



Beyond SMART Goals

Module Two, Session Three

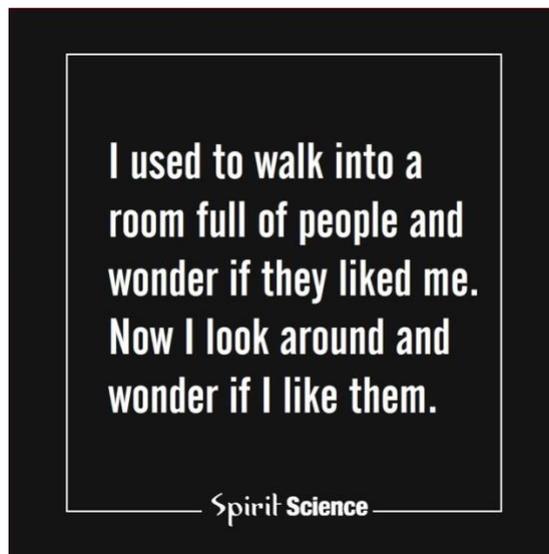
We talk a lot about setting goals but it's really about the journey to achieving them. I know a lot of people and organizations are very gung ho about SMART goals. I was originally trained using the SMART goal acronym. Goals should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-based. OK. But there's got to be more. How do we bring our goals to life from day to day? How can having goals improve the quality of our lives and our riding? How do they help us enjoy the journey and overcome fear? Here are four things that go beyond SMART goals and will change your life.

1. Become internally directed rather than externally directed.

If you're internally directed, you act according to your own values and your own ideas about what success is. You're aware of cultural or familial expectations but choose to set your own instead. You know how to use feedback from others but you don't let it determine who you are. In order to be internally directed, you need to be very clear about your vision and what's important to you.

Being internally directed is not about being selfish. It's about staying true to yourself so that you may better serve the world. If you know what things are most important to you, you'll set goals that are in alignment with those. Accomplishing them will be deeply satisfying and enrich your life. If you're externally directed and set goals based on societal values or based on what you think others want, you'll feel chronically dissatisfied.

Becoming internally directed doesn't happen overnight. It's a process and usually requires work and some help from a coach or mentor. The Performance Project is designed to help you become more internally directed. I recently ran across this anonymous quote:



This is an example of what it means to be internally directed. Wow! What a way to look at the world. Who do I want to know? What are THEY like? What do THEY have to say? Oddly, the more internally directed we become the more people centered we are. We let go of thinking about how we're being perceived and how we're measuring up and we begin to see and hear others more clearly. We begin to act with more conviction and waste less energy trying to figure out how to impress or placate others. We begin to make choices from a more authentic place and are less attached to the choices others make. We become more courageous and feel less vulnerable in the face of conflict because we're sure about where we stand. Start to notice the places where the goal setting process is requiring you to be more internally directed than you've been before.

2. Set a stretch goal, not a realistic one.

I get that it's important to set realistic goals. The thing I've learned, though, is that most people tend to err on the side of being safe and conservative rather than unrealistic when it comes to goals. They let their goals be tempered by self-doubt. I would prefer to aspire to a stretch goal than hold myself to a realistic one. A stretch goal is one that feels a little risky and exciting but that your trainer or mentor would agree you are capable of. It will invite you on a journey and require courage. It will be attainable but require you to grow. A realistic goal might feel comfortable but it may not be very motivating.

3. Consider the health and confidence of your horse when you set goals.

The horse always comes first. There are times when setting a personal riding goal can help you understand when it's time to move on from a particular horse or trainer or

barn. It is easy to get so stuck in the status quo that we forget we have options. A goal can become a catalyst for making significant changes in your habits or lifestyle that you've been reluctant to make. Setting a riding goal can help you calibrate your own desires to the capabilities and needs of your horse. If you are at a time in your life when your relationship with your particular horse is the most important thing, your goal should reflect that and be appropriate and attainable for your horse. If you are at a point where your education or achieving particular competitive goals is the most important, your goal may help you evaluate the suitability of your horse. Setting your riding goal will help you become very clear about what matters most to you right now.

4. Get ready to fail.

Remember that, no matter what, when you do something big or bold or outside your comfort zone, you're going to face criticism or failure. And guess what, no goal worth setting is not big or bold or outside your comfort zone. YOU WILL FAIL! Things will get in your way. Bad things will happen. You will be discouraged, heart-broken and frustrated. And you will forge ahead. I like to say, "Be like river." This means you flow up, over and around whatever obstacles show up. Be ready and do not expect smooth sailing.

You've got this!