

Behavior Based Goals

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Behavior vs. Outcome-Based Goals

We all know that goal-oriented people are more successful, happier, and more productive. But setting and keeping goals is a skill, and like any skill, there's a right way to do it. One thing you might find helpful is separating your goals into behavior-based and outcome-based models.

There are a few differences between the two, and knowing which is which can be key.

Behavior-Based Goals

Behavior-based goals are typically changes you make to how you act. For instance, handling stress better, being nicer to others, and spending less time procrastinating are all examples of behavior-based goals. They focus on how you personally feel and behave, rather than just looking purely at the outcome of your actions.

Behavior-based goals play into outcome-based goals, but they aren't the same. When you change how you think and feel, often you'll notice a change in results. But that's not the focus, it's just a pleasant side-effect.

In order to make behavior-based goals, you'll need to reflect on how you feel when you're completing a certain task. Do you get snippy with coworkers in the mornings, or feel tired when you're trying to meet a deadline? Focusing on the way you feel when you aren't performing well, then making a concrete effort to change can help to make you more pleasant and productive.

Outcome-Based Goals

Outcome-based goals are changes you make to your performance. For instance, answering your emails faster, reducing the amount of errors you make, and getting projects done on time are all outcome-based goals. They focus on the outcome of your actions, rather than how you feel about performing your tasks.

Outcome-based goals tend to be easier to quantify. You can count the number of emails you respond to before lunch, and you can keep track of the amount of time you spend on a certain project. For this reason, most people focus on making outcome-based goals. After all, your progress is so much simpler to quantify.

Making Them Work Together

The real key to success is melding behavior-based goals with outcome-based goals. Often you can get to the root of a problem by changing your behavior, and then watch as

your outcomes change. Sometimes it's hard to separate the two, and that's okay. Just don't lose sight of the fact that your performance is a mix of both. Having the right mindset is just as important as working hard if you want to succeed.

Behavior-Based Goals 101

Setting goals isn't complicated, but like everything else, there is a right and wrong way to go about it. Making goals to change your behavior -- whether it's to decrease procrastination or be friendlier when you're under stress -- can be a lot trickier than creating goals to change performance. Here are a few tips to get you started.

Focus on Future Performance

It's cause and effect -- today's behavior affects tomorrow's performance. If you're having trouble meeting a performance-based goal you've set for yourself, consider that you might need to change a behavior instead. For instance, many people set goals to increase productivity. But regardless of how fast you type, if you spend all morning surfing the web you'll never meet your goal.

When it comes to behavior-based goals, your focus should be on future performance. Go out of your way executing

your behavior-based goals, stay consistent, and really work hard on changing the ways you handle stress or deal with interpersonal relationships. As you change your behaviors, the results will come.

Give Yourself Time

In some ways, changing your behavior is a lot harder than just increasing your productivity. How we feel, think, and react is second nature to us in a way that answering a certain amount of emails before lunch isn't. So don't be too hard on yourself if you aren't seeing the behavioral changes you want overnight.

Give yourself a realistic amount of time to make changes. You'll find it's difficult to change a behavior all at once. The most important thing is that you improve a little bit every day. Don't give up on your goals, but don't get upset with yourself if it's harder to stick to behavior-based goals than it is to performance-based goals.

Measure Your Progress

Behavior-based goals are harder to quantify than performance-based goals for a few reasons. It's not always easy to assign a number value to interpersonal skills or teamwork. It can be hard to track the ways you manage your time or communicate. Sometimes, behavior-based

goals are subjective. But keeping track of your progress is important if you want to improve.

You may really need to get creative in order to measure your progress, and you'll definitely need to embrace the subjectivity of the process. Write down your thoughts and feelings. Rather than making charts and graphs, consider journaling to keep track of your positive and negative behaviors.

How to Utilize Behavior-Based Goals

Setting goals simply work... there can be no doubt about that. But I'll bet that the goals you currently want to achieve are based on a specific outcome, aren't they?

These are called outcome-based goals, and they usually involve a change in a situation in our lives. A better job, more money, a bigger house, weight loss and/or fitness... all of these are outcome-based goals, and these are what comes to mind when most people think about goal setting.

But there is a different type of goal that doesn't focus on the outcome at all! Rather than focusing on the outcome, this type of goal focuses on changing behaviors that make

achieving the outcome-based goals so much easier and faster!

These types of goals are called behavior-based goals.

With behavior-based goal setting, the intention is to create positive change in your habits, or behaviors, which will increase your chances of achieving your outcome-based goals. You can think of behavior-based goals as a mid-point, or stepping stone, on your way to your ideal outcome.

By creating and practicing positive habits until they become second nature, you increase the likelihood of achieving your end goals.

