

Unit Three

Making Choices & Setting Goals

UNIT THREE:

MAKING CHOICES & SETTING GOALS

Suggestions for the Instructor

Pg. 3-13 – 3-15 -- Words of Wisdom: Goal Setting

Ask volunteers to take turns reading the quotes aloud. Ask students to pick a quote that interests them and to write about it, reflecting on:

- what they think the speaker means
- whether they agree and why or why not
- how the quote is or is not relevant to their lives
- specific examples from their lives or the lives of others which highlight its meaning

Ask students to share their reflections with the class.

Pg. 3-16 -- Getting Out: Marie and James

Ask volunteers to read aloud the stories on the handout **Getting Out: Marie and James**.

Discuss the following questions with the class:

- Who is the story about?
- How would you describe Marie / James?
- Have you ever known anyone like him / her?
- Where is s/he living in the story? Where does s/he want to go?
- Each character says, “Anywhere is better than this place.” What does that tell you about his /her vision for the future?
- What are his /her dreams?
- How does s/he hope to achieve her dreams?
- Where will s/he be next month?
- How will s/he be doing financially?
- Will s/he achieve her dreams? Why or why not?

After students have discussed the stories, ask them to pick one of the characters. Ask them to work in pairs or groups of three to give the characters advice about how they can “get out” of their current situation in a way that is productive and not self-destructive. Ask them to devise a three or four (or more) step plan for their characters to help them find their way. Ask each group to share their steps with the class.

Pg. 3-17 -- “Paid in Full” by Rakim

Copy the lyrics www.musicsonglyrics.com/paid-in-full-lyrics-rakim.html

Ask students to read the lyrics of the song “Paid in Full” aloud. Ask them to discuss the following questions:

- What is the speaker’s “master plan”?
- What is the speaker’s “mission”?
- Do you think the speaker has regrets? What are they?
- Why does the speaker say “I feel great”?
- Can you relate to his feelings or experiences? How?

Pg. 3-18 – 3-19 -- What Motivates You?

In this activity, students are asked to think about what are the most important things in their lives. What values motivate them the most? Distribute the sheet of value cards and ask them to cut them out, or hand them out pre-cut, then lay them on a table in order from most important to least important.

Ask them to compare their lists to those of the other students and discuss why they ordered the values the way they did. Ask them to write the answers to the questions about what values motivate them and why, and how those values will impact the decisions they make in their lives.

Pg. 3-20 – 3-21 -- What Motivates You? Essay

As a class, read the essay by Malaysia and ask students to identify what Malaysia’s life was like in the past and how her life has changed. What motivated her to make positive changes? Ask students to think about their own life experience in order to identify a time they made a positive change, or about something they would like to accomplish in the future. Ask them to write an essay in which they explain what motivates them and why.

Pg. 3-22 – 3-24 -- Creating Your Personal Mission Statement

Tell students that before they can set goals, they need to assess what is most important to them. Explain that a personal mission statement is a tool that can remind us that our lives are valuable.

Read the model Personal Mission statements aloud. Ask the students:

- Are these mission statements reasonable and doable?
- Do they express sincere values and beliefs? (continued)

- Might they help someone stay on track and not be distracted from what is most important? How so?
- Does one of the model Personal Mission Statements resonate with them? Why or why not?

Ask students to develop a personal mission statement by answering the questions and developing statements:

- I am a person who is:
- I value:
- I am responsible for:
- My purpose in life is to:

Students can then copy their mission statements on the certificate. Depending on students' comfort levels, ask them to stand and share their mission statements with the class. Ask the class to respond with applause or praise. Encourage them to keep their mission statements and refer to them regularly.

Pg. 3-25 -- "Don't Quit" by Edgar Guest

<http://www.all-creatures.org/poetry/dontquit.html>

Have students read aloud the poem "Don't Quit" by Edgar Guest and answer the following questions. Discuss their answers with the class:

ANSWERS:

1. How would you summarize the message of the first stanza?
No matter how bad things get, you shouldn't give up.
2. Can you relate to any of the experiences referenced in the poem?
Answers will vary.
3. Have you ever felt like giving up but persevered instead? Why did you decide to hang in there and not give up?
Answers will vary
4. What do you think the poet means by the lines:
Success is failure turned inside out,
The silver tint of clouds of doubt.
We can learn from failure / success comes from failure / we can transform failure into success.
5. What qualities should a person possess in order to be able to "stick to the fight when you're hardest hit (because) / It's when things seem worst that you mustn't quit."?
Self-confidence, courage, faith, patience, vision -- answers will vary.

Pg. 3-26 – “Invictus” by William Ernest Henly

Read the poem “Invictus” by William Ernest Henley. Discuss the following questions with the class.

ANSWERS:

1. What was the poet’s purpose in writing the poem?
He may have written the poem to give himself courage during a dark time; he may have written it for others going through trying times. He may have wanted to remind himself or others that no matter what the circumstances, he was in charge of his own soul.
2. What kind of place might he have been in when he wrote this poem?
He may have been sick or in prison or at war.
3. Why does the speaker, despite all the difficulties he has endured, proclaim that he is “unafraid”?
He may feel that because he has taken charge of his destiny and not given his power over to others, he has nothing to fear. Answers may vary.
4. What attitude or belief is conveyed by the poem?
Courage, independence, victory over a bad situation. Answers may vary.
5. Do you agree with the poet’s approach to life? Why or why not?
Answers will vary.
6. How might this poem be useful to a person who has obstacles to overcome?
Answers will vary.

Pg. 3-27 – 3-28 -- “Mother to Son” by Langston Hughes

Distribute the handout “Mother to Son” by Langston Hughes. Ask students to look at the title. What do they think the poem will be about? What might the poem have to do with the theme of goal setting?

Read the poem aloud to the students, or ask a volunteer to read it. Discuss the poem, using the following questions as a guide, or have students write their answers first then discuss with the group.

ANSWERS:

1. What do you think is the mother’s message to her son?
Life is difficult, but you have to be strong and keeping going. Don’t give up.
2. What does the mother mean by the line, “Life for me ain’t been no crystal stair”?
She compares her life to a staircase and says hers has been dark and broken down, not beautiful and shiny like a crystal staircase.

(continued)

3. A **metaphor** is the comparison of one thing to another in order to show how they are similar and sometimes to make a larger point. What metaphor does Langston Hughes use to describe the mother's life?
He uses the metaphor of a staircase.
4. Why do you think he chose this metaphor to represent her life?
Answers may vary; he may have chosen it because a staircase represents movement from one place to another.
5. What do you imagine this woman's life has been like? What does she want her son to know about her life?
There have been many obstacles. She wants him to know that in spite of the obstacles she continues to stay strong; she doesn't give up.
6. What do you think her fears for her son might be?
She is afraid that the obstacles he faces will defeat him and that he'll give up.
7. Do you agree with her message? Why or why not?
Answers will vary.

