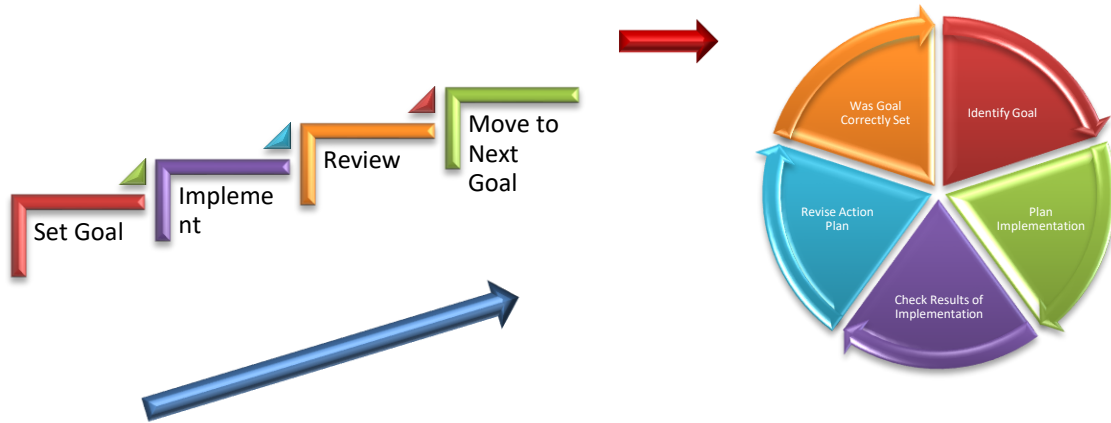
We see this all the time, across all factors of life.

Setting Target or Goal is the trickiest of the activities. Success rate depends largely on setting right Goal. We know that Goal should be SMART if not SMARTER.

Planning for success should not start with setting goal, rather focused planning should be done before setting goals.

Planning for success should be like stairs going upwards. The first step begins with Goal Setting. If there is an error in first step, the stairs turn into a loop. Needless to say, lot of time, resource and effort goes in waste in breaking the loop.

Common errors while Goal setting are: Too high or vague target, or too many goals or focus points.



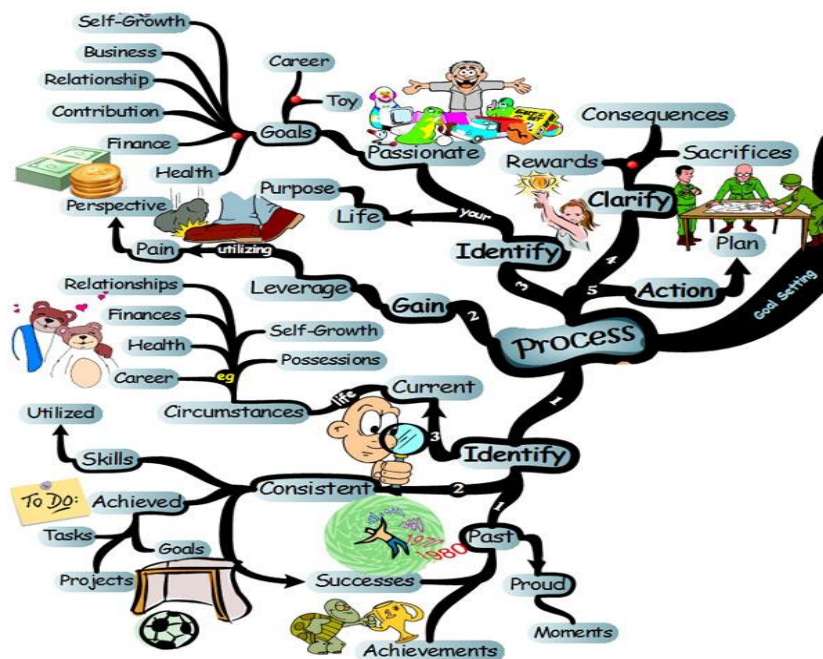
They turn the goal from SMART to a wild goose chase.

Here, we would discuss 5 pointers which helps in setting goals smartly. These are:

- **Know where you stand**
- **Know the Cost**
- **Realistic Goal**
- **Pick 1-2 major goals and 2-4 minor goals**
- **List help or support needed**

Know where you stand

Before picking up a target or goal, know where you stand. Take an honest look at the efforts and the results attained so far. Trending of past performance vis-à-vis effort and time spent. Consider the degree of changes that would change the importance of the achievement areas. Factor in new entries as they can very well be game changers.

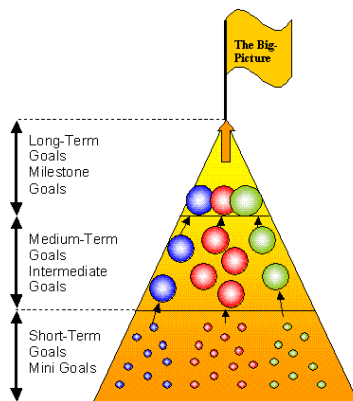


Know the Cost

We all want stars, no harm in that. Few questions that one needs to ask are: How far are we going for it? Is it worth it? Is getting the stars the only focus or it is the journey that matters too? While planning to reach for the sky, never lose the sight of the cost of. Know what would be the cost of the path taken. Else even after attaining the goal or the stars, there would be no sense of achievement. It would act as demotivating factor.

Realistic Goals

A successful plan is what keeps one honest and motivates to attain better results. The goal must never be too easy to achieve nor impossible to attain. The trick is break the goal into smaller components. The goal should be like a stair. The next goal is to be taken once the first one is achieved. Focus on the short term goals, plan for them, and achieve them one after another. It is the step by step plan to reach ultimate goals. This journey of achieving target/goal one after another builds self-confidence and satisfaction.



Pick 1-2 major goals and 2-4 minor goals

It is tempting to list down 5 or 10 goals or pointers to achieve. It is not recommended. Prioritize your want and pick 1 or 2 major goals and 2-4 minor goals. Minor goals or targets are like quick fixes that one can implement quickly with minimum effort. It would boost confidence, motivates and also provides pride of achievement.

List help or support needed

There might be few support or help needed to reach the goal. Don't be shy to acknowledge them and take support. It is nearly impossible to reach the stars without any help. Support might be in form of training, talking to friends, or investing little more time in job front. Invest that little in any support needed and then there is no stopping.

The five pointer gives a fair idea of how to plan a successful and realistic goal setting. Path of success and progress begins with right and successful goal setting. Invest that extra time for goal setting correctly as it is the first step towards success. You owe to yourselves.

