



Values-based Goal Setting

(Adapted from Russ Harris, Ph.D.)

A key focus in ACT is setting our goals guided by our values. Before any goal setting, let's clarify what value(s) is (are) underlying your goals.

Step 1: Write out the guiding value(s):

Use "SMART" Goals"

- **Specific:** specify the actions you will take, when and where you will do so, and who or what is involved. Example of a vague or non-specific goal: "I will spend more time with my kids." A specific goal: "I will take the kids to the park on Saturday to ride bikes".
- **Meaningful:** The goal should be personally meaningful to you. If it is genuinely guided by your values, as opposed to following a rigid rule, or trying to please others, or trying to avoid some pain, then it will be meaningful. If it lacks a sense of meaning or purpose, check in and see if it is really guided by your values.
- **Adaptive:** Does the goal help you to take your life **forwards** in a direction that, as far as you can predict, is likely to improve the quality of that life?
- **Realistic:** The goal should be realistically achievable. Take into account your health, competing demands on your time, financial status, and whether you have the skills to achieve it. Maybe renting a private jet to see family isn't realistic but setting up a group Zoom call is.
- **Time-bound:** set a day, date and time for it. If this is not possible, set as accurate a time limit as you can. Also, try setting a "By When" date. When does this action HAVE to be done by? Make a commitment to get it done by that date.



Values-based Goal Setting cont.

Step 2: Write down a graduated series of goals, starting from tiny, simple, immediate goals to long term goals that may not be achieved for months or longer. The timeline of goals can be changed to reflect issues related to a cancer diagnosis. For some people, it helps to set goals years ahead, for others, that is less helpful. Trust your gut on this one.

An Immediate Goal (something small, simple, easy, I can do in the next 24 hours):

Short Term Goals (things I can do over the next few days):

Medium Term Goal(s) (things I can do over the next few weeks):

Long Term Goal(s) (things I can do over the next few months and/or years):