Pg. 3-29 – 3-31 -- Goal Setting: Advice Poem

Have students read aloud the advice poems by students. Ask them to identify the metaphors the students used to communicate their message about life.

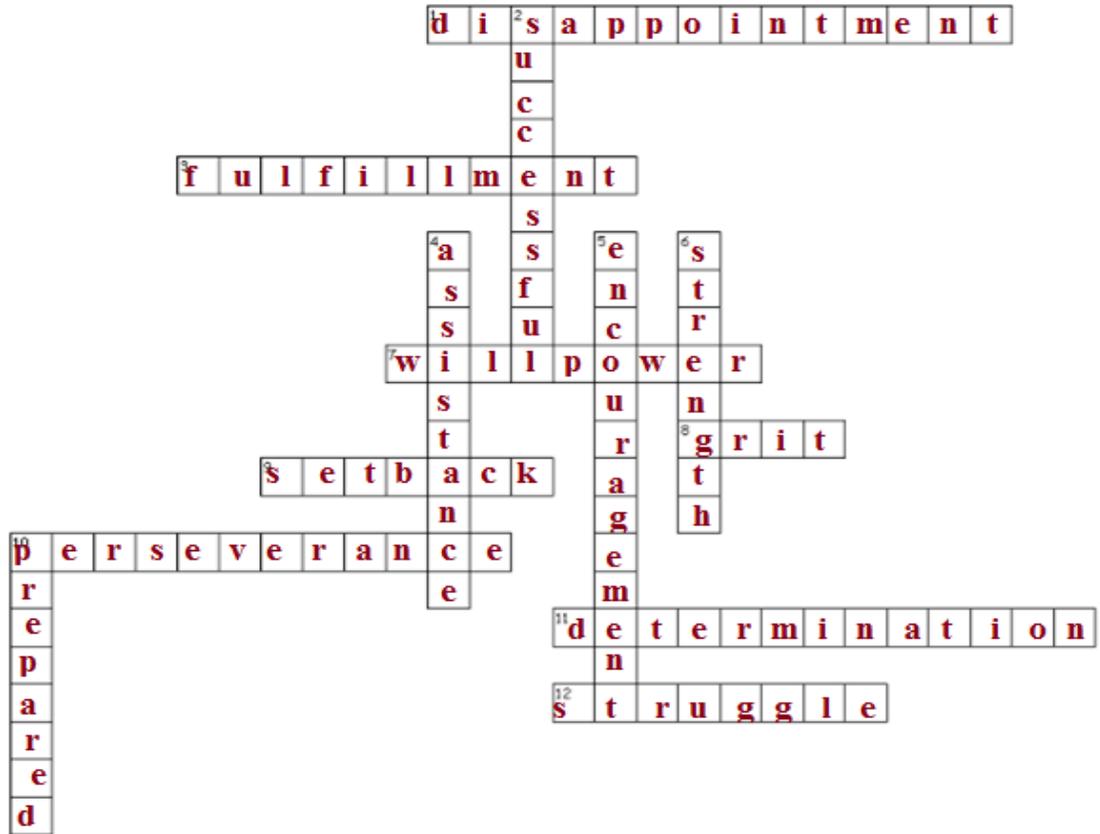
Using "Mother to Son" by Langston Hughes and "Parent to Child: Advice Poems by Students" as models, ask students to write advice poems -- about setting and reaching goals -- to a young person in their lives. Tell them to write to their child if they are a parent; if they don't have a child, ask them to think of a niece or nephew, cousin, brother or sister who might look to them for wisdom about how to live.

Tell them to use metaphors to guide their advice poems. (Hughes used a staircase to symbolize the struggles involved in striving toward a goal; students might choose a ladder, a road, a door, railroad tracks or another image.) Ask students to share their advice poems with the class.

Pg. 3-32 -- Crossword: Perseverance

Have students complete the crossword puzzle on terms related to perseverance and determination, as well as the struggles that go with those ideas.

ANSWERS:



Pg. 3-33 -- Write a Letter of Encouragement

Ask students to think about a struggle that they have gone through in their lives. Ask them to write a letter of encouragement to someone else who may be going through a similar situation and to offer suggestions for how to stay motivated and persevere through difficult times.

Pg. 3-34 – 3-41 -- “A free life is a miracle for Calvin Thomas after he serves 57 years of a death sentence” – Article

Copy the article, which tells the story of Calvin Thomas, who was sentenced to death at the age of 17 and released from prison at the age of 74. Have students work alone or in small groups to answer questions about supporting details, context clues, motivation, and optimism. The article is included with permission from the author.

www.thetallahassee.com/index.php/site/article/a_free_life_is_a_miracle_for_calvin_thomas_after_he_serves_57_years_of_a_de

ANSWERS:

1. B
2. B
3. C
4. A
5. D
6. C
7. B
8. Answers should include four of the following words:
 - positive / positive attitude
 - inspiration
 - joy / radiated joy
 - thankful
 - uplift
 - happier
9. Answers will vary
10. Answers may vary, but should include a reason for the question and a prediction of how Calvin Thomas would respond.

Pg. 3-42 -- Step by Step

Remind students that we are all interconnected and very few of the steps we take are taken alone. We need to take initiative and exercise personal agency, but we also need to use other people’s strengths and contacts and help others by sharing our knowledge and skills. We also need to remember how much larger organizations, agencies and movements influence what we can accomplish.

Ask students to read aloud the handout in order to reflect on and discuss the three types of human agency, or power.

Pg. 3-43- 3-44 -- SMART Goal Setting

Use this handout to review with students the components of “SMART” goal setting. Ask students to give examples of goals they have set for themselves and discuss as a group whether those goals have been specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time bound.

Read the scenarios aloud. Ask students to put a check mark next to each goal that they think is specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time bound. Discuss their choices as a class. Ask them to explain, if a goal is not realistic, what the person could change about the goal to make it SMARTer.

Pg. 3-45 - 3-47 -- Goal Setting Steps

On this handout, students are asked to work through a series of steps to identify and clarify their goals. Help students work through the following steps:

- Step One: Identify Your Goals
- Step Two: Write a SMART Goal
- Step Three: Deal with Obstacles
- Step Four: Break it Down

Pg. 3-48- 3-50 -- Steps to Success

Distribute both models and the blank version of the handout **Steps to Success**. Explain that the handouts are meant to provide a model for breaking long-term goals into measureable and achievable steps.

Ask students to work in pairs to assist each other as they complete the blank handout for one of the goals they have identified. Encourage students to identify self-supporting attitudes and behaviors, people who can help them, short-term goals, projected dates and specific tasks necessary to accomplish their long-term goals. Review the plans with students individually, assisting them in clarifying or specifying steps as necessary.

Pg. 3-51 -- Six Things Successful People Do Before Breakfast

Review with students some of the behaviors of successful people. Ask if they agree or disagree. Discuss whether they have tried some of these strategies and whether or not they have worked for them. Ask if they know successful people and whether they exhibit these or other behaviors.

