



Simple Start Guide to Setting Goals & Making Changes

Welcome to the Simple Start guide for goals! Thank you for joining me as I work towards reaching one of my own goals of providing useful, action oriented materials to help you find a more balanced, intentional life through simple living. Let's get started!

Video welcome and overview of the course-



Why Goals?

You may already have some ideas formed about why goals are important. Maybe the question should be, why change? How does upsetting our current way of life with change, benefit us in the long run? When we are looking at forming goals, what we are really saying to ourselves is, ***“You need to change things.”***

What that ‘thing’ is varies widely from person to person depending on where they live, their background, values and unique life experiences. For some it may be changing their health status, for others it could be changing their career, it could even be something like changing focus from TV viewing to family time. The truth is, most of us have some ‘thing’ that we feel we could be doing differently or better, that would enhance our quality of life, and that is the driving force behind our desire for goals and change.

Sometimes you may not have a specific goal in mind, but you may be feeling a sort of self-stagnation, where you are just going through the motions of life, day to day, week to week, just maintaining your existence. You may be feeling like you need something more, something to work towards, and change through goals can fill that void.

Decide now to determine what changes you could make to increase your **quality of life**. It could be something very small, like waking up 15 minutes earlier each morning, or something as drastic as finding a way to quit your job and do something you enjoy. Whatever you are considering, make the decision that it is time to take steps and make that change.

Identifying What Is Important

If you don't already have a specific goal or change in mind, and even if you do, you may want to consider the following wisdom-

Happiness is not a matter of intensity but of balance, order, rhythm and harmony.
-Thomas Merton

As I mentioned above, the driving force behind our desire for change is usually to increase our **quality of life**, our happiness. Working towards one goal with great intensity can help you achieve it, however, you may sacrifice balance in other areas of your life as you do. As you consider which goal(s) you would like to work towards accomplishing, make sure your choices allow your life to stay balanced and in harmony. Perhaps you are balanced already in your life aside from your health, or maybe your finances are out of harmony with the rest of your values. In that case, you would do well to focus on goals in the particular area you are struggling with, while being sure to maintain your current balance in the other areas.

Below is a representation of the main areas in life to consider while identifying goals and changes you would like to make-

Identifying Goals



As you consider these four areas, take some time to answer the following questions:

*What are three things that would increase my **quality of life** in the following areas-*

Intellectually- 1. 2. 3.	Emotionally- 1. 2. 3.
Health- 1. 2. 3.	Financially- 1. 2. 3.

If you are new to making goals, and don't already have one in mind, below are some ideas I have written down that I have felt over the years have increased my quality of life. You can use these examples to help you think about and recognize areas in your own life you may want to change.

Intellectually- -Take an online course -Join a book club -Learn to crochet -Learn to make excellent pie crust -Write a blog post three times a week -Read a self-help book	Emotionally- -Set a time weekly or monthly to call long-distance friends and family to build relationships -Learn to meditate -Journal -Read religious books and pray -Get up earlier to have some quiet time -Reach out and make a friend -Spend more time with my children and husband
Health- -Eat more whole foods -Exercise for a ½ hour 5 times a week -Run a 10k -Lose 3 pounds -Sleep 7 hours a night -Eat more green vegetables -Drink less caffeine -Floss on a daily basis -Spend more time outdoors -Implement a regular home cleaning schedule -Eat out less	Financially- -Wait 3 days before making non-essential purchases -Choose one problem category in the budget to focus on staying within -Pay off X amount of debt -Save X amount of money for emergencies, a trip, education -Donate X amount of money to causes -Shop only at thrift stores for pants and shorts -Spend X amount on family experiences -Spend money wisely so I can cut down on how much I need

Plan and Prepare to Succeed-

Once you have identified a goal or goals that you would like to achieve, it takes planning and preparation, as well as some type of accountability for you to have the best chance at succeeding. Remember, your ultimate goal is to increase your quality of life.

