

[Career Advice Home](#) > [Personal Branding](#) > [Seven Questions to Help You Reach Your Goals](#)

## Seven Questions to Help You Reach Your Goals

Kimberly Schneiderman  
04/30/08

Have you ever taken yourself through the 'how-tos' and 'whys' behind each of your goals? So often people set themselves up for failure by not considering everything it takes to achieve a challenging goal. Next time you set your ambitions high, think about answers to each of the following questions. They are designed to help you focus on your goal and gain insight on how it will impact different aspects your life.



### What is My Goal?

This is (obviously) the thing you want to achieve. It needs to be tangible and focused – and ideally have a deadline. Quantify what you want and by what date. Goals like 'lose weight' don't have as much impact on your behavior as 'lose 10 pounds in six weeks.'

### What Does this Mean?

Really, this is a follow-up to the first question; it ensures you have described your goal as accurately as possible. The more you can describe the achievement, the better your chance of reaching it. For example, a precise target like 'land an IT programming position with a Fortune 100 company which allows me to work from home by August' is a very detailed picture of what you want to achieve.

### Why is it Important to Me?

Sometimes we set goals that we think should be important, but ultimately they are not that meaningful to us. Laying out why you want to reach a goal will give it significance in your mind and will help you figure out if you are pursuing this goal for your benefit or someone else's.

### How Will Things Change When I Accomplish My Goal?

Answering this question will help you visualize the impact that achieving your goal will have on your life. Perhaps your objective is to land a marketing position with a major food retailer at a salary increase of \$15k. Things that might change when you reach that goal are your ability to pay off your student loan within two years or to put an additional \$500 monthly toward retirement/investments.

### What Does it Take to Reach My Goal?

This is the tough question – answers might be lengthy and include several action items. However, do not get discouraged! Addressing this question will put the requirements to reaching your goal in perspective. In addition, there might be other factors that you need to consider. Will you need to hire a professional coach? Pay for classes? Travel? Purchase books and other resources? Let this question help you lay out your step-by-step plan.

### How Much Time Can I Put Towards Accomplishing My Goal?

Here is where reality sets in. Often people set a goal that takes a tremendous amount of time commitment without considering the demands from the rest of their life. For example, is it realistic for you to train for a marathon the same year that you are pursuing a Master's degree and juggling a brand new baby at home? Set up a chart reflecting a typical week's commitments (including weekends). Be sure to factor in time for your commute, sleeping hours, Timmy's little league games, date night with your spouse, and anything else that commands your attention. From there, look at the hours you have free to dedicate to your goal and plan your time accordingly.

### Who Will Help Me Reach My Goal?

Do you know someone that has 'been there, done that'? Now is the time to leverage your network connections and call on them to ask for help with your goals. Perhaps one person will know just the right coach you can work with and another friend can put you in touch with a company looking for someone with your skill set. Addressing this question has a dual purpose – the more people that know about your ambitions, the more often you will be asked about your progress. Often, that is just the right amount of positive pressure you need to stay on track with your goals.

Dedicating time to each of these questions is not meant to deter you, but rather to help you see your target from all sides. By spending time on this exercise with each of your goals, you will be better prepared to tackle any obstacles that present themselves along the way. Good luck!

*Kimberly Schneiderman is the owner of [City Career Services](#), a company that provides job search tools including [Resumes](#), [Cover Letters](#), and [Interview Workshops](#) to goal-oriented professionals at all levels and across all industries.*

Previous: [How to Deal with the Daily Drama of Economic Trends](#)

Next: [Master the Art of Precision](#)