



Go For The Goals You Control

Often when we fail to achieve a goal, it's not because we lack talent, ability or hard work. The problem may be the goal itself, as there are times when success or failure is out of our control. For example, let's say you aspire to win a poetry contest. You could write something absolutely beautiful, but so might another contestant. If that person wins, it's not because you've done something wrong or because of something you lack. It's because there can only be one winner, and the other contestant did something really well, totally independent of you.

There are two kinds of goals: Personal Outcomes & Personal Performances. Outcomes are results that compare you to others, such as winning a contest, getting a certain number of votes, or a certain kind of recognition. Outcomes require the acknowledgement and/or participation of others. Action is required that you can't control. Personal Performances are measurements of your own effort, completely independent of outside evaluation or comparison. Performances have nothing to do with anyone else. They are all about you, and are within your complete control.

For example, an outcome goal might be to win a 10K. Your success is based on how fast other people run – something you can't control. A performance goal might be to complete the race within a certain time frame, without focus on how your time measures up to others.

Concentrating on what we can control protects us from the jealousy, insecurity and intimidation that hold us back. When we free ourselves of those worries, our performance actually improves. During the 2002 winter Olympics, Michelle Kwan was the favorite to win the gold medal in women's figure skating. This was an outcome goal, as she could not control how others skated. With this goal came significant pressure, which affected her skating. Sarah Hughes, however, never thought about the medal. She was just grateful to be competing at all, and during interviews, she said all she wanted to do was skate the best she could. This was a personal performance goal – as she wasn't concerned with how she compared to others. She just wanted to skate well. This mentality gave her the mental freedom to give a gold-medal performance.

Your control is limited to your own talent and ability. It will do you no good to aspire to out-win, out-last or out-perform others. Instead, shoot for your personal best. Limit your efforts to what you can control within you and don't worry about anyone else. Do that, and pretty soon you will, in fact, skate right by the competition.

Motivational speaker Scott Greenberg gives live presentations and workshops all over America. For more information on his programs or leadership books, call 1-800-450-0432 or visit www.scottgreenberg.com.