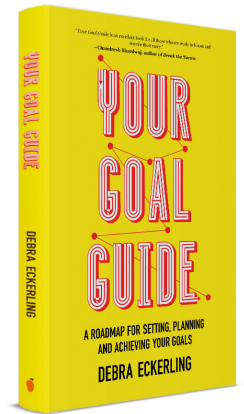


Your Goal Guide

A Roadmap for Setting, Planning
and Achieving Your Goals

by **Debra Eckerling**



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You Want To Go

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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

What stops you from achieving your goals? Not enough time? Not enough motivation? Not a clue as to what you want to do? You're not alone. It's difficult to focus on your goals when you have to invest time and energy you don't really have into something that may reward you down the line. However, if you make your goals a priority and work on them for short periods of time, you will eventually reach your desired destination.

Over the years, author Debra Eckerling has helped people around the world set and achieve goals through strategizing, troubleshooting and offering resources, encouragement, and deadlines. She has developed and polished goal-setting and productivity techniques and adapted them into a simple roadmap. In *Your Goal Guide*, she shares this method with readers to figure out what they want and how to develop a plan to get it.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to determine your ultimate dream, goal, or desired accomplishment.
- What processes you can use to identify optimal options and possibilities.
- How to establish goals, benchmarks, and tasks that will get you to your destination.
- How to stay motivated and energized along the way.

Determine Where You Want To Go

Go back in time. Think about those things that have stuck with you –the ideas that roll around in your head and show themselves every now and again. Now’s the time to take them out to play. Maybe the life you want has nothing to do with the life you have. In order to change that, you start with one question: What do you want? And only you can answer it.

Exercise 1: GoalTopia

Open a dedicated notebook or computer document and write “GoalTopia” at the top. Underneath, write “GoalTopia 1.” What’s your ultimate dream, goal, or desired accomplishment? Write down the first thing that comes to mind.

Now, give it some thought. Meditate. Set a timer for fifteen minutes. Close your eyes, clear your mind, and let your thoughts wander. Time’s up. Write your next header, “GoalTopia: Take 2.” Answer the question again: What’s your ultimate dream, goal, or desired accomplishment? Write it down. If necessary, repeat this process a few more times.

Once you are happy with your potential GoalTopias, read through the list. Do you see similarities? What keeps popping up? This could have to do with your job or career, industry, family, health, wealth, lifestyle, or a combination of them all. After some consideration, from your list, identify the GoalTopia – or combination of GoalTopias – you want to focus on and write it down under the header: “Ultimate GoalTopia.”

Exercise 2: Your Current Biography

A bio is a document that shares your accomplishments, experience, and expertise, along with your strengths and values. It is written in narrative form and should be in your tone and style, showing some personality along with your professional background. It’s the public’s first impression of you and a good way to remind yourself of all you have done and what you want to achieve.

To assist you, try some simple tricks to make the process of writing your biography easier. Go to a networking event. After you’ve spent an hour or so introducing yourself to a bunch of new people, your background will be in easy recall mode. Still stumped? Ask your friends and peers to give you their unique, unbiased perspective. Find previous bios of yourself on your blog, company website, or LinkedIn and read them.

Go to the next page of your dedicated notebook or document and title it, “Current Bio.”

Label and fill in the following sections: Employment History; Education, Organizations, and Certifications; Successes; Strengths; Challenges; Skills; Personal Details or Anecdotal Information. Take the information and turn the high points into a 150-300 word bio written in third person.

Exercise 3: Your Future Biography

The next step in this process is to figure out your future. Identify what additional skills, education, and relationships you need to pick up or develop along this journey. When you see the distance between your current life and your future, you can begin to chart your course. Your future biography should reflect your ideal persona once you reach your yet-to-be-determined destination.

Go to the next page of your dedicated notebook or document and title it, “Future Bio.”

Label and fill in the following sections: Future Work Experience; Education, Organizations, and Certifications; Successes; New Skills; Personal Ambitions. Use this information to write your biography 1, 3, or 5 years from now. Copy your future bio into your Trip Map.

Exercise 4: Create Your Mission Statement

Your mission statement is a summary of your goals and values, as well as the driving force behind them. Furthermore, once you know your mission, you are able to set long- and short-term goals that reflect it. Since your mission statement combines your biography with your ultimate goal, you’ve done a lot of the legwork already. It’s just a matter of putting all the pieces together, mixing them up, and adding one more.

Go to the next page of your dedicated notebook or document and title it, “Mission Statement.”

Answer the following questions as concisely as possible:

- Who are you? What is your work, education, and personal background?
- What are your values? What principles are important to you?
- What are your unique qualities? What talents and skills define you?
- What do you ultimately want? What is your goal?
- Who does it serve and why? What is the value to others?

Once you've answered these questions, use the information to create your mission statement. For example, I am a (adjective) person who enjoys (talent) and excels at (skill) who wants to help (demographic) (do this) in order to (reason). Once you have your mission statement, add it to your Trip Map.

Exercise 5: Create Your Motto

It can be helpful to turn your mission statement into a motto that you can use as a barometer for making decisions that relate to your goals. Take 5-7 keywords from your mission statement and create a memorable phrase that will stick with you.

