

6 GOAL SETTING

Setting and achieving goals is an important part of any leadership journey. Even in failure, the desire to strive for something difficult to attain is a noble act in and of itself. Setting and attaining goals is where your leadership journey takes on a life of its own. Now is the time when you are no longer training to be a leader but are expected to act like a leader. Everything up to this point will prove to be pointless if you are unable or unwilling to take the next step: TO ACTUALLY LEAD, execute, and help move the group toward its desired goals!

A good, honest place to start is to think about all of the goals you have set in the past that you have failed to achieve, and you'll get a sense for what lies ahead. Remember your last New Year's resolution? Remember the goal you set on the first day of school last year to procrastinate less and work harder? Remember all of the things you said you were going to do during your summer vacation?

I think you get the idea that most people don't even remember, much less achieve, their goals.

Goals without action are called wishes.

There is nothing wrong with wishing for something, hoping that it will magically appear, as long as everyone understands it is a wish. The problem occurs when others are counting on you and your leadership peers to help the group achieve them, only to find that they were more wishes than goals.

THE THREE PITFALLS OF GOAL-SETTING

Believe it or not, most people fail to achieve their goals, not because they are unwilling participants, but because they were doomed to fail from the start. Most goals go unrealized because of three missteps:

1. The leaders were unwilling to do the work required for success.
2. The leaders set faulty, unrealistic goals to begin with.
3. The leaders had no specific plan of action to achieve their goals.

For further clarification and understanding, let's take a quick look at each of the three pitfalls. Review these materials before and after you have set your goals to ensure that you have not set yourself up for failure.

1. *Unwillingness to do the work.* Let's be blunt: There is nothing anyone can do about this but YOU. You and you alone have to commit to doing what is required to get the job done. This is where the vision ends and accountability begins. There will be others who will help and support you, but this does not mean they will do the work for you. At times, it will be important that you don't walk alone as a leader. Your student leader colleagues will walk with you, but don't expect them to carry you.

Key Takeaway

Goals are nothing more than destinations on a map. It's something to point to and dream about how awesome it would be to get there. The key is in the planning of the trip.