

How Many Goals Should You Set?

The title of this post is a great question and the answer is ...

It depends.

Actually, there are, I believe, two answers that may seem in disagreement at first, but I hope they will be clearer to you in the time it takes you to read this short post.

First, I believe, and the research I've read supports it, that we need a limited list of current and most important goals. We need a *short* list of 3, 6 and/or 12 month goals — these are important goals to move us forward in the various areas of our lives. Since our brains can only focus on a certain number of things anyway, having this short list is important — a short list allows us to take daily or regular action in pursuit of them and stay focused on what is most important.

And ...

I believe we need a big lifetime list too.

This idea became popular with the movie *The Bucket List*. In this movie, if you haven't seen it, two terminally ill men escape from a cancer ward and head off on a road trip with a wish list of to-dos before they die. This isn't exactly what I mean, but it is close.

Too often, people speak of a Bucket List as a list of things they want to do "someday" — while in the movie Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman *do* take action — they waited until they were terminally ill before they started!

The bigger life list of goals may include specific things to do (like take my Mom to the Kentucky Derby) and also bigger items on your life-course. I suggest you sit down and write your life goal list. Think big and let your mind go. Write down your heart's desires. Then look at the list regularly — this review allows you to shape and add to the list, but also gets your subconscious working on them in ways you couldn't imagine consciously.

Then as you are adding or updating your shorter goal list, consult this big list. If you don't ever move items from the big list to the shorter term, the list is of less value and is truly only a wish list.

How many goals should you have?

As many as you want. But keep your focus on a few meaningful ones at any given time. With this dual-goal approach you will achieve more of them faster than with any other method.

To learn more about achieving the goals you set, check out this [powerful recording](#) of a teleseminar I led.