

Sample essay on goal theory related to short and long term goals

[Psychology](#), [Success](#)



Abstract

Long-term goals are more easily achieved when we create stepping stones of short-term goals that put us on the correct path. These short-term goals can help us track our progress and give us the tools we need to increase our knowledge and skill set. With these personal developments, we will have the instruments required to reach the next step towards our long-term goals and ultimately help us achieve our life's dreams.

It is important to know what motivates us towards these personal goals. Is it something we want for ourselves or something we feel pressured to achieve? Is it something that focuses on improving our well-being, others, and our community? Or is it a goal focused on greed, material objects, and shallow visions? We can also determine how we focus our goals based on the “ need” the goal fixes. Research on the relationship between our goals and the success of reaching them, the goal's affect on our overall well-being, and how we can increase our ability to reach these goals, can be helpful in accessing whether our goals are worthwhile and achievable.

Goals can be categorized as short-term or long-term, depending on the amount of time and dedication it may take to achieve the desired outcome. Three goals I hope to achieve in the near future are to pass my driving test and be awarded a driver's license, complete my Psychology degree, and to lose 5-7 kg weight. Long-term goals of mine would be to buy my dream car, to engage in a regular exercise regimen, and to be employed by a non-profit helping special needs children, the elderly, or disabled.

Comparing my short-term and long-term goals, it is easy to see a correlation in my desire to become fit and stay healthy. I would like to lose weight within

the year, but it is my intent to continue this active and healthy behavior so that it becomes a habit that I incorporate in to my life for years to come. In order to achieve my life long dream of owning my dream car and having the pleasure of driving it, I have to pass my driving test. To have the income necessary to purchase my dream car, I will need to become financially stable, which also ties into my third short and long term goals. By passing my exams and completing my Psychology degree, I can then focus on developing my career helping people and in the process, save money to purchase my dream vehicle.

You can see that short-term goals can act as stepping stones towards your long-term goals. Any dream you could hope to achieve can be broken up into smaller, achievable goals. The key is to make sure they are achievable. This can make your dream feel within reach and help you track your progress. A strong motivator for reaching goals is to have a personal connection to them. For me, I have a personal desire to stay fit, as I know how important it is to stay healthy. Physical activity is not only beneficial for your body, but it reduces stress, fights depression, helps clear your mind, and improves your mood. Owning my dream car is significant to me because it's something I've dreamt of owning for a long time. When I reach the point of financial freedom and finally being able to afford it, this car will be a symbol of my success and years of hard work. It's something I can take for a drive and feel as though I'm instantly free and on vacation. Psychology is a subject that greatly interests me and I would love to have a job in this field that involves helping people and making a difference in my community. Luckily, Psychology is a field that can be used in the non-profit sector and having a

degree would open many opportunities for me.

Extrinsic goals are those dealing with the superficial such as wealth, material objects, social standing, and outward appearances. While some may say my goal of physical fitness is extrinsic, my motivation isn't based solely on improving my appearance. I am interested in improving my health and longevity. Owning my dream car is an extrinsic goal, as a flashy vehicle serves no purpose other than a status symbol. My long-term career goal would be categorized as intrinsic, or being focused on self-improvement and helping community. We know through research reported by Schmuck, Kasser, & Ryan (1999) that working towards intrinsic goals improves our outlook on life.

Fulfilling our desires gives us a sense of accomplishment (Vitranò, 2010). This satisfaction is a basis for happiness. So while the goal of purchasing my dream car is extrinsic, it would fulfill a personal desire of mine and the fruition of owning this vehicle would give me a sense of accomplishment and happiness. So you can't fully discredit extrinsic goals as having no purpose. Though, happiness is objective and many feel can't be achieved through mere satisfaction and that you must be in a specific mental state, or that your life must meet basic moral standards. "A person's happiness is proportional to how positively she views her life; the more favorable her impression, the happier she is (Vitranò, 2010, p. 53)." If I am feeling unsatisfied in my career or unhappy with my current relationships, owning this car will not magically make me happy.

Controlled goals may be something we feel pressured to achieve, where as autonomous goals are those we have self-interest in completing. I feel my

goals are all autonomous, though the need for a Psychology degree is something that was defined as a requirement by outside forces. I do have personal interest in my Psychology classes and enjoy learning more on the subject, but the need for an actual degree is more of a controlled objective. According to Koestner, Otis, Powers, et al. (2008), goals were realized if they were motivated by personal interest. I feel that I have enough personal interest in the field of Psychology to have a positive outcome with gaining my degree. In conducting a study on 214 undergraduate students, Brunet, Gunnell, Gaudreeau, et al. (2015) found that students with academic goals had higher grades when their motivation was autonomous. Having self-interest in physical fitness was also important in following through with the goal of physical activity.

Sheldon & Houser-Marko (2015) hypothesized that there would be a link between goal achievement and ego development. They had 114 participants complete their study and they found “freshmen who do well in their self-generated goals (who likely are pursuing more self-concordant goals thereby achieve relatively more consolidated identities, especially in the domain of vocational or occupational choices (p. 160.)” This means that by achieving good grades and reaching the goal of obtaining my Psychology degree, I will have more self-confidence moving forward with my career goals. You could even say that the satisfaction of achieving one goal becomes a motivator for moving on and successfully completing the next goal at hand.

Our goals can also be organized in a hierarchy, with our basic physical needs being at the base, and our mental and emotional needs following (Rouse, 2004). If I applied this hierarchy to my personal goals, the goal of obtaining

my Psychology degree and starting my career would be the most significant priority, as this would pave the way to financing my physiological and safety needs. My fitness goals would be next and would help address the need for self-esteem. The last goal to take priority would be to own my dream car, which isn't a "need" and is more of a want. Maslow's theory is helpful in determining where I should focus my attention.

In reviewing the research, it has helped me evaluate my own personal goals. I feel that I may want to put my focus on finishing my Psychology degree and not concerning myself with the goal of purchasing my dream car. It will still be important for me to pass my driving test and get my drivers license. Having a driver's license is necessary for me to be able to drive to and from work as well as other obligations, but the type of vehicle I drive will hold little influence to the important things in life. Should I reach financial freedom, I can then re-evaluate my goals and perhaps it would make sense at that time to consider purchasing my dream car. Fitness will still be a short and long-term goal of mine. I believe that this will improve my life, health, and mental focus. Having the short-term goal of losing weight will get me on the track of learning healthy eating habits and incorporating physical activities in my every day routine. These behaviors will make it easier to reach my long-term goal of maintaining my health and having a regular fitness regimen.

Works Cited

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