



STRATEGIC GOAL TRACKER™

DAN SULLIVAN





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An example that illustrates five personal goals over the first quarter of a year.

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INTRODUCTION: Keeping Track Of Your Goals

The value of goal setting.

When you look at all the people around you, something becomes obvious: Certain individuals are always more successful than others. And not only are they more successful, they're more focused, energetic, enthusiastic, and confident. This is especially true as these people get older. Most children are full of energy and dreams, but when many individuals reach their thirties and forties, their youthful enthusiasm and optimism fades. What is the reason for this?

There are many explanations, but the number one reason for the loss of momentum in life is a lack of goal setting and achievement. Without goals, people lose their sense of direction, their sense of confidence, and the desire to develop new capabilities. All of this means that they start going backward rather than forward. Their past becomes increasingly bigger than their future. Instead of being excited about what lies ahead, they become increasingly nostalgic about the lost magic of their youth.

The principle of personal compound interest.

For those people (and they are always in a minority) who continually set, cultivate, and achieve goals, life as they get older always becomes more exciting. There is a sense of momentum, acceleration, increased progress, and increased confidence and capability. *All of this occurs because they know a secret that non-goal setters do not: Life itself is based on the principle of compound interest.*

The more you invest in visualizing, committing to, and working toward a bigger future, the bigger that future automatically becomes.

Compound interest as it relates to money is just a specific example of a much larger universal reality: Life itself operates according to investment and returns. Those who invest in their personal future get big rewards. Those who do not invest get little or nothing.

The logic of self-investment.

We're all seen great athletes and entertainers perform. When we're told how they achieved their great skills, we're not surprised. It seems only logical that it took many years of dedication and hard work to get to their high level of performance. It seems only natural that it required special coaching and learning specialized techniques for them to get where they are. We intuitively know that they had to follow a disciplined regimen of daily activities to develop their instincts and habits.

When many of us look at our own lives, though, we don't learn from these athletes and entertainers.

We don't grant ourselves the same logic of investment and return that we do to these extraordinary performers. We don't realize that by following the same principle of self-investment, we'll get the same kind of rewards.

The "average" person over the course of a lifetime has the opportunity to out-perform and out-succeed the greatest of athletes and entertainers. After all, most athletes have relatively short careers. Most entertainers are popular and in the spotlight for a relatively short time.

But your entire life is your greatest area of performance. Everyone has an entire lifetime opportunity to be extraordinary in their own unique way.

Being extraordinary for an entire lifetime.

Every person who chooses to can become extraordinary, and this extraordinary quality can continually increase over the course of a lifetime. You have unique talents and a unique vision of what you want to do with your life. Right now, those talents may be only partially developed. You may have only started working on them. Your vision of what's possible may, at this point, be only a daydream. You may see what's possible, but you don't have any evidence of it yet. But that was also true of great

athletes and entertainers when they were getting started. And for most of them, their vision of being at the top was going to have a short future: *Their performance “lifetime” was only going to last a decade or two. Yours, on the other hand, can continually get better for the remainder of your life.*

The extraordinary power of goal-tracking. Those who continually set goals and track them over the course of their life are more likely to achieve them. Goal setting and goal tracking work. But it involves commitment. It requires that you take yourself and your dreams seriously. And it involves concentration and effort over the course of your life. But once you get into the habit, it becomes easier and easier. Here’s how:

- **Visualize your future:** All goal setting starts by being willing to tell yourself what you want—in all of the different situations in your life. Be willing to visualize everything: your health, appearance, abilities, relationships, wealth, contributions, impact, and reputation. Anyone can do this, but it does require that you tell the truth.
- **Write your future:** Your writing hand is connected to your brain. Whatever you write on paper, positive or negative, your brain takes seriously. Therefore, always write down positive things that will increasingly make your future bigger than your past. Be very specific.
- **Time yourself:** Tell your brain when you want the achievements to happen. With deadlines, your brain responds by giving you a sense of focus and motivation.
- **Measure yourself:** With each goal, provide a measurement. Specify the actual achievement that will prove to you and others that the goal has been achieved. The clearer and more specific the measurement, the more motivating the goal.

- **Check your progress:** Check your goals on a daily, weekly, monthly, and quarterly basis. By doing this, you not only visualize your future, you actually live it.

- **Report your progress:** Surround yourself with an accountability community of other goal achievers where you continually report your progress to one another on a scheduled basis.

Using The Strategic Goal Tracker™.

On the following pages is a Goal Tracker you can use as a daily tool to set, track, and achieve your most important goals. It’s a simple tool and system, but the results will be as extraordinary as your commitment to use it. The more you invest in the effort, and the more you make it a habit, the greater the returns.

