

## ACTION PLAN

ADVICE FROM JEFF DAVIDSON, AT YOUR BEST ADVISOR AND AUTHOR OF *BREATHING SPACE*

### Setting & Achieving Goals

Priorities are the handful of things in your life or career that are important to you. Goals, on the other hand, are specific statements about what you intend to accomplish, and when. Goals are different from priorities, but they must fit in with and support your priorities. Here are some examples of well-constructed goals:

- ▼ "To work out for 45 minutes, 3 sessions weekly, starting today."  
(Underlying priority: staying healthy)
- ▼ "To increase my annual income to \$48,000 next year." (Underlying priority: achieving financial independence)

Here, on the other hand, are some poorly constructed goals:

- ▼ "To sell our vacation property."
- ▼ "To be the best manager in the whole organization."

What they lack is specifics and target dates. Imprecision in goal-setting can lead to missed goals.

Setting goals, of course, is only the first step in attaining them. There are plenty of barriers to reaching your goals that you should be aware of:

- ▼ **Poor time frame:** choosing goals that are too challenging for the available time.
  - ▼ **Not enough resources:** selecting a goal without having proper tools or support.
  - ▼ **Losing sight of goals or larger priorities:** letting the din obscure your view of the big picture.
  - ▼ **Confusing priorities with goals:** "To have good health" is a priority. To support this priority you would select a number of specific goals, such as taking vitamins daily or walking 45 minutes each day.
  - ▼ **Letting rituals dominate your goals:** We all have ritual behaviors we developed over time. Some are helpful, but many just waste our time. If, for example, you still open your own mail, even though you've become a manager, you're probably spending time each day that could be better spent on pursuing your goals.
- NEXT MONTH:** Strategies that help you stick with your goals.

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**SPACE AND TIME MANAGEMENT** Jeff Davidson, professional speaker, certified management consultant and author of *Breathing Space* and 17 other books.

**SELF-ESTEEM** Des. Ron and Mary Kubrick, Ph.D., President and Academic Vice-President, University of Santa Monica, on the Advisory Board of the National Council for Self-Esteem.

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Dr. Brenda Wade, Ph.D., expert in family stress and communications

Contributors Sharon Stocker, Marian Wolbers, Janet Bregman-Taney

**PURPOSE:** To provide authoritative, useful, easy-to-understand information that will help our readers reduce stress, be more energetic and balance the demands of home and work.

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