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For parents who care

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Goal setting

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If you think that setting goals for yourself is just a waste of time, think about this: if life is a journey, how will you get to your destination if you don't know where you are going, what you need for your journey, and what you intend to do when you get there? Goals help to give our lives direction, purpose and inspiration. The same goes for our children. 97% of people do not set goals, but the 3% who do, accomplish more than the rest combined because their behavior has direction.

The first thing you need to do is have a long, hard think about exactly what it is you really want. Without a clear picture of what you want, you will not be able to formulate a plan to get it. Sitting down quietly, visualizing attaining your goal and consciously focusing on this, forces you to reassess your priorities and identify the things that are most important to you. Writing these down implies a commitment and intention to do whatever it takes to achieve these. Encourage your children to write down not only the goal, but also why it is important and what it will look like once it is achieved. Allow your children to come up with their OWN goals as far as possible, because they need to be important enough to your children for the work to be put in to achieve them. Be a good example to your children by having your own list of goals too, and let your children see you regularly working towards them. Once you have a list of what you want, it is extremely rewarding to see what you can achieve when you put your mind to it. Aim to put in place deadlines to accomplish small steps of the final goal. Always ensure that the WHY for the goal is big enough – without this, the motivation and inspiration to achieve the goal will not be there.

Goals can be short term or long term. Long term goals may require too much follow through for young children. The reward of the success of short term goals can be immediate and inspire the child to set, and achieve, another goal.

Be sure to set realistic goals. If the goals are out of reach and overwhelming, you will become despondent and give up. Set goals in small steps, complete with dates, amount and some details. Remember, even the great ones had to start somewhere.

