How to Achieve Your Goals

Create a Path to Success
Welcome to "How to Achieve Your Goals and Create a Path to Success." I am so excited that you’re here! This is an amazing journey we’re about to embark on together.

I’m Aby Garvey author of this curriculum. I am a business owner, manager, and mom just like many of you. Throughout this course you will hear my stories as I share my personal journey and life lessons about setting and achieving goals.

The focus of this training will be to walk you through a process of capturing your hopes for the future of your child care program and any dreams you have for yourself as an individual. You’ll put those hopes and dreams onto paper and map a path of action that leads to success.

I hope this class is the first step in a lifelong journey. You’ll learn powerful yet simple techniques to accomplish goals and take steps in the direction of creating a child care program you’ll truly love. I hope you get “addicted” to goal setting and make it a part of your everyday life.

Make The Most Of This Training

Before we get started, here are some suggestions to make your experience even more rewarding.

Read the student policy packet, it has great tips to help you be successful in the course. The packet will show you the ins and outs of using the Eager to Learn system, including the chat feature, discussion board, and communication expectations. Then, come right back here and dig into Module 1.

Use the online chat sessions and discussion boards! You have a rare opportunity right now. Every single other person in this training is working on creating a child care program and life they love, too. What a wonderful chance to share your goals, challenges, victories, fears and ideas with someone who totally gets where you are…because he/she’s there, too! Take advantage of the community and use it to motivate and inspire you to create a child care setting you love! We’re all on the journey together.
Introduction

I’m really not sure when I learned about goals or started setting them. It feels as if goal setting has been a part of my life forever, though I know that isn’t at all true. My parents weren’t goal setters. At least if they were, they never shared their goals with me or my brother and sister. So…when did goals become such a big part of my life? I’m really not sure. But it’s one of those things like having kids…you really can’t remember what your life was like before they came into your life.

What I know for sure about goals is this: goals give my life greater purpose and meaning. Even the goals I have not yet achieved. I am far happier when I am working on a goal. It’s quite surprising really, and probably hard to believe if you haven’t experienced it for yourself, but the process of dreaming and deciding what you want can make you happy even before your dream becomes a reality.

It’s fitting that I’d start a goals training by sharing with you my goals for you—what I hope you will learn by taking this course. My first goal is that you feel inspired and empowered to really go after what you want. Setting goals and creating a work environment and life you love is a journey. You don’t just proclaim what you want and then poof, there it is. I realize you know this already, or you wouldn’t have signed up for this training. You would already be perfectly happy with the work you do and be living a life that is exactly as you want it to be.

While you’re reading this material, it is easy to accept that there is a delay between deciding on your goals and achieving them. The trick, my friends, is to remember this when you’re working on your goals. Expect bumps. Expect setbacks. Expect to feel discomfort. Bumps, set backs and discomfort are signs of progress…not failure. When you know this and embrace it up front, it is much easier to let yourself dream big dreams and go for what you truly want.

I have many other goals for you during this training. I’ll share these as we go along. But for now my biggest goal for you is this: let yourself dream.
Training Overview

Alright...let’s take a quick look at the journey ahead. As you know, this training is broken down into four modules each of which will be a building block in the process of setting and achieving your goals. Each module will span a one week time frame.

During the first module, your goal is to dream. I will share with you a number of techniques to get those dreams out of your head and heart and down onto paper. Be sure to stop reading and take action by doing the exercises and writing down your dreams. The action steps for each module are easy and fun to do, and easy to find in the handout area of your online classroom. Whenever it’s time to stop and take action, you’ll see a stop sign in the handout, followed by the action steps to take. So all you have to do is stop…and take action!

In Module 1, you’ll create a really long list of dreams. Then, in Module 2 we will take that list of dreams and decide a first goal or set of goals to tackle. We’ll also talk about the difference between goals and dreams. Plus, you’ll learn how to make your goals tangible and compelling.

Module 3 is all about taking action. During this module you won’t just learn how to take action on your goals…you’ll start doing it! You’ll learn how to take those big goals and break them down into simple action steps. Plus, you’ll tap into your past successes to give you confidence to move forward, even if the goal you’re going after is so big it scares you!

Our final module will help you stay motivated as you continue making progress on your goals. I’ll share ideas for how to track your goals, stay accountable and celebrate your achievements! I hope you enjoy the amazing journey ahead…and create a business you love!
Module 1: Dream about a life you’ll love

As I am writing this introduction, an interesting thing is happening in my	household. My children are proving to me something I already knew: kids
naturally know how to dream. As I write, my children are dreaming of living
in the HGTV dream home. They picture us living there. They are deciding
where my office will be, where my husband Jay’s office will be, and how
they’ll redecorate their room so it will fit what they’re into right now. The
kids are figuring out how to transport fish and dogs across the country.
They’re deciding which pieces of furniture we’ll take with us, and which
ones we will sell—both in our old home and in our new one. They’re going
through their personal belongings and purging things…in an effort to help
fund the tax bill we’ll have as a result of winning this two million dollar prize.
As I write, there are literally three boxes filled with belongings my kids are
donating to the cause. My home is starting to look as if we are getting
ready to move, and my kids are most certainly “acting as if” we are going to
move.