Explore Different Destinations

Although you know what your GoalTopia looks like, you are just getting started. Now you need to go through the process of investigating different possibilities. The legwork, which includes writing, research, and outreach, will help you identify options.

Exercise 6: Directed Journaling

Directed Journaling is a technique that helps you work through any sort of concept, decision, or problem. This method is effective because, when you put your ideas in writing, you are able to look at them objectively, move things around, and determine the best course of action.

In your calendar, schedule five or more fifteen-minute sessions for journaling. Spend that focused time writing out your thoughts, answering a specific question or series of questions. What should I do? What do I want? What changes do I need to make? These are the kinds of questions your Directed Journaling will answer. Your stream of consciousness will identify numerous scenarios that could lead you to achieve GoalTopia.

Exercise 7: Common Themes

Go to the next page of your dedicated notebook or document and title it, "Common Themes."

Read the first day of your journal entries and jot down five things that stand out. Repeat this for each of your journal days. Now compare your lists. What ideas showed up on most days? Are there any obvious omissions? What did you learn about yourself? Take your answers and assign them a common two-to-three-word theme. Examples include Career Change, Climb the Corporate Ladder, or Start Side Hustle.

Your theme will help you home in on what actions to take,

interests to explore, or lifestyle elements to change as you get closer to identifying your specific destination.

Exercise 8: Identify Options

Go to the next page of your dedicated notebook or document and title it, "Options."

Based on your journal entries and notes, make a list of five possibilities of what you can do in service to your theme.

Answer the following questions:

- Why does this interest me?
- How will it serve my mission and motto?
- In what ways is it a good fit for my theme?
- Which of my experience and skills can I use or transfer to pursue this?
- What additional education, support, or resources will I need to obtain.

Use your answers to narrow your options down to three finalists. These are the options you will research extensively.

Exercise 9: Research

Take your top three options from the previous exercise and extensively research them. Find out who the leaders in the field are, what education is required, and what resources exist within the field. Think about any connections you may already have to each option and reach out to them.

Exercise 10: Select a Destination

Now that you have carefully researched what it takes to get to your different options, you have enough information to make a Destination Decision. Review all of the exercises you have done so far and see how each option relates and is aligned with your mission, motto, and theme. Ultimately, ask yourself, "Do I want to do this?" From your answers, you should be able to determine your destination.

Brainstorm Your Route

Now that you have selected a destination, you get to decide how you are going to get there. You will brainstorm all the goals, benchmarks, and action items you believe are necessary to get to your destination.

Exercise 11: Goals Brainstorm

In your notebook or document, write down all of your professional and personal goals. The reason to set both is

because they work in tandem. If you get stuck, look at your future bio, mission statement, journaling pages, or options exercise to see if you missed anything.

Exercise 12: Organize Professional Goals

Separate your master list into two categories: Professional Goals and Personal Goals. Take your list of professional goals and identify which are long-term and write each on a separate page. Now, put any short-term goals from your list under the appropriate long-term goal. Now, add benchmarks, or mini-hurdles, under each short-term goal. Under each benchmark, write out the tasks necessary to accomplish it.

Exercise 13: Organize Personal Goals

Personal goals complement professional ones. When you do things to improve your personal life, it impacts your career, and vice versa. Map out your personal goals in the same way you have mapped out your professional goals into long-term, short-term, benchmarks, and tasks.

Exercise 14: Priorities

Prioritizing is simple. When trying to decide what takes priority, ask yourself: Is it exciting? Is it necessary? Is it urgent? From your extensive list, choose three of the long-term goals that will lead you to GoalTopia. Next, choose three long-term personal goals. Now zero in. Choose three short-term professional and three short-term personal goals that you will tackle first to make those long-term goals happen.

Exercise 15: Choose Alpha And Beta Projects

Even though you prioritized, you can't pursue all of your goals simultaneously. What you can do is choose alpha and

beta projects. Alpha projects will take center stage because they are more timely and important to keep you moving towards GoalTopia.

5 Of 7 Rule

While the idea of working toward your goals every day is good in theory, it's not always realistic since you have plenty of other professional and personal responsibilities. Long-term goals take time.

The 5 of 7 Rule helps you take the pressure off yourself as you work toward your goals while continuing to juggle everything else going on in your life. Work toward your GoalTopia five out of every seven days each week. This enables you to keep your objective top of mind while giving you ample downtime. It eliminates the fluster you feel when life happens and you need to skip a day or two.

Everyone deserves happiness in their lives. If you don't have it, you can do one of two things: be okay with being miserable or do something about it. For those at a crossroads who've decided to make a change, good for you! But don't stop there. That decision is a huge first step, but you need to do the work and follow through. Nearly anything is possible. You just need to take the time to figure out what you want and commit to making it happen.



Debra Eckerling works with individuals and businesses to set goals and manage their projects through one-on-one coaching, workshops, and online support. A professional writer, communications specialist, and project catalyst with more than 20 years of experience, Debra is the founder of Write On Online, a live and online community for writers, creatives, and entrepreneurs and host of the #GoalChat Twitter Chat.

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