Pg. 3-52 -- Everybody has Goals: Essay

Ask students to write an essay in which they write about one of the goals they have discussed in depth in this unit. Ask them to write in response to the following prompt: *Everybody has goals. Describe a goal you have and specific steps you plan to take to achieve this goal. Remember to include an introduction, two or three paragraphs in which you explain the steps in detail, and a conclusion.*

Pg. 3-53 – Individual Career & Education Plan

This goal setting sheet can be used in the GED classroom to help students examine their individual goals and plan for the work they will do in the class to achieve those goals.

Unit Three

Making Choices & Setting Goals

Student Activities

◆●◆●◆ WORDS OF WISDOM ◆●◆●◆

Goal Setting

*Don't sit down and wait for opportunities to come;
you have to get up and make them.*
Madame C.J. Walker

*Every time you meet a situation, though you think at the time it is an impossibility
and you go through the torture of the damned, once you have met it and lived
through it, you find that forever after you are
freer than you were before.*
Eleanor Roosevelt

Luck is matter of preparation meeting opportunity.
Oprah Winfrey

A good goal is like a strenuous exercise -- it makes you stretch.
Mary Kay Ask

Yard by yard, it's very hard. But inch by inch, it's a cinch.
Author Unknown

Hold yourself to a higher standard than anyone else expects of you.
Henry Ward Beecher

You will find a joy in overcoming obstacles.
Helen Keller





Action is the antidote to despair.

Joan Baez

I have learned to have very modest goals for society and myself, things like clean air, clean grass, children with bright eyes, not being pushed around, useful work that suits one's abilities, plain tasty food, and occasionally satisfying nookie.

Paul Goodman

Vision is not enough. It must be combined with venture. It is not enough to stare up the steps; you must step up the stairs.

Vaclav Havel

The self-confidence that builds from achieving difficult things and accomplishing goals is the most beautiful thing of all.

Madonna

The first thing I want to say is don't be scared. With all the giddy excitement you feel... my guess is that you're also feeling a little uncertain today... And you're being flung into a world that's running about as smoothly as a car with square wheels. I want you to know that it's okay to be uncertain. I'm uncertain, too.

In a world like this, it's appropriate to be uncertain.

Alan Alda



The journey of one thousand miles begins with one step.

Chinese proverb



❖ ❖ ❖ Getting Out ❖ ❖ ❖

Marie

Marie was ready to go. She had her bags packed. Her hair was pulled back to show off her carefully made up eyes and her dangling earrings. People always told her she had style and talent for doing hair, and she hoped to make money in fashion someday. She was ready for a change -- but she didn't know where to go. Marie looked around at her life, at the empty whiskey bottles next to her father's chair, the school books she hadn't opened in weeks, the broken TV, the dishes stacked in the sink.

She looked at the note she'd set in the middle of the cluttered table. "Daddy," it read, "I'm finally getting out of here. I'm just going to start walking. I'll figure out how to get money somewhere along the way. I don't know where I'm going to end up -- but anyplace is better than this place."

She felt her heart beating faster as tears welled up in her eyes. She picked up her journal and leafed through it. She remembered how many nights she'd felt trapped, how many nights she'd cried. "I just want to make it," she read out loud. "I just want to be somebody special." She stuffed her journal in her bag, looked in the mirror one last time, then left.

James

James was sick and tired of his life. His mother was going quickly downhill -- using drugs more and more, staying out all night, telling him to steal for her so she could get her fix. He had tried to turn to his father for help, but he wouldn't let James stay with him. James loved playing football in school, and always dreamed of playing in college. But he was kicked off the team for missing a lot of days and failing his classes. His parents didn't seem to care. He was hungry a lot because his mother used whatever income they had for drugs.

James got involved with the neighborhood gang and for a while it was good. They were like a family, always looking out for each other. At first when he sold drugs for them he had more money than he ever had before -- until they started making him sell more just to get the same cut. He wanted out, wanted to go back to school, didn't want to become an addict like his mom.

One night when his mother was gone again, he punched the wall in the apartment and broke a chair. "I gotta get out of here," he said to himself. "Anyplace is better than this place." But he didn't know where to go or how to get there.

Pick one of the stories above and give the character advice. What steps should s/he take to "get out" of the situation in a way that is productive and not self-destructive?

PAID IN FULL

by Rakim



Read the lyrics to the song "Paid in Full" by Rakim:
www.musicsonglyrics.com/paid-in-full-lyrics-rakim.html

After reading the lyrics, work individually or in groups to answer these questions:

1. What is the speaker's "master plan"?
2. What is the speaker's "mission"?
3. Do you think the speaker has regrets? What are they?
4. Why does the speaker say "I feel great"?
5. Can you relate to his feelings or experiences? How? Be specific.



WHAT MOTIVATES YOU?

What are the most important things in your life? What values motivate you most? Cut out the values cards on the following page and lay them on a table in order from most important to least important.

Compare your list to those of the other students and discuss why you ordered the values the way you did. Then answer the following questions about what values motivate you and why, and how these values will impact the decisions you make in your life.

1. Which of these values did you rank in the top four? Why are these most important to you?

#1: _____ is important to me because _____

#2: _____ is important to me because _____

#3: _____ is important to me because _____

#4: _____ is important to me because _____

2. How do you think these values will affect the choices and decisions you make in the future?

VALUES

being well known	medical care
education	mental health
family / children	money
having a nice car	freedom / independence
housing	politics / voting
job / career	safety
love / relationships	travel
being respected	creative expression
being healthy	leisure / relaxation
exercise	safety
peace	fairness

What Motivates You? *ESSAY*

As you read Malaysia's essay about what motivated her to make positive changes in her life, think about your own life. Think about a time you have made a positive change. What motivated you to do it? Or think about something you would like to accomplish in the future and what will motivate you to do it.

Write an essay in which you explain what motivates you and why.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

I used to think that things were as bad as they could be and life couldn't get any worse. I dropped out of school, got addicted to being in the streets and drugs. I didn't care about anything or anyone till I had my first child. My child motivated me to make major changes in my life.

I was all about the streets, trying to fit in with the cool crowd. I started skipping school or just not going at all, thinking that I could find life in the streets. I started smoking marijuana every single day. Sometimes I would get so high that all I could do was go to sleep or eat. Marijuana became the most important thing to me. I felt as if I needed weed to make my day go by.

But my life changed. When I had my first child, it changed my life. I realized that the streets didn't have the answers for me at all. I was determined to be a better person for my child. I gave up the drug that I had needed so bad. I got back in school trying to obtain my high school diploma. I feel good because after I gave birth to my daughter I started looking at life a whole different way. Now I have two kids, I don't smoke weed any more, and I'm in school working toward my GED.

I'm proud of myself. I used to think that things were as bad as they could be and life couldn't get any worse. Because of my kids -- my motivation -- I have changed my opinion about life.

