



THE NO-GOAL GUIDE TO AN EXTRAORDINARY 2011

The Confidence Guy's Guide to Making Great Stuff Happen (without goals)

Introduction

Welcome to 2011 and to a new way of getting things done that ensures what you're doing matches up with a. what really matters to you and b. who you are.

This is my way of getting things done - without using goals. I'll explain to you exactly why I have a problem with goals, and I'll guide you step-by-step through my alternative approach.

By the way, this works better if you do it over the course of a week or so instead of in one sitting. It gives more room for things to take shape and allow ideas to come together.

The Problem With Goals

Here are the problems I've seen with traditional goal-setting.

1. They create a gulf between where you are and where you want to be, and make it easy to reach the conclusion that you're somewhere you don't want to be or that you're "less than" because you haven't got that goal nailed already.
2. All too often goals are based on what people think they *should* want. Look at what you think you *should* be doing or what you *think* you want and you have a sure-fire way of heading down the wrong road.
3. They lack real meaning and personal relevance. You're taking something that doesn't really amount to a hill o' beans and running round in circles to make it happen. That's why the motivation never lasts.

4. Goals make you look at what's next, never at what you've got right now. Your vision is squarely on the future rather than noticing what is.

It's all too easy to get sucked into planning for what might be, rather than noticing what is

5. There's no link between reaching a goal or resolution and happiness. It's been proven that people who achieve a goal are NO happier than those who don't set goals or who don't reach them.
6. You'll often find something amazing on the way towards a goal that renders the goal obsolete or redundant. The value is in the path you take, not where it ends up.
7. They're a handy way to maintain the illusion of control. If you feel like you're able to plan and control things by setting goals then life's uncertainties won't be able to interfere or knock you off track, right? Truth is, living a life where everything is certain is dull, limiting and a struggle.
8. Goals are largely blind to obstacles you run into along the way, another reason they often never get very far.

The Alternative Approach

To avoid these common problems and traps, here's what I think is needed instead.

1. A mechanism where the perceived gap between you and an end point or goal either doesn't exist or just doesn't matter.
2. A system that strips away all of the "shoulds", "oughts" and half-hearted "wants".
3. An approach that makes it easy to find what really matters, so that everything you do is aligned around the things that have a personal relevance.
4. A way to de-future-fy goals; making sure that where you are right now – *this very moment* – is the most important thing.
5. An understanding that your happiness is not dependent on getting what you want but that the real gold and real value is in the experience, NOT in the end result.
6. A way of moving forwards that addresses obstacles but doesn't involve struggling or suffering.
7. A system that gives room for down-time, flexibility and fun.

So with those needs established I come back to the approach I've been using for the last few years.

Games.

The entire, entire point of playing a game is that you get into the game, play it to the best of your ability and enjoy it while you're playing, right?

The distinction I use is this: goals are things that you work towards, trying to make them happen at some point in the future. Games are things you live (and love) this very moment. They're here right now.

The need and want you have to play a game is something that comes from the inside, something that's based on what's important and what matters to you.

A goal is something you do. A game is something you live.

Playing a game that matters means that you have to make a decision to play. And to play a great game you have to get into the flow of playing the game right now and engage with every moment of it. And that's a level of relevance, meaning, engagement and unstuckness that goals and resolutions simply don't have.

And of course, there's no way you can win a game unless you want to play it to the best of your ability, right? Winning is fantastic, of course it is, but if you don't win you get to learn more about the game and become a better player.

Not too shabby.

How it Works



As you can see from the diagram there are 4 levels to this model.

Game

Your game is where you jump in with both feet with [inspired participation](#).

It has to be something you can't wait to start because it allows you to do your own thing in your own way, it allows you to really nail something amazing and it's something you want to do simply because it matters.

The example I've used here is being the world's best tennis player, but it could be having a \$250,000 business, travelling the world, being in the best damn relationship you can imagine or anything else that gets your heart thumping with excitement.

Strategies

Once you have your game you can look at the strategies you can employ that [will get you in the game](#) and bring it to life.

The strategies form a roadmap towards winning your game, broad strokes of activity that will make you the best player you can be.

In the tennis example it's nailing your serve, but outside of tennis this could be building a social media strategy, building your dating confidence or beating your fear of failure ([or success](#)).

Objectives & Obstacles

The next level is where you need to consider 2 things – specific objectives and obstacles.

You need some specific objectives to hit, measurable targets that will stretch you and deliver something concrete. Include anything that will help to deliver on one of your strategies. You also need to identify [what might get in the way](#); the things that might take away from your ability to play the best damn game you can. You'll need at least 5 of each.