EXAMPLE

Visualizing your future.

Think about the things you want to have happen in the next 12 months that would make your life more focused, fun, and fulfilling. This is your game plan for the next year. By visualizing what you want to have happen, you take greater ownership of your future. By writing it down, you're telling yourself that you take your goals seriously. Consciously or unconsciously, you'll start to take the steps needed to make these goals a reality.

The example below and on the following page illustrates five personal 1-year goals, the reason why each of them is so important, the truth about the current situation in relation to the goal, and the resources you can call on to support you in achieving it. Each goal is then broken down into a first-quarter goal, with obstacles to achieving it, strategies to overcome these obstacles, and specific actions you need to take to move forward. Our example illustrates only the first quarter's progress, but you'll track your goals quarterly over a full one-year period.

1-Year Goal	Why is this goal so important?	What's the truth about your current situation?	Available resources and people to support you.
1 Lose 15 pounds	As I get older, losing weight is more difficult, need to do it now	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 pounds overweight Physically active, but I like to eat the wrong foods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gym is close by Joanne knows a very good nutritionist
2 Take a really rejuvenating 2-week vacation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Haven't had one in too long Want to have a new adventure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Haven't budgeted for it We both like to travel 	Travel agent
3 Start saving 15% of income	There are lots of uses for our money - hard to make choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We're currently saving only 5% Once we're focused, we stay on track 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Payroll deduction system Retirement savings plan at work
4 Get a promotion	I want a new challenge, and I think I can provide value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I'm very busy with current responsibilities Not sure how to grow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> John In-house leadership training
5 Renovate kitchen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everything costs more than we thought There are so many details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kitchen completely outdated Doesn't work for our family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our budget is really tight Chris and I have different tastes

On the following pages, start by listing your five most crucial and important 1-year goals. While it can be hard to choose only five, pick the ones that will give you the greatest sense of progress and achievement over the next 12 months. Remember to keep them both specific and realistic. They need to be a bit of a stretch, but not an impossibility, especially since these are not the only things you'll be doing over the next year!

as you review your goals and your progress, you'll become aware of "bonus" achievements that result from working toward your original goal. We call these "Strategic By-Products," and they can often be more important than your original goal. Tracking your goals and recognizing all of your achievements over the year will give you a powerful sense of direction, confidence, and motivation. This is the key to even greater momentum and success.

Once you've identified your goals, continue as illustrated in the example. With each new quarter,

First-Quarter Goal	Obstacles	Strategies	Specific Actions
1 Join gym and meet with personal trainer to set up program	Schedule already really busy	Work out right after work before I go home	Schedule training sessions for the quarter
2 Research destinations and decide on one	Don't have the money right now	Set up vacation savings fund	Open new savings account
3 Save 15% of this quarter's income	Feel like we're already stretched - hard to save more	Set up automatic payroll deduction	Meet with payroll department
4 Start leadership training program	Workload already heavy	Delegate Smythe project to Patti	Meet with John to talk about my career goals
5 Meet with designer and decide on a budget and plan	Chris and I can't agree on style of kitchen	Use designer's skill to incorporate both our tastes	Put together a file of clippings from decorating magazines

FIRST QUARTER

From: _____ to _____

1-Year Goal	Why is this goal so important?	What's the truth about your current situation?	Available resources and people to support you.
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

First-Quarter Goal	Obstacles	Strategies	Specific Actions
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

SECOND QUARTER

From: _____ to _____

1-Year Goal	Why is this goal so important?	What's the truth about your current situation?	Available resources and people to support you.
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

First-Quarter Goal	Obstacles	Strategies	Specific Actions
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

THIRD QUARTER

From: _____ to _____

1-Year Goal	Why is this goal so important?	What's the truth about your current situation?	Available resources and people to support you.
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

First-Quarter Goal	Obstacles	Strategies	Specific Actions
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