But there is an unintended positive consequence of doing this! You see, while you're changing your behaviors, you'll also be utilizing those newly-cemented positive habits in many different areas of your life – some having nothing at all to do with your end goal!

This is the beauty of learning to utilize behavior-based goals alongside outcome-based goals.

Create the larger outcome-based goal first. Then ask yourself, “What positive habits will I need to create in order to increase my chances of achieving this goal?” The answer to that question will be your new behavior-based goals!

To demonstrate the technique here is an example.

Anna wants to lose thirty pounds. Losing the weight is her larger, outcome-based goal. She knows that in order to lose the weight and keep it off, she needs to change habits that are preventing her right now from doing this. She sees that she needs to create new habits around consistency, discipline, and learning to not get overwhelmed.

Anna does a bit of research into these three new habits and finds techniques that she will implement to create positive habit changes that meet these interim behavior-based goals.

A few months later, Anna has lost the thirty pounds but has also created stronger positive habits that will stay with her for the rest of her life.

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How to Quantify Behavior-Based Goals

Setting goals isn't much use unless you can measure and quantify them. Without the right metrics, you won't know whether you're succeeding or not. That can derail even the best intentions and set you back. If you're going to improve your life and become a goal-oriented person, it's important to learn how to quantify behavior-based goals.

Be Specific

It's hard to quantify your behavior-based goals if they aren't specific enough to track. Really take your time and think hard about whether or not your goals are clear. It doesn't matter how high your aspirations are, it matters how clear-cut they are. If you don't have specific goals, you'll never be able to track them.

Keep Count

When possible, specify hard numbers in your goals. Make it a priority to answer emails within a certain amount of time, or make so many business calls each day. Numbers are easy to keep track of, they're easy to compare, and they aren't open to interpretation. Not every goal is easy to keep

track of in this way, but use hard numbers whenever you can.

Write it Out

Journaling can help you keep track of your goals. Break down your day and write out exactly what you did in service of your goals. When hard numbers aren't possible, keeping a detailed log like this is a good way to see what you've been doing to achieve your goals. When it comes down to it, you can't quantify your behavior-based goals without data. One way or another, you need to collect it.

Check In

Set a timeframe, and use it to reflect on what you've done. If possible, review the numbers or check your diary. But even if you haven't been keeping track using those metrics, think about how much you've accomplished every so often. It will help keep you motivated. Be realistic about the timeframe you set. Give yourself enough time to improve, but don't wait too long to look over your notes.

Get Feedback

Especially if you're trying to set goals in a professional environment, make sure to get feedback. Not only will it force you to be open with others about the goals you've set, it will give you a whole new perspective on your

performance. Involving others in setting and keeping goals is important to the process of changing yourself for the better. Often you won't notice how much you've improved, but others almost always will.

Advantages of Behavior-Based Goals

When you think about the advantages of behavior-based goals, a few things come to mind immediately. You might be excited to get more done, or be promoted, or increase your leadership skills, or just lead a happier life in general. All of these things are possible with hard work and dedication, but setting the right goals makes it much easier.

Increase Productivity

Being a goal-oriented person means making the most of your time. When you start to act on behavior-based goals, you'll find yourself getting more done. In fact, one of the biggest reasons that people seek change in the first place is to increase their productivity. With a few changes, you can stop procrastinating and accomplish more with less stress.

Behavior-based goals like cutting down on procrastination, managing your time more effectively, and concentrating on the task at hand can all increase your productivity.

Instead of making explicit goals like finishing a report in record time, focus more on staying positive and motivated. You'll get more done and find yourself experiencing less stress while you do it.

Win Friends and Influence People

Other people are drawn to motivated, goal-oriented individuals. Use behavior-based goals to make the people around you feel valued, and you'll find yourself making friends and effortlessly leading others. Set out to be the sort of person you want to have around, and friends and coworkers will give you their respect and seek you out for advice.

Make Yourself Marketable

Employers love people who set goals and act on them. They routinely promote people who have a clear idea of what they want to accomplish. Behavior-based goals can make you more marketable and help you rise to the top of your profession. When you think about the sort of people who are leaders rather than followers, you'll start to see that behavior-based goals are key.

In order to make yourself more marketable, set behavior-based goals that encourage positive interactions and improve your ability to manage stress. Tell yourself that every time you talk to a client or coworker, you're being given an opportunity to prove yourself competent,

valuable, and trustworthy. Before you know it, you'll see yourself grow into the leader you're capable of being.

Live Your Best Life

One of the biggest advantages of behavior-based goals is increased personal satisfaction and self-worth. When you're killing it at work or interacting in a positive way with friends and family, you'll find yourself becoming happier and more self-assured without even trying. Use behavior-based goals to become a better listener, set aside time to relax, and connect with the ones you love. Your quality of life will improve practically overnight.