

Getting What you Want in **Life**



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I have never been able to grasp the meaning of the song, “Que Sera Sera” (Whatever Will Be Will Be). I have always believed that we can actually have a direct impact on what happens in our lives. However, to do so requires that we take action. To get what you want in life, you must actively pursue your goals.

Goal setting has many benefits, such as enhancing your self-image and increasing the effectiveness of your actions, desires and motivation. It helps you recognize your weaknesses and strengths and stay focused without procrastinating. It also provides you with a sense of purpose, direction and achievement. Through goal setting, you will ultimately learn to prioritize and balance your work, home and health by making better decisions. In essence, goal setting gives you control over your life.

But where do you start?

During my master’s program I learned a concept called **SMART** goals. **SMART** is an acronym for **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant and **T**imed. If you want to succeed in meeting your goals, then they must be **SMART**. The first step—deciding to achieve a goal—is the hardest. I suggest setting goals that make you stretch your limits.

Aim high. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “We aim above the mark to hit the mark.”

Ask yourself, “What is it I want to achieve?” Your goal must be **S**pecific. “I want to pursue my credentials” is vague, however “I want to earn the SR/WA designation” is very specific. Once you have identified your goal, write it down.

The next step is to determine how you will **M**easure your success. “When I receive my SR/WA designation plaque, I will have met this goal” is very specific way to measure your success. Be sure that your goal is **A**chievable given the other demands on your time. Can you meet the experience and education requirements for this program? Are you able to attend the classes required? Always confirm that your goal is **R**elevant to you. Will this goal enhance your career? Determine exactly how much **T**ime is needed by stating your target date: “I will earn the SR/WA designation by December 31, 2012.”

Once you set your goal, break it into smaller steps to develop your action plan. Establish some milestones or sub goals, and determine target dates for each milestone. Create a list of those items, and use it as a checklist to monitor

your progress. For example, if you need to take another six IRWA classes, list those. Write down everything you need to do in order to meet the requirements, including the specific classes you need, the dates each class is offered, a list of classes available online, and whether you will need to request time off or apply for education assistance. Along the way, you may uncover some extenuating circumstances that will require an adjustment in your overall timeline, such as a prerequisite class required or a canceled class. Ensure that your list is updated with changes.

If you apply this **SMART** goal setting to every goal in your life, you will reach your goal. According to Henry David Thoreau, “In the long run, men only hit what they aim at.”

Goal setting allows you the freedom to choose the life you want to live, and not accept that whatever will be, will be. Remember, if you aim at nothing, you’ll hit it every time.