

THE BEAR ACADEMY

Session 1 – Setting and Achieving Goals



Excellence in Education and Performance

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HEART OF A CHAMPION

...You and me and nobody will hit you as hard as life. It's not a matter of how hard you can hit, it is a matter of how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward, how much you can take and keep moving forward. That's how winning is done. If you know what you are worth you gotta go get what you're worth, but you gotta be willing to take the hits. Not point fingers and say you are not where you want to be because of him or her or anybody. Cowards do that and that ain't you, you are better than that..... - Rocky



INTRODUCTION

“A man who stands for nothing will follow everything”. What is a goal? It is usually confused with a dream, mistaken for milestones and usually much too comprehensive. A goal is a clear, tangible, transparent achievement that is;

S = Specific

M = Measurable

A = Attainable

R = Relevant

T = Timebound

Along with this goal comes a road map that should also be clear, tangible and transparent. In life, every person should have goals although we use hockey as the example here. It is a top-down approach where we evaluate everything going backwards. Note, most people talk about short and long term goals. But let's make it simpler by applying the following concepts;

Dream = An ultimate outcome. Example, play in the NHL.

Milestones = Significant achievements set by you that bridge the dreams from your goals.

Goals = Timebound achievements that challenge you every day.

Goals will keep you focused, motivated, a sense of “being in control” and inspire work ethic.

DREAMS

Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand – Albert Einstein

It is important to dream, always dream, in life and especially in hockey. Dreams should be big and exciting. This being said, don't set expectations within your dream, just dream of getting to a point and then embracing the adversity as well as the perks that comes with being there. That is because only the few realize their big dreams and they are dreams because many people usually want the same thing. As such, it is usually surrounded by "the business" that will control you, media that will exploit you, teammates who want your job and fans who either thrive on your success or failure with neither being unconditional.

Regardless of a dream being achieved or not, the path shall shape you as a human being by creating great habits, character and values that transfer into so many facets of life. There is a "side-effect" of being a seeker of a dream that usually results in a great life regardless and you never know what that may be. Thus, always "dream" just don't be a "dreamer". Use dreams to guide you through your career and leave them at that.

If anyone thinks your dream is crazy and you don't feel an imminent urge to prove them wrong then your dream will most likely not be fulfilled. The bridge to your dream is filled with adversity, struggle, pain and sacrifice.

MILESTONES

Milestones is what bridges your dream to your goals. They are periodic achievements that guide your goals towards your dream. If you want to play in the NHL, some milestones may be.

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1) NHL | 24 years old |
| 2) D-1 college (don't pick a specific one) | 19 – 23 years old |
| 3) USHL | 18 – 19 years old |
| 4) NAHL | 17 – 18 years old |
| 5) 16AAA/18AAA | 16 – 17 years old |
| 6) Bears 14U Elite | 14 years old |

These are all milestones for a Bantam player who wants to play in the NHL. The difference between Milestones and Goals is that Milestones are not necessarily in your complete control as they are subject to selection by third parties (coaches, GM's, scouts etc.).



GOALS

Goals are very specific and measurable. They should be within arm's length and in your complete control. For example, you want to play in the NHL? Here is how you go about setting goals to get you on the right path.

- 1) Find an NHL player (or figure out what an average player performs at in that league) that plays the game like you, he should be within the projected size you will have and given the role's the you see yourself being the BEST at.
- 2) Break down that player and figure out what characterizes that player.
- 3) Figure out what shaped those characteristics within that player
- 4) Set goals that exceed what that player did to become who he is today.

If none of this information is available to you, talk to a coach who can break you down in pieces and lay out what you need to do athletically to optimize your games. Don't be unrealistic in your goal setting. Be a humble warrior where the goals are within reach but they don't kill your passion towards your dream in the process. It is not feasible to gain 50lbs in one year so that would be a bad goal.



MOTIVATOR

What drives your goals?

- 1) Are you motivated by the need for success or by the fear of failure?
- 2) Is your sense of achievement foremost the result of a contingent event (winning a trophy) or by habitual improvements (results from workout routine)?
- 3) Is your achievement greater a) when experienced internally, or b) when acknowledged by others?

I am sure you have multiple answers that are dependent on circumstances. That is not the point to evaluate the questions above. The intent is for you to acknowledge focus, which is the ability to set your mind on something without the influence of others detrimentally steering you away from reaching or exceeding a desired outcome. By creating goals and training to achieve them, you create habits where 15,000 screaming fans don't rattle your thoughts in a game or the headlines of a newspaper don't discourage you from moving on.

Your response should be focused on 1) need for success, 2) habitual improvements, 3) internal experiences. This will keep you on a straight path to success with less roller-coaster fluctuations with respect to motivation, dedication, desire and inspiration.