-- Malaysia

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Creating Your ★ ★ ★ PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT ★ ★ ★

A mission statement proclaims what kind of person you are, what you value and who you are responsible for. A personal mission statement declares your purpose in life.

Before you can set goals for yourself, you need to assess what is most important to you. It helps to develop a statement of how to live -- according to what you value most. When times get tough, when you feel unsure or unmoored, when you are tempted to make choices that are not in your own best interests or do not represent your own best self, your personal mission statement can help guide your life. A personal mission statement:

- reminds you that your life is meaningful and valuable
- helps you communicate your values clearly to employers
- helps you communicate your values clearly to people you care about
- motivates you to do your best
- keeps you from being distracted from your purpose
- gives you strength and courage in the face of difficulties
- helps you to *act* rather than react
- helps you to attract people and opportunities which can give you support.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Examples of mission statements:

*I am a person who is kind, funny and helpful. I value my family.
I am responsible for being there for my baby. My purpose in life
is to stay out of trouble and to be a good father.*

Terrence D

*I am a person who is capable and responsible. I remind myself every day
how much I value my family and how important my children are to me. I am responsible for
teaching them, playing with them, helping them with their homework and listening to them. The
purpose of my life is to set a good example by working hard
and doing the right thing.*

*I am a person who is smart and talented. I value becoming a better reader,
getting my GED, and earning a certificate in welding. I am responsible to myself and my
mother. My purpose in life is to work hard at something I enjoy so I can
make enough money to support myself and my mom.*

Creating Your Personal Mission Statement, cont.

To create your Personal Mission Statement, decide which of the following terms describe you best, then rewrite all of the sentences on the Personal Mission Statement certificate sheet. Keep it in a place where you can look at it often to remind yourself of your strengths, your values, your responsibilities and your purpose in life.

I am person who is _____

- | | | |
|-----------|---------------|-------------|
| Kind | Funny | Generous |
| Helpful | Smart | Disciplined |
| Serious | Intelligent | Wise |
| Creative | Energetic | Committed |
| Spiritual | Capable | Talented |
| Brave | Adventurous | Thoughtful |
| Outgoing | Introspective | Honest |

I value _____

- | | | |
|------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Time | Money | Health |
| Security | Work | Exercise |
| Freedom | Friendship | Creativity |
| Strength | Intelligence | Sober living |
| Spiritual living | Courage | Love |
| Family | Fun | Relaxation |
| Community | Education | Tradition |
| Kindness | Responsibility | Honesty |

I am responsible for:

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

My purpose in life is to:

Knowing my mission and my purpose in life helps me to stay motivated to achieve my goals.



*My
Personal
Mission Statement*

Don't Quit

by Edgar A. Guest

<http://www.all-creatures.org/poetry/dontquit.html>

Read the poem "Don't Quit" by Edgar Guest and answer the following questions. Discuss your answers with the class:

1. How would you summarize the message of the first stanza?

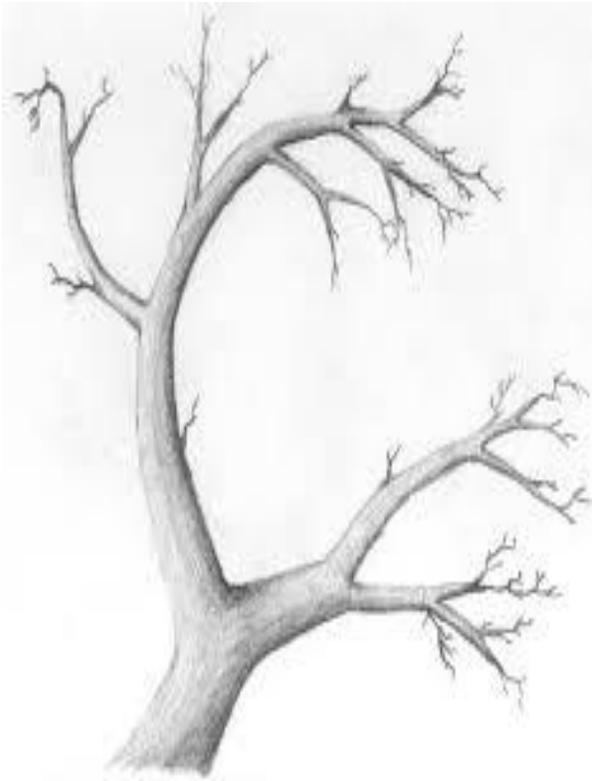
2. Can you relate to any of the experiences referenced in the poem?

3. Have you ever felt like giving up but persevered instead? Why did you decide to hang in there and not give up?

4. What do you think the poet means by the lines:
Success is failure turned inside out,
The silver tint of clouds of doubt,

5. What qualities should a person possess in order to be able to "stick to the fight when you're hardest hit (because) / It's when things seem worst that you mustn't quit."?

INVICTUS



Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments
the scroll,
I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul.

William Ernest Henley 1849-1903

Drawing by Creative Commons <https://www.deviantart.com/ryanv777/art/Dark-tree-330418597>

1. What was the poet's purpose in writing the poem?
2. What kind of place might he have been in when he wrote this poem?
3. Why does the speaker, despite all the difficulties he has endured, proclaim that he is "unafraid"?
4. What attitude or belief is conveyed by the poem?
5. Do you agree with the poet's approach to life? Why or why not?
6. How might this poem be useful to a person who has obstacles to overcome?

MOTHER TO SON

Well, son, I'll tell you:
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.
It's had tacks in it,
And splinters,
And boards torn up,
And places with no carpet on the floor —
Bare.
But all the time
I've been a-climbin' on,
And reachin' landin's,
And turnin' corners,
And sometimes goin' in the dark
Where there ain't been no light.
So boy, don't you turn back.
Don't you set down on the steps
'Cause you find it's kinder hard.
Don't you fall now —
For I've still goin', honey,
I've still climbin',
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

Langston Hughes

From *Collected Poems* by Langston Hughes
Copyright © 1994 by the Estate of Langston Hughes
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Langston Hughes 1902 - 1967

Langston Hughes was born in Joplin, Missouri, and began writing poetry as a high school student. After graduating, he worked on cargo ships traveling to Africa and Europe.

Hughes became recognized as a poet who used the language of ordinary people to communicate important ideas. He became a leading figure in the Harlem Renaissance, a heyday of African-American culture during the 1920's, and eventually became one of America's best-known poets. In addition to poetry, Hughes wrote novels, dramas, musicals, newspaper columns and children's books.

“Mother to Son” by Langston Hughes, cont.

After reading the poem “Mother to Son” by Langston Hughes, work individually or in groups to answer the following questions:

1. What do you think is the mother’s message to her son?
2. What does the mother mean by the line, “Life for me ain’t been no crystal stair”?
3. A **metaphor** is the comparison of one thing to another in order to show how they are similar and sometimes to make a larger point. What metaphor does Langston Hughes use to describe the mother’s life?
4. Why do you think he chose this metaphor to represent her life?
5. What do you imagine this woman’s life has been like? What does she want her son to know about her life?
6. What do you think her fears for her son might be?
7. Do you agree with her message? Why or why not?

