

Does goal setting still deliver during a recession?

The global economic landscape has deteriorated dramatically in recent times – throwing plenty of challenges our way. In the prevailing climate of corporate collapse, redundancy and general belt tightening, it is more than a little tempting to batten down the hatches and concentrate on weathering the storm.

But is this really the time to stop setting goals for the future? “Most definitely not” says Adrian Cropley, Director of Cropley Communications. “In fact now is the time to set goals to take advantage of the opportunities a recession can bring and prepare ourselves to ride the waves of the future upswing. More than ever though, it is important to be realistic and to continually review goals as circumstances evolve “.

So, how can we set realistic and achievable goals?

Set a goal that you can really own

This goal must belong to you alone. It should reflect **your** aspiration – not your partner’s or best friend’s. The very thought of achieving this goal should generate feelings of excitement and anticipation – in you.

Ensure your goal reflects your personal values

We all have a core set of personal values which define how we view life and act on a daily basis. You are far more likely to achieve goals which fit within your own values than those which do not.

Set goals across all aspects of your life

It makes good sense to set goals across the many aspects of your life in order to maintain balance and avoid competing priorities. Think about setting goals in a number of areas:

- Family and home
- Career and finance
- Physical and emotional wellbeing
- Education and personal development

Believe that you can accomplish your goal – and take action

Central to achieving your goals is confidence that you can do so. We all have negative thoughts. Replace these negative statements with positive thoughts about your progress. Believe in yourself and your ability to achieve.

Repeat a short affirmation put your positive thoughts into context e.g. “I am confident when I speak in public” would be useful when focusing on building your confidence in public speaking. Remember the best affirmations are short and written as “I am “statements not “I will be” or “I am going to be”.

Ensure that you develop your plan for achieving goals and schedule specific tasks and timelines to move you towards success.

Paint a vivid picture of what accomplishing this goal will look like

Spend some time defining what success will look like for you. You might choose a measurable goal such as an increase of \$20,000 in annual earnings over the next twelve months. Or you could visualise how you will feel when you attain your goal – where you are living, what you are doing, with whom you are sharing your success.

Check your goals and review your progress regularly

Evaluate your progress as part of a daily, weekly or monthly review process - whichever works best for you. Clearly identify obstacles you might meet and identify a way to overcome them. If you are really not making headway, honestly evaluate what is going on. Ask yourself if you are really committed to these goals? Perhaps they are not the right ones or maybe there is payoff at some level for maintaining the status quo? Is it an unrealistic objective?

Give yourself permission to change your goals when genuinely required- but don’t fall into a habit of doing so just because the going gets tough.

Celebrate your achievements

Even minor achievements are worth celebrating – after all they are steps on the journey to success. Celebrate what you have done and move onwards to your next milestone.

Goal setting is not a panacea – and you may well be buffeted by the rigours of the global financial turndown. But paying consistent attention to what you wish to achieve in life by planning your goals will pay dividends and put you in an excellent position to build on the upturn which will follow.