FOURTH QUARTER

From: _____ to _____

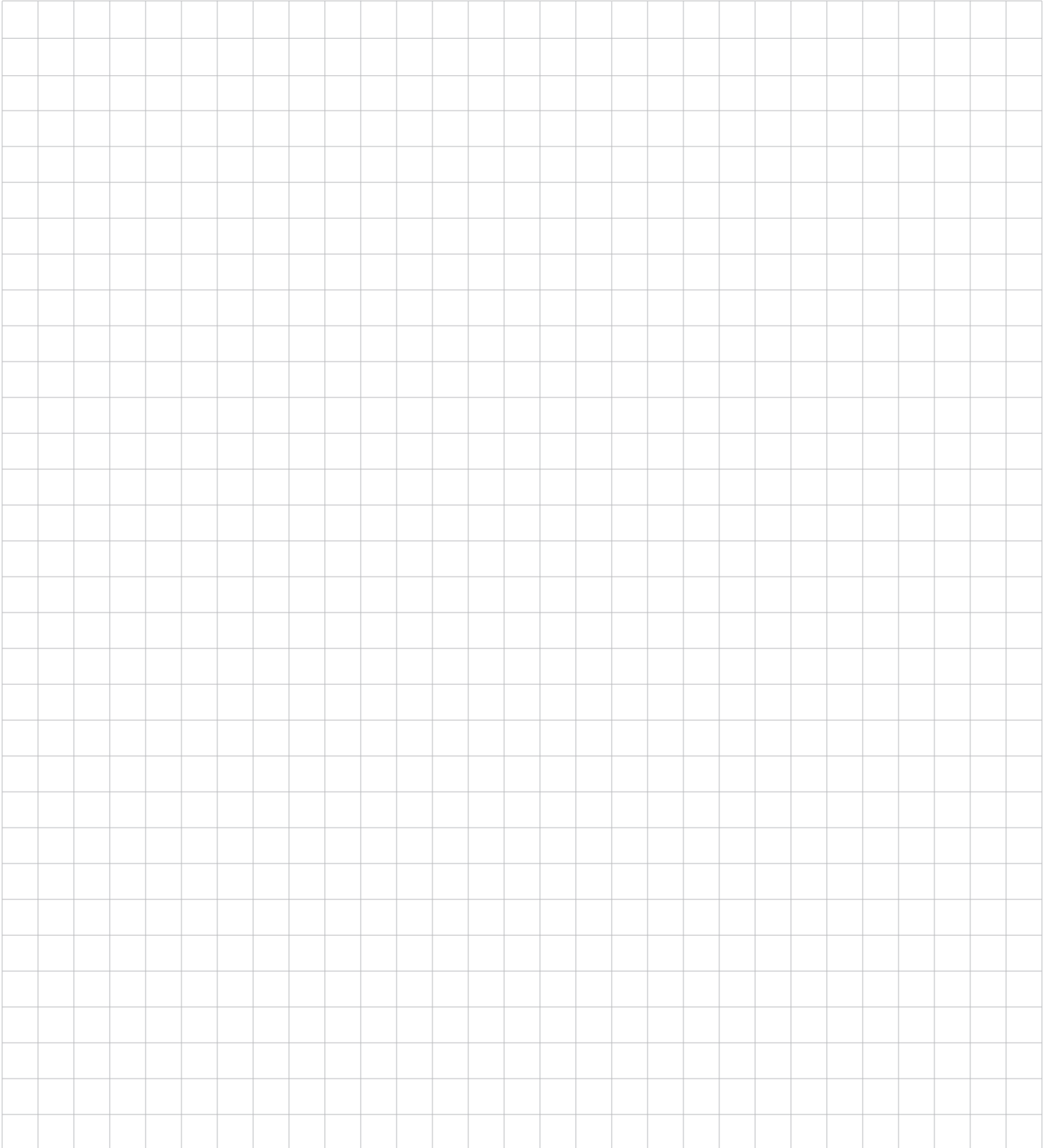
1-Year Goal	Why is this goal so important?	What's the truth about your current situation?	Available resources and people to support you.
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

First-Quarter Goal	Obstacles	Strategies	Specific Actions
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

NOTES

A large grid of 30 columns and 30 rows, intended for taking notes. The grid is composed of thin black lines forming small squares.

NOTES





The more you invest in visualizing, committing to, and working toward a bigger future, the bigger that future automatically becomes.

A tool for taking ownership of every part of your life. When it comes to your future, the most powerful vision always wins. The question is: Is that vision yours, or that of a thousand other people who want a piece of your future? The vision that controls your future can easily be yours — but only when you own that future. The best way to do this is through a lifetime process of powerful goal setting and tracking. The Strategic Goal Tracker™ is a structure for doing this.



Dan Sullivan is the founder and president of The Strategic Coach Inc. and creator of The Strategic Coach® Program, which helps accomplished entrepreneurs reach new heights of success and happiness. He has over 40 years of experience as a speaker, consultant, strategic planner, and coach to entrepreneurial individuals and groups. He is also the author of over 30 publications, including *The Great Crossover*®, *The 21st Century Agent*™, *How The Best Get Better*®, and *Creative Destruction*, and is co-author of *The Laws of Lifetime Growth* and *The Advisor Century*. Dan Sullivan lives in Toronto with his wife and business partner, Babs Smith.

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