SELF-CONFIDENCE

One of the main topics discussed with players and parents is Self-Confidence. This is also the biggest misunderstanding by players and parents. We will segregate this into a) True Self-Confidence and, b) Fleeting Self-Confidence. They are not mutually exclusive but one-directional, I will explain more below.

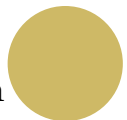
True Self-Confidence

It relies on mental and physical preparation alone. It is created by oneself entirely. It starts with a dream, is measured by goals and is instilled by consistent habits (repetitions). It is also modifiable as environments change and is guided by self-awareness (more on this shortly). This is only shaken by your performance against your own goals and the more tangible you make your performance the more focused you will be and the more in-control you will be.

Fleeting Self-Confidence

This is external boosters or inhibitors. Coach saying “good job” (booster) or a coach saying “what were you thinking there” (inhibitor). These verbal or non-verbal (a look of disdain = inhibitor etc.) will have a temporary (fleeting) affect on you but won’t shake your self-confidence. It may piss you off or make you feel great and BOTH create ENERGY which is all it is. What it can’t create is indifference or hopelessness which only happens if you don’t have goals for yourself. If fleeting self-confidence rules you, something will always get the best of you be it criticism by media, your GM, your teammate, parents or social media this is external and having true self-confidence will shake these off quickly and use all criticism as boosters. This is what mental strength truly is, the ability to take criticism and award and create action to build more self-confidence.

“you will find an excuse to quit anywhere, all you have to do is to give yourself one” – Peter Torsson



SELF-AWARENESS

This is THE most important component of success. It will change as you grow older and compete at higher levels. You will see first round draft picks in the NHL having a career as a “face-off guy”, a “penalty killer”, a “glue-guy” or something else that was not on his/her mind when they first started playing. Self-awareness identifies you and it makes you selectable. Always play to your strengths given the opportunity at hand. As you break barriers upwards in your career, the pressure and responsibility becomes greater, but your role will become smaller no matter who you are. This is because the game is so technical now and EVERYONE KNOWS HOW TO PLAY and do so very well. It is better to be great at something than good at everything sooner or later as this identifies who you are and builds trust with decision makers who ultimately determine whether you will get an opportunity or not. There are plenty of young studs who end up enjoying long careers because they did one thing well..... They changed!!.

Scott Upshall – #6 overall pick NHL, blocks-shot, forechecks and penalty kills (4th line) NHL.

Matt Hendrix – Mr. Hockey in Minnesota Youth and “glue guy” / “fighter” in NHL.

These players were selected based on talent but found success and a roster spot because they realized they needed to be great at something instead of good at everything. Should they not have done that, their careers would have ended sooner or they may not ever have broken an NHL roster. At the youth level, you should build a broad set of skills and what you ultimately become the best at should not be determined quite yet but it will be at some point if you are smart enough to do so (change) but for now you should know what this is, you should be realistic and build from self-awareness all the time. Most youth players completely ignore this and just play, these are the kids who will get lost, blame a coach or whatever else that does not matter and probably be right in their own mind but without a roster spot sooner rather than later.

GOALS VS. COMPETITION

The beauty of goals is that it drives competition and comparability with other players. At the end of the day, competition is what life is all about and the core of what wins in hockey. There are three categories of competition.

- 1) **Internal Competition** – this is where you compete with yourself every day. Goals will be a great motivator to push yourself harder every time you exercise. Passion, dedication, sacrifice are the impressions you leave behind by simply being who you are IF your internal competition is high. Some players are given this gift and some are not but it is 100% in your mind so everyone without a severe mental handicap are without excuses.
- 2) **External Competition** – this is where YOU as an individual compete against other individuals within one specific category that is tangible. For example, if we skate ladders the players who compete externally hate to not win every time we skate down that ice, they never give up and regard adversity as a challenge. Some players have this gift as well but it is also mental and within you control to care or not care about. Goals are important here as you can compare your results with peers while driving up the goals that relate to your internal competition.
- 3) **Team Competition** – this is the where you are NOT in direct control of the outcome. The best players here are the ones who not only have the best external and internal competitive attitude but also bring other players up to their peak levels of performance. Leadership, camaraderie, discipline and perseverance are key factors to keep this competitive level positive and constructive. Goals are important here as you can have direct conversations about cause and effect as a whole and find constructive solutions to the benefit of the team going forward instead of dwelling in the past.

INTERNAL COMPETITION

Goal setting in relation to internal competition is short-term and constantly evolving. They should be specific and timebound. For example, I lift 160 lbs in bench press today, I will lift 200 lbs within a year. Then create a training regiment to get there. Do this across categories and keep pushing yourself towards the goals. Be honest about failures and successes, communicate this journey with coaches and mentors periodically and re-evaluate your performance.

