Goal For It
by **Lou Stoops**

The reason so many folk fail to achieve in life is found in their adamant refusal to goal for it! Aimlessly wandering down what they hope to be Primrose Lane, they miss the abundant opportunities that are present all along the way. These poor people hide behind a myriad of excuses in an attempt to divert the spotlight of attention from their lackluster performances. They run from goals because to do otherwise would require work. Consider some of the lame rationalizations that are often noted:

"It's _____ fault that I can't get ahead in life."
"I can't; _____ doesn't want me to succeed."
"I can't; I don't have the (time, money, education, intelligence)."
"I can't; I'm the wrong (sex, color, size, age)."
"If I do that, I'll lose _____."
"I could, if only I had _____."
"I could, if only I hadn't _____."
"I know my limitations."

Dr. Bobbie Sommer and Mark Falstein, in their book, Psycho-Cybernetics 2000 refer to this as "the intrapsychic dialog that keep us immobile." It's true; if you want to build a case for your failures, you certainly can! The question is, why would you want to?

Instead of making excuses for not pursuing achievement, why not just goal for it? Set down and begin to dream. What is it that you'd love to achieve with your life? What do you want to be remembered for? If you could do anything you wanted, and knew you couldn't fail, what would it be? What are your skills, natural talents, passions?

Spend a few moments doing some creative self-assessment. How has God built you that is so unique? As a result of answering all these questions, you'll have a better idea of just what it is you should goal for.

Once you understand yourself and the direction you should be taking, establish SMART goals to get your there.

SMART is an acronym that illustrates the process for goal setting that is most likely to produce positive results. Here's how it works:

S-pecific
M-easurable
A-ction Oriented
R-ealistic
T-ime Conscious

Specific
Want to lose weight? Not good enough! How much weight do you want to lose? Be specific. A goal must have a clear destination to become a positive reality.

Measurable
What, when, where? These words help you measure. Without being able to measure a goal, how would you know what's needed to arrive at the destination?

A measurable goal is a goal more likely to be reached. By being measurable, you'll know what needs to be done monthly, weekly, and daily, to get where you want to go.

Action
Every goal needs an action plan. Every action plan should consist of the following:

1. Identify and write your goal down.

2. When are you wanting to achieve your goals? Write it down.

3. What could get in the way? Are there obstacles that are hindering you from possible achievement?

4. Get with "birds of a feather". When you surround yourself with positive people who want to go in the same direction as you, you'll be encouraged and thus less likely to give up.

5. Develop your skills. You can never have enough abilities and most things can be learned. Start where you are and develop from there.

6. Follow your plan. Plans and programs don't work; people do!
   Remind yourself of the benefit. We are more likely to stay on course when we stay focused upon the positive outcome we desire.

Realistic
I've always wanted to sing like Mario Lanza or Pavarotti but I sound more like a man caught in the gears of a giant clockworks. It wouldn't be realistic of me to set a goal of being a great tenor; it's just not going to happen. I could practice everyday for a thousand years and it just wouldn't happen.

Realistically, I could set a goal to sing in a more technically correct way; learning breathing technique, enunciation and how to read music. This I could do.

Time Conscious
To goal for it requires time. Start now and complete then:_____.

The SMART approach offers a roadmap to reaching your achievement destinations. A thousand mile journey begins with the first step. If you want to go somewhere, stop making excuses, stop blaming others, start doing. Goal for it!