

# Reverse Engineering Your Goals

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## What's This Exercise About?

Let's review the formula:

Values → Vision → **Goals** → Actions

Values support the vision; the vision determines the goals; the goals dictate the actions.

This exercise is designed to help you **reverse engineer** your vision and break it down into specific, measurable, actionable, relevant, and time-limited (SMART) **goals**.

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## What You'll Need

To complete this exercise you'll need:

- Your answers to the Vision Clarity exercise/worksheet
- Pens in two different colors (I find blue and red work best)
- Calendar
- Scratch paper

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## How to Do This Exercise

1. Get comfortable and turn off the phone. It's best to reserve at least an hour for Part I. Part II can take a few hours or a few days, depending totally on the complexity of your goals.
2. When you're ready, begin to work through the exercise by answering the questions on the following pages in the space provided. You'll need to refer back to the completed Vision Clarity worksheet from time to time, at least at first.
3. After you've completed Part I: The Interview, take a break. You may even want to tackle Part II the next day.
4. Begin Part II by reviewing what you wrote during Part I. Then take the second pen and underline or circle key words/phrases that might be potential goals.

Those keywords/keyphrases are what I call “goal seeds” -- the kernels that will grow into your goals.

5. After you've gone through all of Part I, circling or underlining your goal seeds, list those words on page 8 of the worksheet.
6. Proceed to Part III to create your goals and make sure they're SMART.

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## Tips

This exercise is going to take some time and focused effort, but the payoff is a clear, actionable road map to your vision for your business+life.

Set aside a few hours to work through Part I. Plan to take a significant break before you go on to Part II -- not just to give your tired brain a break but also because Part II requires a different kind of thinking than Part I. See, Part I's all about creativity and conscious dreaming; Part II's about picking things apart and figuring out how one thing leads to another.

**A note about the framework of the exercise:** When I first started developing this exercise with coaching clients, I was surprised to get some pushback on the whole “Oprah” thing.

“But I’m not looking to become Oprah-famous,” one client protested. “I know my definition of success, and my vision would just not interest Oprah. It interests me, though...”

OK, that’s totally valid. And I have three totally awesome responses:

1. **Give it a try anyway.** It’s imagination. Made-up. Fantasy. It’s just a fun way to help you dig deep and get at what’s inside you that you need to bring out into the world in order to build your vision.
2. **Oprah loves the “everywoman” success story.** Yes, she interviews celebrities but she also features everyday people who make a difference in the world, who conquer obstacles and build successful lives. Is it really that far out of the realm of possibility? Think carefully before you answer that question.
3. **If it really bugs you, think smaller.** Substitute some random reporter or freelancer for a specialized trade publication for Oprah. Yes, you can do that. It’s just make-believe, after all.

But I really hope you give poor Oprah a chance ...

# Part I: The Interview

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## The Setup

Congratulations! It only took you five years, and it's happened, finally.

You have hit the Big Time.

And by "Big," of course, I mean Oprah.

You're about to be interviewed by Oprah herself, for her brand new show *Living the Dream: Learning From the Masters*. (OK, seriously, I should totally pitch that to OWN.)

You've been through wardrobe and makeup. You met Stedman, petted Sadie, said "howdy" to Gayle. You're sitting in a ridiculously comfortable chair on the set, waiting to start. You're nervous but it's a good kind of nervous - lots of energy. You feel good. You feel *ready*.

Oprah sits down, shakes your hand and whispers "Love your work, really" ... there's some bald guy counting backwards from five ... and then ...

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## The Interview

Oprah begins the introduction to the interview, speaking directly to one of the many cameras trained on her:

"All of us - *all* of us - have, at one time or another, faced obstacles in our journey to achieving a dream. But some of us have, through focused effort, courage, and belief in ourselves, conquered those obstacles in a truly inspiring way. A way that, *I* believe, we can all learn from. That's what this show is about - a chance to learn from those who have achieved *their* dreams how they got from point A to point B. And my guest for this episode is a prime example of that determination and commitment to excellence."

She turns to you and says, "Welcome ..."

You exchange greetings and Oprah jumps right in, recounting the highlights of your success ...

**How does she describe the success that five-years-from-now you has achieved? Write it out like a script, right here:**

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You nod sagely, and say, "Yes, Oprah, it has truly been a remarkable journey."  
She nods and says, "But it wasn't always this way ... Just five years ago, you ..."

**How does Oprah describe present-you and your life/business now? Write the script:**

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Oprah says, "So what I want to know ... what I imagine everyone who's watching this wants to know is ... *how?* How did you get from there to here?"

You think for a moment and begin to describe the big picture of your journey to achieving your vision. The key points. The big stepping stones. The story of your success. You say, thoughtfully ...

**What do you tell Oprah? Write your response here:**

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# Part III: SMART Goals

Look back at your list from Part II (p. 8), and then take a stab at transforming these goal seeds into actual goals below.

Remember to use active verbs wherever possible to make sure they're actually do-able goals.

**NOTE:** If you need a refresher course in SMART goals, [re-read this post](#). And if you need more space, print off as many copies of page 10 as you need!

## A. Turning Seeds Into Goals

**GOAL SEED**



**SMART GOAL**

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Now we're going to finalize those goals you wrote down in III.A, by running through a brief SMART checklist and assigning a deadline to each one. Ready?

### **Instructions**

1. On scrap paper, write each goal down. Use active verbs wherever possible.
2. Run through the SMART checklist below for each goal. Make whatever revisions you think are appropriate based on your checklist results.
3. When you're satisfied the goal meets the SMART test, write it down on page 12. (Make extra copies of p. 12 if you need more space!)
4. Give it a deadline (use a calendar if you need to) for each goal. Remember this just a *tentative* deadline. When you create your tasks list for this goal, you may find you'll need more time to accomplish each step. Make your best guess here, and then move on. You can totally change it later.

Capisce? Sweet! Onward..

### **The SMART Checklist**

- Is this goal **specific**?
- Is this goal capable of being **measured**? Will you be able to tell *objectively* when you've reached it?
- Is this goal **actionable**? Can you actually take steps yourself to get there?
- Is this goal **relevant** to your overall vision and consistent with your values?
- Time-limit** each goal by assigning a deadline to it.

**GOAL:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**DEADLINE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**GOAL:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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**DEADLINE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**GOAL:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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**DEADLINE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**GOAL:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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**DEADLINE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**GOAL:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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**DEADLINE:** \_\_\_\_\_