

Goal Setting: Creating Personal Expectations

Many people don't like the idea of goal setting; in fact, just the mere mention of the words makes them cringe. However, there is no doubt that goal setting works. The problem is most people aren't doing it the right way. I am not going to spend time talking about the many aspects of goal setting – the bottom line is that goal setting works and is an important aspect of the Law of Expectations. If you can help others make goals, it increases their future expectations for themselves. Visualizing themselves reaching their goals also makes achievement of those goals more tangible.

Goals must have the power to stretch and inspire, and they must be realistic in the mind of the person being persuaded. Research shows that goals dictate future performance. Conscious goals influence our overall performance. In one study, there was a large difference between asking someone to do their best and helping them set their goals or standard for their performance.

It is a general rule of thumb that greater or more difficult goals actually increase performance. The reason for this is that lofty goals set a higher expectation, and, as discussed already, expectations strongly influence behavior. In a production plant, a group of workers with less experience were divided in two. One group was told to simply observe the experienced workers and try to be able to perform at a skilled level themselves within twelve weeks. The second group received specific weekly goals that were progressively more and more demanding. Needless to say, the second group fared much better.

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