Goal-Setting Check-In

The early part of the school year is a great time to do a goals check-in—to set some new goals OR to re-energize and refocus on previously defined goals. Whether for academic or personal growth, goal-setting is a valuable process that will benefit you throughout your life.

Setting and achieving goals can be tedious, even intimidating for some students. Following is a clear step-by-step process—a slight variation from goal-setting you learned at SuperCamp—that could help you set some goals (or one big goal!) and stay focused on achieving them.

Here are the basics . . .

- Pick it
- Map it
- Do it
- Own it
- Celebrate it

Pick It
When we pick our goals we want to make sure they’re important and meaningful—something we really want to achieve in our lives. Our passions and dreams are the real motivators—the things we want deep down. When we act from these motivations, nothing stops us. We look at any problems we encounter as bumps in the road—we deal with them and move on.

In picking our goals, we ask ourselves . . . What motivates me? What would inspire me to give my best effort? What would make me feel good while I’m doing it? What achievement would make me feel proud?

Map It
After we pick our goal, we map the path from where we are now to where we want to be, from who we are now to who we want to be, from what we’re achieving now to what we want to achieve. If we want to drive across the country from New York to California, we don’t just get in our car and start driving, thinking we know how to get to California. We get a map, decide which route to take, and follow it until we get to California.

We’re much more likely to get there if we do the same with any other goal—we analyze different ways to reach our goal and we choose the path that works best for us. Then we define clear steps—as many as it takes—that will lead to our goal. As we achieve each step, these mini-successes build our confidence, remotivate and re-energize us . . . Wow, I did it—now I can move on to the next step! Whether it’s increased training time for a marathon or a higher test grade in a tough subject, each step achieved in our Map-It process is a win on the path to our final goal—finishing that marathon or getting that A!

Do It
Once we’ve mapped the path to our goal, we take action! We focus on that first step and give it our best effort! We stay aware that no dream ever comes true, no obstacle is ever overcome, no goal is ever reached without focused action. Once we take action and start achieving those mini-successes there’s no holding us back. We’re fired up, we’re flexible, we’re creative, and we do whatever it takes to achieve each step on the path to our goal.
Own It
As we progress toward our goal, we own it—we take full responsibility for making it happen. We know—and keep reminding ourselves—that if it’s to be, it’s up to me!

We periodically take time for reflection . . . How am I doing? What’s working? What’s not working? What can I change to get to my goal? And as we reflect on our progress, we analyze possible changes and adjust our “map” wherever necessary.

One of the basics of achieving our goals is to keep a positive attitude! Those little bumps along the road don’t stop us, nor do we blame anyone when we encounter them—we own our mistakes as well as our successes. We stay flexible and come up with a plan to move around or over them. If something comes along that holds us back temporarily—or even something that we might consider a failure—we look at it as feedback that provides us with information we need to succeed. We learn from our mistakes and move on with new and valuable knowledge!

When we refocus on what we’ve achieved and the successes that are around the corner, we move forward with renewed energy and enthusiasm.

Celebrate It
Acknowledgment and celebration are a huge part of achieving goals. And your parents and teachers can play a valuable role in your path to achieving your goals, so get them all involved in every step along the way.

It’s vital to remember that acknowledgment and celebration are not simply about achievement of the “big” goal. They’re about effort and progress—when we ourselves or our parents or teachers acknowledge every effort and celebrate every mini-success along the way, we build confidence and motivation. We feel good about ourselves and get to know that if we persevere we will achieve another mini-success, and finally achieve our goal!

Success is inevitable when we believe in ourselves and in our ability to achieve and succeed!

“Reach high, for stars lie hidden in you.
Dream deep, for every dream precedes the goal.”
— Rabindranath Tagore