

Goal Setting: Ways to keep focused and motivated

by Reggie Waller, DTM, Past Division B Governor "President's Distinguished Division"

July 1, begins the new Toastmasters International calendar year for District 38 and Toastmasters all around the world. At the beginning of the Toastmaster year, we typically set goals to complete the Competent Communication and Leadership Manual, become a club officer, enter a club contest etc. At the end of June, some Toastmasters found that they only reach some or none of their goals. Anatole France said "To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe." You must dream and believe in reaching your goals. Let's focus on a plan of action to help you set goals. If you for example wanted to receive your Advanced Communicator Bronze award by June 2009, these are some of the things that you would want to consider:

Create a plan of action. In order for you to achieve your goal, you have to start with the what, when, and who questions. Identifying these questions upfront rather than later, will help make your journey less painful. Don't create the plan and then put it away. Keep it in a place where you can review it every so many days to see where you are and where you're going.

What is the goal that I would like to achieve. What is your dream, what do you want to achieve. For example, you want to receive your Advanced Communicator Bronze award. You should make this **your** goal and not the club or someone else's. This is a common trait when setting goals. I want to do this because my club, spouse or friends think it would be excellent for me. Well, if you don't establish the goal for yourself, you will find it hard to achieve that goal.

When would I like to achieve this goal by. Set a realistic time frame around your goal. I want to complete the Advanced Communicator Bronze award by June 30, 2009. If at all possible, try to break the goal into manageable components (i.e. 90 day increments). Also, creating milestones within the goal allows you to not feel overwhelmed. Be sure to have **FUN** when you're working to reach your goal. Let me say that again, have **FUN** when working towards your goal. When you start to take it too seriously, you start to loose focus and that causes you to shift your focus elsewhere.

Don't forget to celebrate when you reach milestones (i.e. first 5 speeches, completing three speeches within two months, etc.). This is great motivation to help you achieve the next level of your plan.

Who if anyone do I need to help me achieve this goal. Sometimes you need others support to help you overcome challenges and obstacles in order to achieve your goals. If you have problems getting on the club schedule, work with your Vice President of Education in advance or possibly visit another club(s) to give a speech. Maybe, you're having a challenge finding a topic to write about. Why not contact your fellow Toastmasters, mentors and friends to help you with possible topics. This is not a bad thing at all. Having people that are positive in nature supporting you with your goals, helps you keep focused and motivated on your vision. People want you to succeed in reaching your goals.

These are just some of many methods to assist you in setting goals. These methods can be utilized with any types of goals (short or long-term) you're looking to achieve. Reflect on what you've learned throughout the process. Every goal starts with your vision, your dream. If you believe it, you can achieve it. Put your goal setting plan in place and work your plan.