GOALSETTING: Advice Poems by Students



Image from Creative Commons
<https://pixabay.com/en/photos/goals/>

One Step at a Time

Life is like a staircase.
Take one step at a time.
Be watchful of your surroundings
and always stay in stride.
Stay in school and get your education
and don't mess around with crime
and hate.
Set your eyes on the higher prize
and don't waste your time
hanging with fools.

-- Ethel W

Father to Son

My life is like a house.
Day one, I had to start with a plan.
Day two, I had to draw a house.
Then I started to save my money to buy
wood, and after that I bought me
a hammer and some nails.
First the foundation, then the frame,
Then brick after brick after brick...
Now, when you see me,
After years of toil and struggle,
I am a brick house.

-- Devyrus H

Letter to My Daughter

Life is like the rain and sun.
Sometimes it's pouring
and some days the sun shines.
When the rain comes,
life is painful and it hurts.
When the sun shines, life feels happy.
Sometimes it hails on you and it feels
like everything is falling down!
But at the end of the day, the sun
shines through and picks you up,
and you can breathe again. Don't give
up -- because there are good days and
bad days and you will get through it.

-- Heather

Life is a Game of Chess

Life is a maze, life is a game of chess,
life is the y-axis going upwards into the sky
and downwards into the sea
and the volcanoes.
You must navigate the maze.
You must become a successful individual.
No matter what your objectives may be
from day to day, it is meaningless
without educating yourself.

-- Eddie D



Image from Commons.wikimedia.org

Life is a Vast Ocean

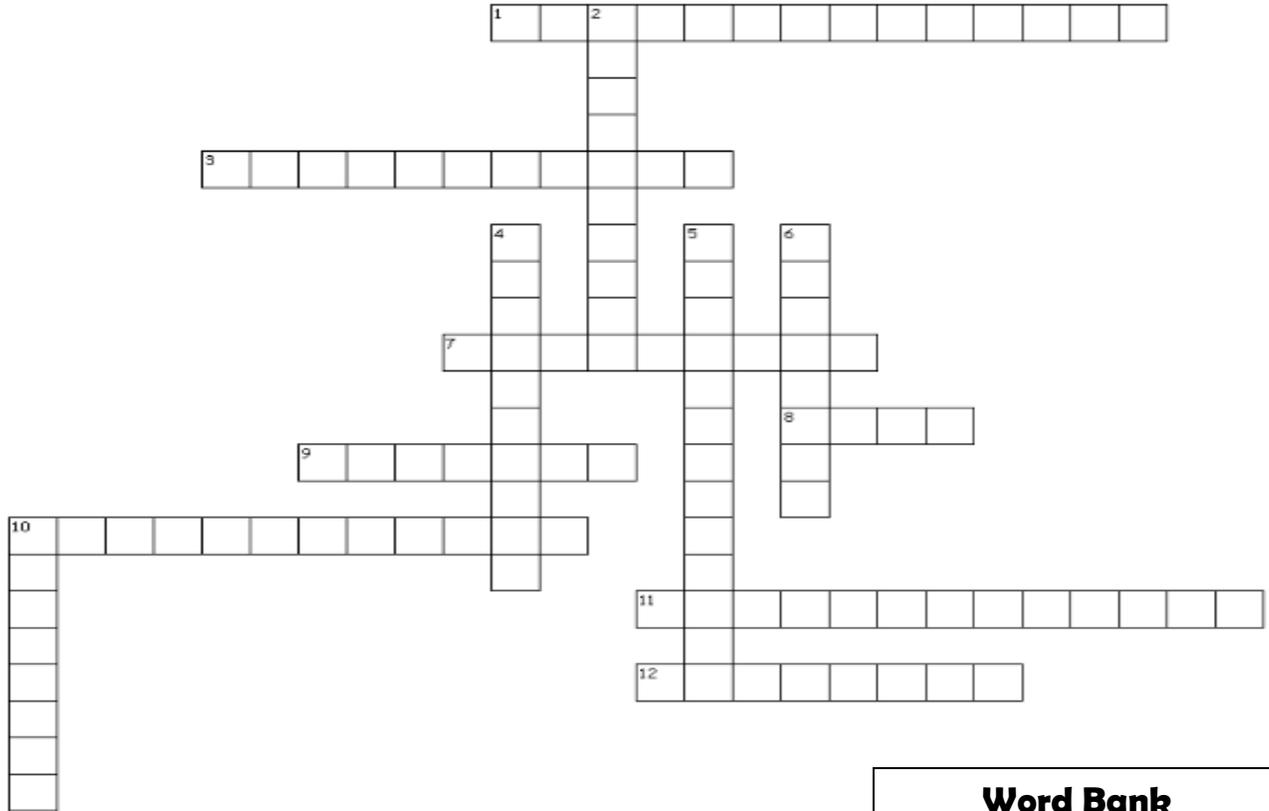
Life is a vast ocean and without the right equipment you may get lost forever.
Choose the right boat for you. Whether it's a row boat, sail boat or engine-powered,
choose your own speed and go. Have something strong to drive you forward:
Whether it's two simple oars, large sails, or the complexity of a gas powered engine.
Make sure you know how to navigate these treacherous seas with ease
or you may find yourself in the middle of the Pacific without the breeze.
Life is an ocean that has no mercy, so go out for a ride and prove that you're thirsty.

-- Deon R



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PERSEVERANCE



Across

1. The feeling of sadness when your hopes or expectations are not fulfilled.
3. Achieving something that is promised or predicted.
7. Control over yourself and your impulses.
8. Courage and resolve, or strength of character.
9. A reversal in progress.
10. A mindset needed to continue to do something despite difficulty.
11. Firmness of purpose.
12. Having difficulty handling or coping with something.

Down

2. Accomplishing your purpose.
4. Helping someone.
5. Giving someone support, confidence, or hope.
6. Emotional, mental, and physical abilities needed to deal with difficult situations.
10. To be willing and ready to do something.

Word Bank

Assistance
Perseverance
Determination
Setback
Disappointment
Strength
Encouragement
Struggle
Fulfillment
Successful
Grit
Willpower
Prepared

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A Free Life is a Miracle for Calvin Thomas After He Serves 57 Years of a Death Sentence

*By Jack Strickland Reprinted with permission
May 02, 2017*



Calvin Thomas walked to freedom last week. The 74-year-old native of Jacksonville has been in prison since he was 17. It has been 57 years since he was sentenced to death in a Duval County courtroom.

It is no small miracle that Thomas is alive. His death warrant was signed in 1963. He was moved to “The Ready Room” next to the electric chair as preparations were made for his execution. The courts granted a stay of execution hours before he was scheduled to be put to death.

In 1972 a U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Furman v Georgia*, ruled that the death penalty, as it was imposed in America, was arbitrary and unconstitutional. All death row prisoners had their sentences overturned. They were re-sentenced to life.