Add 10mph to your serve, mitigate ill-health, create a guest post diary, go on 1 date a week, do 5 things that will take you out of your comfort zone or notice whenever you hear your inner critic, for example.

Actions

This level is all about execution - [taking action](#). These are the specific things you can do – *at a specific time or by a specific date* - to help an objective happen or to overcome, reduce or eliminate an obstacle.

This is where you get to roll your sleeves up and play the game.

An Example For Ya

Let's say that you've set a New Years Resolution to go to the gym 3 times a week. First of all, yawn. Second of all, if that's all you've got it won't work. Resolutions or goals like these ones are all about execution; it's a specific action point for you implement and by itself you'll never see it through. What's missing from it is the other 3 levels.

So think about the reason you want to hit the gym 3 times per week. What's that? You want to loose ten pounds, be able to run for 5 kilometres and still feel ready for more? Okay, now we're getting somewhere, you've identified a couple of specific objectives for your action to fit into.

But what could stop you? Yep, those cup cakes might derail your plans, and your family commitments could easily overtake your gym time too.

That's a good beginning, but how do these objectives and obstacles fit into the bigger picture? What strategies are they a part of that add to something amazing? Well, if you've lost that weight and can easily run for 5 kilometres you may well be in the best shape you've ever been physically. That's a strategy right there – *"get myself in tip-top physical shape"*.

And then the big one. What's the reason you want to be in tip-top physical shape? What does that contribute to? What matters to you that would be helped by being in prime physical shape? This could be something like running the New York marathon, walking the Inca trail, climbing Kilimanjaro for a charity that has a personal relevance, changing career or even just being able to join in and play sports with your family.

See how it works? You can start big or start small, and **you can start from any level in the model.**

This example started with an action at the bottom level of the model, but you could just as easily have started at the top level with the game *"Loving my vibrant, healthy, fun-loving family"* and worked down. You just have to be sure to visit the other layers too, so that each part is considered.

To add even more flexibility you can swap around the two middle layers – strategies and objectives/obstacles – if it's easier to work and think that way. That means that you can define an objective (e.g. to add 10 mph to your serve, move to a company who match your values, put together a fantastic seminar, etc.) and then figure out the strategies that you need to employ to bring about that objective. Whichever way works for you is peachy with me.

Now it's Your Turn

Okay, that's quite enough of me prattling on – this is about you.

Over the page you'll find a template worksheet that gets you implementing this model in your own life - use one of these for each game you want to engage with. Feel free to grab pen and paper if you want more space (I'm in love with A3 pads and marker pens, loads of space *and* different colours).

I've included some key questions at each level to help you think along the right lines, and remember to come back and add your and ideas as they come together.

1

Game

What matters to you in 2011?
 What do you want your 2011 to *really* be all about?
 At the end of 2011, what would you love to have been a part of?
 What would make you bounce with excitement or enthusiasm?
 What can't you wait to jump into with both feet?

2

Strategies

What could you work on that would help?
 What could you put in place to make you more likely to win?
 What would make it fun?

3

Objectives	Obstacles
What specific target can you aim for? What would be a great end result? What specific achievement would help you be the best damn player you can be?	What might derail your efforts? What could take away from your ability to play this game brilliantly? What is there in your life that might stop you?

4

Actions

What	When
Looking at your objectives and obstacles, what's one thing you can start? What regular activity or behaviour will you commit to? What can you do to get in the game right now? What can you do to move one step closer to one of your objectives?	



Bringing It Together

You might have one game that drives your efforts in 2011, or you might have 5. That's entirely up to you and this model is flexible enough for you to keep coming back to add more strategies, more objectives, more obstacles and more actions to each of your games.

Try a couple of different ways to phrase your game too. Some words will work better than others, and when you've got it you'll feel it click. By the way, I use the word "game", but feel free to use "theme" if that works better for you. The point is to find the thing(s) that matter to you in 2011.

And then, taking a leaf out of Chris "How does he do that?" Brogan's book, I want you to do one last thing.

Looking at the games (or themes) you've identified and the shape that you've given to your year, **find three words** that represent what this year means to you.

Just 3 simple words that summarise what matters and what 2011 will both bring you and mean to you. Complete this sentence:

For me, 2011 is the year of:

Wrapping Up

What's my 2011 all about?

For me, 2011 is the year of Growth, Vitality and Joy.

Pretty good huh?

I use this model myself, and that's why I've given you this, so that you can avoid many of the traps that conventional goals and resolutions lead to and see some really cool stuff happen.

And this really works. Promise.

Of course, this is just the start. Now, it's down to you.

I'd love to know how you get on, and you can always drop me a line at steve@theconfidenceguyline.com to ask me any questions and let me know what's happening.

Have fun, learn lots,