See, kids naturally know how to dream. Most adults, however, at least the
ones I know, have forgotten how. And I put myself in that same boat. As
much as I know all the steps that I see my kids taking are the right things to
do—act as if it’s already happened, picture it in your mind, give yourself
visual reminders of the goal you want to achieve—I am constantly having
to fight off my parental instinct to protect us all from harm.

The chances of winning this dream home are very slim. My rational mind
knows this and I don’t want my kids to be disappointed. But if I squelch
this…I squelch something bigger—their natural instinct to dream.

In my own life, somewhere between dreaming of becoming a princess and
going to college to become a packaging engineer, I forgot how to dream. I
learned to play it safe and do what was responsible. I learned that I’m good
at science and math, so I should be an engineer. And so, an engineer I
became.

To be fair, I really didn’t want to be a princess. But I also didn’t want to be a
packaging engineer. I wanted to be a business owner. I remember chatting
with friends while still in college—still on the path to engineering
purgatory—sharing my real dream, to open a store called “Aby’s Attic.” It
was to be a quaint little gift shop loaded with all sorts of charming and
antique home décor items. And it would be in a resort town…maybe
somewhere like Martha’s Vineyard or Traverse City, Michigan.
Luckily, somewhere along the way I learned to dream again and created what is now a dream business for me and Jay. In essence “Aby’s Attic” transformed into a form of Aby’s Attic Organizing Services, more accurately known as simplify 101. What started as a dream, became a goal, and now is a life that I genuinely love. Is my life perfect? Heavens no. But it’s getting better every single day, in a large part because I figured out how to dream again.

By taking this training, you will remember how to dream, too. Before we begin the process of pulling those dreams out of you, here are a couple of things to keep in mind. First, there is a difference between goals and dreams. It’s not terribly important at this point in the process that we understand the difference; I’ll share more about that in Week 2. The important thing now is that you let yourself dream. Let yourself figure out what you want out of being a child care provider as well as in other areas of your life, even if it feels a bit scary. Regardless of what you call it: a goal, a dream or something else altogether, your job right here and now is to let yourself want what you want.

Throughout the text, I refer to dreaming “big.” Keep in mind that big is a relative term. Bill Gates’ big dream was for every home to have a computer. It would be hard to argue that was anything other than a big dream. Your dream doesn’t have to be BIG in size. The goal is to make it big in terms of its significance to you. Your dream may be to become a more patient caregiver/teacher. This is big because it matters to you, your program and the children you care for—people who are significant in your world. So if the term big gets you hung up, think big in terms of importance and significance. What dream really matters to you? That’s what we’re going after this week.

As you think about your work related dreams, consider the different aspects of your job as a child care provider. Areas to consider:

- Health and Safety
- Play and learning experiences
- Environment
- Relationships and communication
- Guidance and interaction
- Business practices
- Knowledge and education

If you find yourself dreaming about your work life but can’t seem to paint a clear picture of the future, be sure to draw on some of the helpful discovery tools available through Child Care Aware® of North Dakota www.ndchildcare.org.

“One of the main reasons people don’t get what they want is they haven’t decided what they want.”

- Jack Canfield
They can help you reflect on where you are and allow you to compare your work or what’s happening in your program against what scientist and researchers say is simply good for children. Here are a few tools you might use:

- Self assessment tools
- Parent surveys
- Staff surveys
- Rating scales

To learn more about these tools contact Child Care Aware® of North Dakota.

Finally, it is very possible that you signed up for this training because you have in mind a specific goal that you want to achieve and you’re looking for ideas to make it happen. If that’s the case, Module 1 may not feel relevant to you. But I’d like to encourage you to go through the process anyway. If the goal you have in mind is to organize your toy storage, for example, you may discover along the way that you are craving an environment makeover and didn’t even realize it. These two goals may complement each other, if your newly found environment makeover also addresses how your toys are stored and organized, for example. Additionally, the exercises in this module will help you uncover other goals you may like to pursue after achieving your first one.

Rules of Engagement

The rest of the module is all about you. (Thank goodness, right?) ;) Here are some tips to help you make the most of the module and allow yourself to dream BIG.

Have Fun!

Sure, setting goals is serious stuff—it’s about your career, business, and life after all. But don’t take it too seriously. It is about life…but it isn’t life or death.

Turn Off Your Inner Critic

We all have an inner critic, that little voice that jumps in and says something discouraging like “You should just be happy with what you have” the instant you let yourself want something different. Let’s make a deal. Let’s send that little grouch on permanent vacation, OK? Now, if your naysayer is anything like mine, she’s not going to go away without a fight. The trick is to tell her to get lost each and every time she rears her ugly little voice. Tell her, in no uncertain terms, that you’re very sorry but this time you’re just not interested in her opinion. (And mean it.)
Let the Dreaming Begin

Is this content helpful? If so, register for the full course. You’ll get the complete Module 1 along with 3 other inspiring lessons from Aby Garvey.