States were required to pass new legislation structuring their capital punishment laws in accordance with the new Supreme Court guidelines before executions could resume for newly sentenced prisoners.

Court decision saved his life

That Supreme Court ruling undoubtedly saved Thomas’ life. There is little doubt that he would have been executed before the end of the 70’s had he remained under the sentence of death.

Thomas used various prison libraries to stay in touch with changes in the law as he was housed in different prisons. Family and friends never gave up on winning his freedom.

A 2005 U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Roper v Simmons*, ruled that juveniles were not mature enough to understand court procedures and the magnitude of serious crimes and should not be sentenced to life in prison. The court overturned life sentences imposed on juveniles.

Almost six decades

Thomas used this and other court rulings to get his case back before the courts. With the help of the 4th Judicial Circuit Public Defender’s office in Jacksonville, he was able to

A Free Life is a Miracle, cont.

get his sentence overturned. He was re-sentenced, last week, after pleading guilty to the charges.

Circuit Judge Mark Borello sentenced him to time served. That sentence gave Thomas credit for almost 6 decades of prison time. The judge also imposed two years of probation, to follow the prison sentence. The first year of probation is to be served at a rehabilitation center.

The judge pointed out that the conditions of probation were specifically designed to train Thomas to live in the modern world which is now alien to him.

Thomas will have a year of supervised probation in the community after he leaves the rehabilitation center. His former lawyers, family, and friends stand ready to help him complete his adjustment to modern life when he returns to Jacksonville in a year.

New world: everyone is in a rush

Thomas had never seen a cell phone or computer. He has never used modern conveniences we take for granted in today's world. When he was set free he stepped out into a world that is shockingly different from the one he left in 1960. He seems to be adjusting well.

His sister Marion Erin is a lifesaver for him as she steers him around obstacles and unfamiliar conditions.

He said the hardest part of his adjustment is adapting to the fast pace of today's world. Everybody seems to be in such a big hurry. He said it is nothing like the laid-back, easy going, world he lived in as a teenager all those years ago.

Radiates joy to others

Friends say his positive attitude in prison has been a real inspiration to everyone who knows him. He has always radiated joy and been thankful to be alive. His mission in life seems to be to uplift everyone around him and make their lives happier.

People meeting him have a hard time believing he was sentenced to death for first degree murder. He looks and acts more like a deacon at the First Baptist Church than someone who lived on death row. But, the facts surrounding his residence on Florida's death row are well documented.

Times were tough when Thomas was a black teenager in segregated Jacksonville during the 1950's. Jobs were few and far between. If a teenager could get a job it usually didn't

A Free Life is a Miracle, cont.

pay much. Thomas and a 17-year-old friend came up with a plan. There was a demand for moonshine whiskey in their neighborhood. A 24-year-old friend knew how to make “Shine.” He also knew how to build a still. They needed \$300 for materials to build a still and run off the first batch of “Shine.’ They didn’t have any money. They decided to rob a neighborhood grocery store to get the money.

They didn’t intend to hurt anyone. They were simply going to run in, grab the money, and run away.

Robbery went awry

Things went terribly wrong. The 24-year-old friend had a gun and was in charge. Thomas was at the door of the store and did not see what happened. He later learned that the store manager resisted. There was a tussle. The gun went off. The manager was hit and his wound was fatal.

The court found the shooter guilty of first degree murder. The two teenagers were convicted under Florida’s felony murder law that holds that, if a person dies during the commission of a felony, all participants in the felony are equally guilty of the murder. All three defendants in the grocery store robbery were found guilty, sentenced to death and sent to Florida’s death row to await execution.

Thomas has vivid memories of death row. Like it was yesterday, seared into his psyche are memories of the morning, more than 50 years ago, when Florida Department of Corrections Captain J.C. Combs appeared, unannounced, at Thomas’ death row cell door. Two lieutenants accompanied him.

They were there to notify Thomas the Governor had signed his death warrant. Captain Combs read the death warrant to him. Thomas remembers the death warrant having a black border with a black seal adorned with black ribbons. It was signed by Florida Governor C. Ferris Bryant on October 2, 1963.

Four days to live

It was served to Thomas on the morning of Thursday, Oct, 3, 1963. That was four days before the death warrant ordered that Thomas be executed in Florida’s electric chair at 8 a.m. on Monday, Oct. 7, 1963. A couple of hours later, Thomas remembers two of the biggest men he had ever seen came to remove him from his cell and take him to the “ready room” next to “the chair.”

Thomas said they must have weighed 300 pounds each and stood at least six-feet-six. They placed “wrist breakers” on each of his arms. A wrist breaker is a single handcuff with a handle the guard can twist to tighten the cuff to cause the prisoner to comply

A Free Life is a Miracle, cont.

with the guard's directives. The guard can apply enough pressure to break the prisoner's wrist if he resists being taken to his death in "the chair."

Thomas' head was shaved so the electrode in the death helmet would make a good connection as electricity was channeled into his body through his head. He was measured for the suit of clothes he would be buried in. He was given the opportunity to order his last meal. Thomas said in keeping with protocol on death row at the time, he ordered everything.

Steak, pork chops, shrimp, crabs, fried fish, cheese burgers, and lots of banana pudding. He knew that what he didn't eat would be shared with prison guards – his executioners – and fellow prisoners he left behind. He said he knew he would be unable to eat any part of the last meal because of the stress. He knew that, a few hours after his death, what he ate would be listed as "stomach contents" on the medical examiners autopsy report.

Then came the surprise

Thomas' younger brother, Edward, has indelible memories of the occasion. In other words, he will never forget the moment he learned of his brother's stay of execution. He was in the army stationed in Texas. He was given emergency leave to come home to attend to his brother's affairs and funeral. Edward Thomas remembers he was expecting a solemn neighborhood when he arrived at his mother's house a few hours before the scheduled execution. Instead a big party was underway. As he got out of his car someone yelled to him, "They are not going to kill Calvin in the morning! He got a stay!"

At his sentencing last week, Judge Mark Borello noted that Thomas had an exceptional good conduct record during the half century he was in prison. He had only four write-ups. One was for talking loud on death row. Another was for eating chicken and rice that had been taken out of the prison dining room. The other two were for lesser infractions and Thomas does not remember what they were for. The judge cited his good conduct record as grounds indicating that Thomas is worthy of living in a free society.

Thomas expressed deep appreciation to assistant public defenders Camille Burbank and H. Kate Bedell, and their staff, for their untiring dedication and hard work in fighting for his freedom. Thomas said he developed an incredible bond with his defenders. He seems to view them as treasured and deeply loved members of his extended family.

A Free Life is a Miracle, cont.

“Earth Angel” sister Marion and the Parvins

Thomas wants to honor his younger sister Marion. He says she stood by him through the hard times as no one else did. She was a teenager living in New York when he was sentenced to death. Marion moved back to Jacksonville to be close and to support her big brother. Thomas said she has been unwavering in her stand by his side ever since. Thomas calls her his Earth Angel. He says she kept him focused on God and credits her for the positive attitude that is his trademark.

