

# Exploring Leadership

## PLANNING & ORGANIZATION: GOAL SETTING

Some people like to take life as it comes. This approach can work until an important deadline gets missed, or a special event or opportunity passes them by. One way to stay ahead of the game is to visualize what you want to achieve out of life and then take the steps necessary to help you get there.

### CONVERSATION STARTER:

We tend to consume ourselves in "busy" work, yet still don't accomplish our goals. If you consume yourself in the simple tasks, how will you make time for the bigger ones that get you to your goals?

Setting goals and acting on them can help you become who you want to be. Daily goal setting requires discipline, but is something you can train yourself to learn how to do. By taking charge of your life through setting goals and working hard at achieving them, you improve your chances of realizing your full potential.

### KEY OBJECTIVES:

- To see the value behind setting goals of high importance.
- To prioritize your goals so you can achieve what's most important first.

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Large empty glass jar
- Sand
- Large rocks
- Pebbles
- Black paper
- Pens/pencils
- Copies of Appendix A & B.

## EXPLORATION ACTIVITY:

Demonstrate the "Jar Of Life" analogy used to emphasize the importance of completing important tasks first.

- Pour the sand into a jar and then try to fit in the pebbles. It leaves no room for any large rocks. Now, dump all of the contents of the jar out and start again, this time putting the large rocks in the jar first, then adding in the pebbles, showing how there is now plenty of room for the sand. Everything fits.
- This is similar to our day-to-day tasks. If we are always doing the least important tasks first (represented by the pebbles and sand), when will we make room for the most important stuff (represented by the rocks)?
- Have the youth make a goals list. First explain the value of goals and planning by going through Appendix A.

### FACILITATION TIPS:

- Use your own examples or ask participants for examples of what is most important their lives write them on the rocks, attach masking tape, or make a list(most important)
- Label jar or bag of pebbles as (next important)
- Label the jar or bag of sand as least important



## EXPLORATION ACTIVITY: CONTINUED

- Grab a blank paper and pen.
- Draw a line down the middle!
- On one side write personal, and on the other side write work.
- Start by listing your “BIG ROCKS” in your personal and work life. (Ask yourself, what the most important tasks and aspects of your life are to get you where you want?)
- Next list your pebbles. (What are the next important tasks and aspects?)
- Lastly, decide what your sand is. (What are the tasks and aspects of your life that aren’t as important, but still add to the big picture?)
- Use this as a guide to prioritize your goals.

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## REFERENCES

- “Planning and Decision Making.” *What Teens Need To Succeed*, Free Spirit Publishing, 1998, pp. 256–263.



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- Did seeing the visual of sand and rocks help you think about your biggest and smaller priorities?
- Are you surprised by what your list of BIG ROCKS contains? Are they getting adequate time in your life, or do you often find yourself out of time for the areas of your life that are of highest importance to you?
- What are some ways you can let the smaller areas of your life come in last in your daily priorities?

## APPLICATION DISCUSSION:

- Ask participants to think about if the goals they outlined today are actually doable by themselves. If not, what outside resources are necessary to help them?
- What timeline can they picture themselves achieving these goals? Are deadlines motivating to them or not?
- Are outside people required for their goals to be achieved? If so, how can these people be helpful to you?



## CONCLUSION:

Today's demonstration showed that a jar can only hold so much. This visual representation of a jar is symbolic of our lives. When we plan accordingly through prioritizing and goal setting, we learn how to place proper importance on our highest priorities (largest rocks), secondary priorities (pebbles), and last, the smaller stuff (sand). When it comes to living a happy and fulfilled life, it's essential that we plan, but before we do that, we need to make sure we prioritize what is most important to us!

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## APPENDIX A:

### PLANNING AND DECISION MAKING

#### If planning is difficult for you, start simple

1. Make a daily Things To Do list.
2. Number the items, starting with 1 for most important.
3. Check off items, starting the most important.
4. Move leftover items to tomorrow's list.

#### Go beyond planning to goal setting

Making plans and following through can help you get what you want. Setting goals and acting on them can help you become who you want to be.

#### 5 BENEFITS OF BEING A GOAL SETTER.

1. **You gain independence.** You're not letting someone else decide your life for you.
2. **You gain a sense of accomplishment.** You're not just following orders or doing what's expected of you.
3. **You make things happen.** You're not waiting and wishing things would happen.
4. **You manage your time more effectively.** Getting more done gives you more freedom to explore other things you want to do.
5. **People who set goals aren't bored, and they aren't boring.** Many people have a general idea of where they'd like to be in 5, 10, or 20 years from now. But they don't have the discipline to do the daily goal setting needed to get there. If you train yourself to do this - and you must do it for yourself - you'll take charge of your life and greatly improve your chances of realizing your potential.

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## APPENDIX B:

### GOAL SETTING

1. Write down all the things you'd like to accomplish during the next 10 years. These can include both school, self-improvement, career, life direction, as well as hobbies, interests, passion, friends, and fun. These are your long-range goals. Be specific and thorough.
2. When you've completed your list of long range goals, prioritize them. Select the 2-3 that are most important to you.
3. Write down all the things you'd like to accomplish during the next 3-5 years. These are your intermediate (medium-range) goals. Prioritize them; select the top 2-3. Your intermediate goals should help you achieve your long-range goals.
4. Write down all the things you'd like to accomplish during the next year. These are your immediate (short-range) goals. Prioritize and select the top few. Your immediate goals should relate directly to your intermediate goals.
5. Ask an adult or peer to hold you accountable and to check up on your progress.
6. Carry these lists with you often and consult your lists regularly (once a day-best) , or once a week (minimum). When you reach a goal, write down that date next to it. Goals can be revised as circumstances change.

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