It is crucial that you write down your goals and keep track of your workouts to see where they are taking you. This will keep you motivated, focused and you gain self-control when conflicted with activities that steers you off your path.

Be reasonable in that the goals you set are attainable within a short timespan. Don't go further out than 1 year. Make sure to adjust for seasonal impacts. Thus, in-season, you probably don't lift as much as in the off-season. Maybe a goal is to maintain strength more than excelling in the middle of playoffs etc. Try to keep goals within a period of time. Hockey players usually have two seasons which is in-season and off-season. Goals should be set for either season and be completed at its conclusion. Don't span across seasons or into the following half-season. You will lose track and feel uninspired by time taking away the passion from the goal.



EXTERNAL COMPETITION

Always keep sportsmanship close to your heart when setting goals against your teammates. It is good to want to beat them, but don't beat them or yourself down in the process. Also, don't get caught up in subjective comparisons drawn from the impression of others opinions of who did the best.

Focus on tangibles like, for example, push ups. If your buddy does 15 push-ups and you did 13, get to work and do better than him next time. This is a tangible and measurable comparison that is completely in your control with the exception of your buddy doing more than you next time. Either way, it is constructive and non-subjective.

A bad example would be, Johnny scored 3 goals and Mike thinks he is better than me, I need to prove Mike that I am better than Johnny by scoring 4 goals. This is an example of a player who will have a roller coaster career influenced by the impression of others which is completely out of his control.

Most of these goals, however, are mental processing of reflections in relation to peers which happens each practice. If we skate ladders, do you care about beating everyone every time you go. Do you mind losing a 50/50 battle. Do you mind getting knocked off the puck. Do you mind that your shot is not as good as your peers etc. You don't have to write goals in relation to external competition down, however, they should motivate your efforts in practice constantly.




TEAM COMPETITION

“The best way to help improve your team is to improve yourself”

Teams like players who have great internal and external competition. Usually that translates into improving team competition. However, this correlation is not perfect because of some players lacking discipline. Player who have a problem balancing the internal and external competition with sportsmanship and camaraderie often fail to bring a team to its optimal performance and is usually impacting their respective teams in the opposite direction.

Team competition depends on each players ability to provide synergy. Synergy is when two or more players work more efficiently together than apart. This translates directly into how scouting works. ***Scouts will LIKE internally and externally competitive players, but they will PICK players who can contribute to the team being competitive first.***

Teams set goals and milestones each season to focus each member on one common task. This is where your own personal goals are important to contribute to the overall goal. They could be at conflict, however, where you set goals that are guiding natural execution. For example, try to avoid setting goals that include getting points as they would distort your judgment during a game and allow things out of your control to reflect on how well you are doing. Through history, teams with the best point-makers rarely win league titles at the highest level.



GOALS VS. SCOUTS

Off the ice is the best place to continuously set goals and achieve them. Many programs at the Junior and D-1 level “test” player and it is something every player will be measured by at some point. You should set goals and achieve them across categories in off-ice training all the time. For example, here are some generic and great goals;

Endurance Example

Run 400 meters 6 times with 2 minutes of rest between each set. Take the average, lets say its 1 minute flat. Now set a goal that in 6 months, you are going to do that in 50 seconds on average.

Resistance Example

Lift your own body weight as many times as you can without breaking form. Let’s say its 12 times. Set the goal that by the end of the year, you should be at 25 repetitions.

On-Ice Example

- 1) Take a speed-gun and shoot a slap shot from the blue line. Take your MPH and increase it by 10MPH by the end of the year.
- 2) Skate one full lap, take the time and set the goal to decrease your time by 3 seconds by the end of the season.

Setting goals helps you to “be your own motivator” and take responsibility for your own actions. When scouts ask you, “tell me about yourself?” you can answer that question in reference to your goals and come off sounding mature, focused, motivated, dedicates and with leadership qualities all at once by simple referring to your every day life. That is because you live the life of a hockey player already. This is what we do at the Bears.

MATERIAL

Setting Goals – Watch (ignore the promotional aspect of it, very helpful short video)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UnrNwIs6Gu0&feature=related>

[Goal Setting, Profiling, Confidence , Motivation \(Real Player Link\)](#)

Dreams – Watch

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V6xLYt265ZM>

[How Great I Am \(Real Player Link\)](#)

How Bad Do You Want It?

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lsSC2vx7zFQ>

[How Bad Do You Want It \(Real Player Link\)](#)

Don't Let Them Stop Your From Achieving Your Dreams!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hZBCI13rJmA>

[Achieve Your Dreams \(Real Player Link\)](#)

READ “Mind Gym” by – Gary Mack. Available at www.amazon.com

