

Goal Setting A Key to a Successful 4-H Experience

Oklahoma 4-H Volunteer Development Series



A Goal Is

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

Aristotle

A goal is a simple statement of what one wants to do or learn. This statement defines a task which may be for self improvement, personal gratification, or for the good or growth of a group or organization. Skinner states, "A goal must be written; otherwise, it is only a wish." He goes on to say, "A goal is a projected accomplishment; an objective; an end; the purpose towards which an endeavor is directed."

Goals can be long-term or short-term. Long-term goals are the main objective or purpose that one is focused on. Short-term goals are the many smaller steps necessary to breakdown the long-term goal. Goals must be attainable. It must be something the person or people can actually do with the time and resources available. Goals only become reality when the person making or setting the goal takes action.

Before setting goals make a list of the things you know. Then set your long-term goals based on what you want to learn or do. The short-term goals will be the steps needed to achieve the long-term goal. An example of short-term goals in 4-H project work might include:

- 1 project a month
- 1 public speaking opportunity at local 4-H meeting

- Exhibit in 2 county competitive events
- Participate in 1 county activity

In the book 22 Leadership Principles, Skinner states, "A goal must have a purpose: to construct something, to make money, to beautify or preserve something, to benefit an individual, to benefit a group, for personal satisfaction or pleasure, etc. The purpose needs to be clear to the individual or group members who will perform the task or project." He goes on to say, "that a person or group can not accomplish a goal that is not defined or cannot be visualized."

To learn more about the process of planning refer to 4-H Volunteer Development Series - 4H·VOL·109, "Planning."



In Rulon Skinner's book, 22 Leadership Principles he provides a simple step-by-step system for planning and developing goals. Mr. Skinner's material is the primary source for this fact sheet. Additions and changes have been made to make the materials applicable to the 4-H experience and principles.

Steps in Goal Setting

Skinner has developed 11 steps for setting and achieving goals. These goals have been applied to a 4-H goal setting experience.

“... a person or group can not accomplish a goal that is not defined or cannot be visualized.”

Skinner

1. **Set the Goal in General Terms.** - “Do a speech in 4-H.”
2. **Write the Goal in Simple and Specific Language.** - “During the year 20xx, research, write and present a speech at my local 4-H club meeting.” Keep the language simple and specific, so it tells exactly what one wants to achieve, when, and how. This written commitment makes it more permanent and defined.
3. **Make the Goal Measurable.** - “During the year 20xx, the topic and research for my speech will be done by January 31; the speech will be written by February 28; and it will be presented at the local 4-H club meeting by May.” The owner can now see what needs to be done and when and is provided a tool for measuring if he/she is staying on task.
4. **Commit Yourself to Accomplishment of the Goal.** - “During the year 20xx, the topic and research for my speech will be done by January 31; the speech will be written by February 28; and it will be presented at the local 4-H club meeting by May 1.”

Signed: _____
Chris Clover, Cloverville 4-H Club

Personal commitment to a goal will make the difference in success or failure. Most people feel more committed when they sign an

agreement. It is a reminder of what they said they would do.

5. **Consider the Resources Available.** - Make a list of physical and human resources, be sure time is included. Time is a non-renewable resource, that must be used efficiently and effectively the first time and every time. A resource list for a 4-H speech may look something like this: the year 20xx, local 4-H Club, my club Organizational Leader, a 4-H Public Speaking Project Leader, County Speech Club, Extension Educator, School Teacher, local club members, library, etc.
6. **Develop a Step-by-Step Course of Action.** - This charts the short-term goals or steps necessary to achieve the main goal.

Step 1 - Talk with Public Speaking Project Leader.

Step 2 - Select a topic/subject.

Step 3 - Research the topic/subject.

Step 4 - Organize the material.

Step 5 - Write the speech.

Step 6 - Review the speech with Project Leader.

Step 7 - Ask to present speech at May 4-H Meeting.

Step 8 - Practice speech

Step 9 - Present speech at 4-H Club meeting.

7. **Develop a Sound Organization.** - Spend time specifying the resources, timeline, and details necessary to accomplish the step-by-step action plan. For example:

Step 1 -Talk with Public Speaking Project Leader about how to select a topic, research the topic, organize, and writing the speech, and how to present a speech.



Step 2 -Select a topic/subject. Narrow the topic so that it is focused and specific.

Step 3 - Research the topic/subject by using at least 4 resources. Resource will include available 4-H project literature, interviewing one specialist in the field, completing a internet search, and using one other source.

Step 4 - Organize the material in a sequence that shows what I have learned and its importance or relevance.

Step 5 - Write the introduction, body and conclusion of the speech. The introduction should stimulate interest in the subject and catch the audiences attention. The body of the speech will state the facts and what was learned. The conclusion will briefly summarize the subject and leave the audience wanting to learn more or take action.

Step 6 - Review the written speech with 4-H Project Leader.

Step 7 - Ask to be placed on the agenda to present my speech at the May 4-H Meeting.

Step 8 - Practice by myself and by presenting it for family, friends and my 4-H Project Leader.

Step 9 - Present speech at May 6, 4-H Club meeting

8. **Consider Alternatives.** - Be sure to identify and write down contingent plans for possible changes or problems. This might include having to present the speech in April or June, rather than May. An

alternative would be to adjust the timeline accordingly. A second alternative might be to present the speech at the county Public Speaking Event. A third alternative could be to present the speech at a 4-H club other than your own. A fourth alternative may include doing the speech for another organization or for a class at school.

9. **Put the Plan into Effect.** - Take action and complete the steps in the action plan. Do what you set out to do. Following through with commitments is a very important skill to develop.
10. **Test the Plan at Each Stage of Completion.** - Following each step, complete a self-evaluation and ask if you did what was stated in your plan. If a goal was not completed consider why and make adjustments to bring yourself back on track.
11. **Follow-through Until the Goal is Reached.** - Only when the goal is completed can action toward that goal stop.

Resource: 22 Leadership Principles by Rulon D. Skinner, 1992, Horizon Publishers & Distributors, Inc.

Evaluation and Resetting Goals

To finalize the planning process a 4-H member or volunteer needs to have some form of evaluation whether it be formal, informal or both. Formal evaluation would come from a competitive event, a project leader, club leader, record book judging, etc. Informal evaluation would consist of self-evaluation. The individual would look at their goals, what they accomplished, what was learned and then reset their goals for the future. The goal-setting process should be a continuous process