He saluted Ms. Eloise Parvin for providing light during the dark hours over the last 10 years he was in prison. He said he and Ms. Parvin became pen pals. Mail call is the most important part of the day for most prisoners. A letter from “the free world” is a prisoner’s lifeline for hope and inspiration. He said he exchanged several treasured letters each month with Ms. Parvin. Thomas also enjoys a family relationship with Ms. Parvin and her husband, “Deacon Bill.” She works with a prison ministry sponsored by the Neptune Baptist Church at the beaches in Jacksonville. Thomas looks forward to joining her in her ministry sometime soon.

For Calvin Thomas, responsible adult life begins at age 74. He grew up and became a senior citizen in prison. For the first time in his life Thomas will soon be able to make his own decisions. He is well prepared for the opportunity to chart the course for living the life of his dreams. He plans to make the most of it.

He wants to speak to at risk young people who are on roads that could lead them to prison. He thinks he can steer them in the right direction. And, he wants to speak to college groups and civic organizations to help them make a difference in the lives of today’s young people.

Thomas seems to be dedicated to the program he practiced in prison. He is clearly determined to uplift those around him and make our world a better place. As he steps forward in freedom, he is on the way toward making a real difference.

A Free Life is a Miracle for Calvin Thomas After He Serves 57 Years of a Death Sentence

Questions

After reading the article, answer the following questions. Refer back to the article as needed.

1. What is the meaning of the word “**tussle**” in the following excerpt from the article?
*“He later learned that the store manager resisted. There was a **tussle**. The gun went off.”*
 - a. agreement
 - b. fight
 - c. messy
 - d. surrender
2. According to the section, “Then came the surprise,” why did Judge Mark Borello overturn Calvin Thomas’s sentence?
 - a. The laws had changed since Thomas’s conviction.
 - b. Thomas had good conduct while in prison.
 - c. Thomas was a Juvenile in 2017.
 - d. The judge had become friends with Thomas.
3. Choose a synonym for the word “**indelible**” from the section, “Then came the surprise.” *“Thomas’ younger brother, Edward, has **indelible** memories of the occasion.”*
 - a. unforgettable
 - b. frightening
 - c. temporary
 - d. unremarkable
4. Read the following quote from the article. Why did Jack Strickland most likely include this sentence in his article? *“He knew that, a few hours after his death, what he ate would be listed as ‘stomach contents’ on the medical examiners autopsy report.”*
 - a. to help the reader sympathize with Thomas.
 - b. to include a quote from Thomas.
 - c. to show that Thomas was not hungry.
 - d. to show what a medical examiner does after a prisoner is executed
5. What did Calvin Thomas say helped him maintain his positive attitude?
 - a. his younger sister Marion
 - b. his friend, Ms. Eloise Parvin
 - c. his focus on God
 - d. all of the above

A Free Life is a Miracle, Questions, cont.

6. Which sentence supports the idea that Thomas wants to be helpful to others?
- a. "For the first time in his life Thomas will soon be able to make his own decisions."
 - b. "He says she kept him focused on God and credits her for the positive attitude that is his trademark."
 - c. "He wants to speak to at risk young people who are on roads that could lead them to prison."
 - d. "The judge cited his good conduct record as grounds indicating that Thomas is worthy of living in a free society."

Use the following quote from the article to answer questions 7 and 8.

"Friends say his positive attitude in prison has been a real inspiration to everyone who knows him. He has always radiated joy and been thankful to be alive. His mission in life seems to be to uplift everyone around him and make their lives happier."

7. How could Thomas's attitude be described in the above quote from the article?

- e. motivated
- f. optimistic
- g. pessimistic
- h. talkative

8. Chose four words from the passage above to support the idea that Calvin Thomas has a positive attitude.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____

9. Calvin Thomas explains how he was able to remain positive while in Prison for 57 years for first-degree murder. Describe a difficult situation that you have been through. Explain how you were able to get through it.

Step by Step

Step by step the longest march can be won, can be won
Many stones can form an arch, singly none, singly none
And by union what we will can be accomplished still
Drops of water turn a mill, singly none, singly none
Traditional folk song

There are three types of human agency, or power. We need to employ all three to be successful in our relationships, in our jobs, at school and in our daily lives. We can't do it alone! All of these types of agency, or power, are interconnected.

1. Personal power is the individual ability to take initiative, make things happen and influence how things turn out.
2. Interpersonal power is the ability to work with another person, to find people who can help you, or to use your power to help others.
3. Collective power is the ability to use the strengths of a group, to work as part of a community or a movement, to utilize a network, to be part of a group that has a common purpose.

Reflect

In your own life, think about a time when you used or benefited from each of these types of agency or power. Share your thoughts with the class.

Personal power _____

Interpersonal power _____

Collective power _____

In your own life, think about a time when you *wish you had used or benefited* from each of these types of agency or power. Share your thoughts with the class.

Personal power _____

Interpersonal power _____

Collective power _____

❖❖❖❖ SMART Goal Setting ❖❖❖❖

S - SPECIFIC The best goals are specific. They are clearly expressed statements of exactly what you want to accomplish, when you want to complete it and how it will be done. Be careful your goals are not too general or too vague.

NOT SPECIFIC: I will get a good education.

SPECIFIC: I will graduate with an Associate of Arts degree from TCC by January, 2015.

M - MEASURABLE The best goals are measurable. They involve numbers and dates and a way of checking to see if the goal has been reached.

NOT MEASURABLE: I will lose weight.

MEASURABLE: I will lose six pounds in two months; I will weigh myself once a week.

A - ACHIEVABLE For a goal to be achievable, you must be able to answer the questions: *How can this goal be accomplished? Do I have the background, the resources, the skills and the talent to achieve this? If I do not, do I know how to get what I need to be able to accomplish this?*

NOT ACHIEVABLE: I will become a lawyer next year.

ACHIEVABLE: I will research what is involved in becoming a lawyer, how long it will take, what aptitudes and abilities I need to have, etc. If I decide this career is right for me, I will meet with a college counselor to break this goal down into manageable steps.

R - REALISTIC For a goal to be realistic, it has to be something you can actually achieve. One of the reasons people sometimes set unrealistic goals is because they don't appreciate all the obstacles in their way, how long it might take or how much skill is needed. Do research or talk with experienced people to figure out how to make a goal more realistic.

T - TIME BOUND SMART goals are time bound. A deadline can help you avoid being distracted by day-to-day events, can help focus your efforts on completion of the goal and can establish a sense of priority and urgency.

SMART Goal Setting, cont.

ARE THESE GOALS “SMART”?

*Put a check mark next to each goal that you think is **specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound**. If it is not realistic, what could the person change about the goal to make it SMARTer?*

____ A woman who is an alcoholic attends weekly Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. After she is sober for a year, she wants to go to FAMU to become a social worker to help other people with addictions.

