



Learning Goal Checklist

According to goal setting theory by Edwin Locke and Gary Latham, many of the goals we pursue are what are called “learning goals,” which means that we have not taken these actions or pursued these goals successfully before. For that reason, they are initially called “do your best goals,” but that doesn’t mean they cannot be “challenging and specific,” too, which is what Locke and Latham found always create the best outcomes. Learning goals become performance goals after we have flattened our learning curve and gotten some experience under our belt because we will have learned how quickly we can carry out the checklist steps, what efforts will create excellence, and other variables that make a difference (people, weather, materials, etc). Everyone learns differently, so learning goals should be individualized to each person so that their character strengths are applied in a way that makes knowledge/skill acquisition easier. For example, someone with curiosity might want to ask a lot of questions, while someone with appreciation of beauty and excellence might want to study paragons of excellent outcomes.

The BRIDGE framework is helpful in pursuing learning goals for the first time. Once you have established the reason behind the importance of the goal accomplishment, follow this: BRAINSTORMING – who has accomplished this goal before? Can they give you a checklist of how they do it? Where else can you gain knowledge? Do you have any previous experience that is relevant? RELATIONSHIPS – Who will you need to accomplish this goal? Who should not be in your life in this process? INVESTMENT – How much time/money/energy will you need to invest? DECISIONS – When will you take action and how will you know it’s stop and try again? GOOD GRIT – When will you need to be positively persistent, passionate and persevering in the pursuit of this goal? How will you handle obstacles? EXCELLENCE – What are the standards of excellence that you will use to judge progress and success? You can hold yourself to “challenging and specific” standards while gathering information – for example, interviewing five people instead of just one each day.

Use this sheet to answer the questions and take notes as a checklist begins to emerge for this goal that can guide you and others going forward.

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Add any notes below to clarify how you learned to proceed, who was particularly helpful, and what to avoid next time. Use this sheet on every iteration of pursuing a learning goal, refining your approach every time. When it has become a performance goal, transfer the steps to that worksheet and explain the steps to someone else to be sure they are easy to understand.