If you have chosen more than one area that needs changing in your life, I would suggest choosing and focusing on only one at a time. If you feel that you need to wake earlier, focus on just that goal for 2-3 weeks before moving on to a new one. If you want to focus on getting more exercise, start slowly and increase the amount of time you spend each day over the course of a month. If your goals are financial in nature, spend several weeks focusing intently on your spending habits. As you direct your attention towards one goal at a time, you will have a much better chance of succeeding and keeping your life balanced as you make changes.

Planning & Preparing-

It isn't enough to just say that you would like to accomplish something, you must have a plan. When we set out to change a habit in our lives, or add something of value to our days, you need to have a plan worked out as to how you are going to accomplish it. Anytime you are making changes in your life, a plan is essential. Using the Goal Planning Worksheet below, take some time to write down the steps you need to take to achieve the goal, as well as how much time you would like to spend on each step. This will give you an idea of how long it will take you to make the change in your life, and help you avoid possible frustration when change doesn't seem to happen as quickly as you would like.

Tracking & Accountability-

Another important step as you start working towards achieving your goals is tracking your progress and being accountable. It is a very good idea to track your progress in a visual way, which will provide you with a reminder you can see on a regular basis of what it is you are working towards. It also helps for some people to be able to 'check off' steps they have completed along the way, giving themselves encouragement.

Some type of accountability is very helpful in achieving goals. Whether you are motivated by being accountable to a checklist, an online group, a family member or friend, find someone or something that requires you to look at what you are accomplishing or not accomplishing on a regular basis. This can help keep 'good' pressure on yourself to continue to work towards the change you are making. Use the Goal Progress Tracking sheet below to provide yourself a visual reminder.

Note: In the Goal Progress Tracking sheet I have put in a line for an affirmation quote. Find a quote or think of one on your own that will help motivate you towards your goal! Our thoughts are powerful, and reading a positive statement each day will help move you towards the change you want to see.

GOAL PLANNING WORKSHEET

Start Date_____ End Date_____

What change would I like to see happen, or what goal achieved?

How will my **quality of life** improve by making this change?

What steps do I need to complete to make this change happen or achieve this goal? (Be specific.)

1.
Start Date:_____ End Date:_____

2.
Start Date:_____ End Date:_____

3.
Start Date:_____ End Date:_____

4.
Start Date:_____ End Date:_____

5.
Start Date:_____ End Date:_____

What time during the day, week or month will I set aside to take these steps?

How will I track my progress?

What or who will help me feel accountable, supported and motivated?

GOAL PROGRESS TRACKING

Goal/Change:

Start Date:_____ End Date:_____

Affirmation Statement:

Steps:	Start Date:	End Date:	✓

Track your goals on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. Write in each step and your anticipated start/end dates, check when completed.

Getting Started-

Now that you have completed the planning and preparation for the goal or change you would like to make, it's time to get started. You should have chosen a starting and ending date during the planning process. Be sure to start on the date you have chosen, but if you get behind with your steps, don't give up if you realize you won't be achieving your goal by the end date you initially chose. Forming new habits and making changes takes practice, and you may need to reevaluate the timeframe you initially chose for the goal. Frustration and discouragement are common when you start trying to make positive changes and it isn't as easy or going as smoothly as you had hoped. Keep your motivation strong by tracking your progress and staying accountable! Good luck!

I have included some affirmation statements below that I have found very valuable when I set out to try and accomplish a goal or make a change in my life. If you have difficulty coming up with one on your own, perhaps one of these will help.

What you get by achieving your goals is not as important as what you become by achieving your goals.
-Henry David Thoreau

When I let go of what I am, I become what I might be. **-Lao Tzu**

The future depends on what you do today. **-Mahatma Ghandi**

You are what you do, not what you say you'll do. **-C.G. Jung**

Perseverance, secret of all triumphs. **-Victor Hugo**

The secret of getting ahead is getting started. **-Mark Twain**

It does not matter how slowly you go as long as you do not stop. **-Confucius**

You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream. **-C.S. Lewis**

Never, never, never give up. **-Winston Churchill**

A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step. **-Lao Tzu**

Believe you can and you're halfway there. **-Theodore Roosevelt**

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit. **-Aristotle**

Nothing will work unless you do. **-Maya Angelou**

If you enjoyed this guide, please be sure to visit SimplyClearly.com for more resources and information on simple and intentional living!