____ A woman who hasn't been in school for years, struggles with math, and just started adult education classes wants to get her GED next month.

____ A man with two felonies wants to become a welder by completing his GED and attending technical school at night while working as a landscaper during the day.

____ An adult education student wants to get his GED, go to TCC for two years and transfer to FSU to get a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing.

____ A woman who is a good cook and who has \$500 in the bank wants to open a restaurant in three months.

____ A young man who has \$250 in the bank and works full time at minimum wage wants to buy a used car next year.

____ A man who smokes two packs of cigarettes a day wants to quit smoking in two months by smoking one less cigarette every other day; he wants to lose forty pounds at the same time.

____ A woman who wants to get her GED comes to class every day, asks for math homework and takes practice tests to see what she needs to focus on, in order to pass the math part of the test in six months.

____ A man with three felonies who is \$500 in debt and has a family of four wants to rent a recording studio and make a hit record which earns a million dollars by the end of the year.

Have you ever set a goal that **wasn't** realistic or achievable? What happened and why?

Have you ever set a goal that **was** realistic and achievable? What happened and why?

GOALSETTING STEPS

❖❖ Step One: Identify Your Goals ❖❖

There are many types of goals. Describe a goal you have in each of these areas.

Personal _____

Educational _____

Job / Career _____

Financial _____

Physical _____

Spiritual _____

❖❖ Step Two: Write a SMART Goal ❖❖

*Identify one of the goals above and write it here. Rewrite it, if necessary, to make sure that it is **specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound**. The SMARTer it is, the more likely you are to be successful.*

❖❖ **Step Three: Deal with Obstacles** ❖❖

Barriers to achieving goals can be frustrating.
What roadblocks stand in your way of achieving your goals?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

What strategies can you use to overcome these roadblocks?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Having a positive attitude can influence whether you achieve this goal.
What strategies can help develop a positive attitude?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

What people can help you overcome obstacles
to accomplish this goal?

- _____
- _____
- _____

❖❖ Step Four: Break it Down ❖❖

Before you develop a plan of action, it is important to do research.
What research do you need to do to find out how to achieve your goal?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

What short-term goals or steps do you need to accomplish to achieve this goal?
(Keep in mind these may change as you do research.)

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



It is important to reward yourself for achieving short and long-term goals.
What healthy and inexpensive rewards might you use to motivate yourself?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

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Steps to Success

Self-supporting Attitudes & Behaviors:

- believe in myself
- respect myself
- plan
- ask for help
- don't give up!!!

People Who Can Help Me

- my sponsor
- my teacher
- my counselor



Short-term Goal #3 Save for first month's rent and deposit

Date: _____

- Check apartment ads daily
- Meet with counselor to develop plan
- Make a budget
- Find out the cost of rent

Short-term Goal #2 Get a job

Date: _____

- Take GED Exam
- Check want ads daily
- Finish resumé
- Apply for two jobs every week

Short-term Goal #1 Join self-help group

Date: _____

- Research meeting locations
- Arrange transportation to meetings
- Arrange my schedule to include meetings
- _____

Steps to Success

Self-supporting Attitudes & Behaviors:

- believe in myself
- complete tasks on time
- be prepared
- learn new skills
- _____
- _____

People Who Can Help Me

- my teacher
- my brother-in-law
- the financial aid counselor at the technical college
- _____
- _____



Short-term Goal #3 Apply for childcare jobs

Date: _____

- Volunteer at local daycare center
- Visit career center and job placement office
- Finish resumé
- Look for jobs in the paper and apply for them

Short-term Goal #2 Enroll in a training program

Date: _____

- Meet with guidance counselor at the technical school
- Meet with financial aid advisor at the technical school
- Develop personal financial plan
- Attend school full time, or take at least two courses each semester

Short-term Goal #1 Earn a High School Diploma

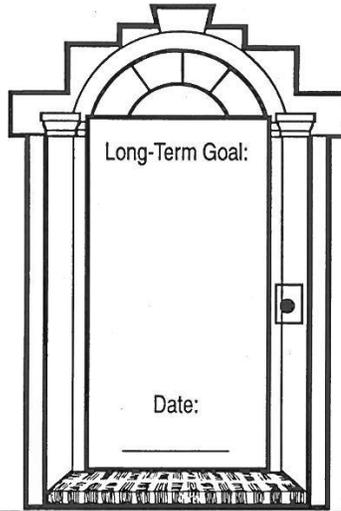
Date: _____

- Attend GED class every day
- Study for one hour every night
- Take the GED Practice Test
- Take the GED Exam

Steps to Success

**Self-supporting
Attitudes & Behaviors:**

**People Who
Can Help Me**



Short-term Goal #3 _____

Date: _____

Short-term Goal #2 _____

Date: _____

Short-term Goal #1 _____

Date: _____

Six Things Successful People Do Before Breakfast

Adapted from Amanda Green



Being successful in life is more than just having a good career and money in the bank. Successful people have a higher quality of life and live happier, more fulfilled lives. It is a well-known fact that successful people do certain things differently than unsuccessful people. Here are five things successful people do before breakfast:

1. Wake Early

Starting the day early is a habit successful people follow every day. Waking early gives you time to start the day off right, taking time to get out of bed, shower, and embrace the day gradually, rather than rushing off at the last minute. Waking early also suggests that you are happy with your life and dedicated to personal growth.

2. Exercise

Successful people exercise every morning. Start your day with pushups, jumping jacks, running, walking or stretches to improve your circulation and get your heart beating.

3. Review and Rewrite Goals

Successful people are great at making and keeping goals. Review your short-term goals (like getting to school on time every day, or reading for thirty minutes a day) and long term goals (like earning a diploma, applying to TCC) daily. Reminding yourself of your goals every day can help keep you on track.

4. Think Positively: How Do You Want Your Day to Go?

Visualizing the day ahead in a positive and productive light can prepare your mind for the tasks and challenges of the day. Whether you choose to do so by thinking, stretching, reading, writing, praying or meditating, adopting a positive mental attitude is an important part of a successful person's day.

5. Read the News

Successful people have a good understanding of what's happening in their community and the world around them. Not only does this prepare you for the day ahead, but it keeps you up to date so you can carry on a conversation about current events as well.

6. Eat Breakfast! Successful people need fuel to work and think, just like a car needs gas to take a trip. Eat a healthy breakfast to give you energy for a productive day.

Image from Creative Commons <https://pixabay.com/en/running-sports-3269468/>

Individual Career & Education Plan

Name _____ Date _____

My long term career goal: _____

Research I need to do / information I need:

Education steps needed to achieve this goal:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Obstacles that might interfere

How to overcome them

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

My short term reading goals / TABE areas of focus:

_____	_____
_____	_____

My short term language goals / TABE areas of focus:

_____	_____
_____	_____

My short term math goals / TABE areas of focus:

_____	_____
_____	_____