

# **PLANNING FOR AND ACHIEVING GOALS**

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With contributions from  
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**Be sure to review all the ideas and reference materials provided in the sample goal plans that have been included to develop your own plan starting on page 19.**

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In 1986, Dr. Wilson relocated to Pennsylvania where he spent two years serving as Medical Director for the University of Pennsylvania's small animal hospital. Today, he is responsible for teaching veterinary law, ethics, and/or practice management at 18-0 veterinary schools across the US and the Caribbean and at the University of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Wilson has authored six books and over 130 articles in various veterinary journals on the subjects of veterinary law, practice management, pet health insurance, and quality ear care. His published books are *The Business Guide for Veterinary Practices* 1982, *Law and Ethics of the Veterinary Profession*, 1988, *Veterinary Receptionist's Training Manual* 1996, the 430-page *Contracts, Benefits, and Practice Management for the Veterinary Profession*, 2000, updated in 2006, *Job Descriptions and Training Schedules for the Veterinary Team* in 2005, and the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of *Legal Consents for Veterinary Practices* in 2006.

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The following two parties work together under the Priority Veterinary Management Consultants banner 1) operating Dr. Wilson's publishing company, Priority Press, Ltd., 2) creating teaching materials, and 3) coordinating and/or providing legal and practice management consultations for veterinarians in private veterinary practices or attorneys who work with them.

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# **IT'S TIME FOR A POP QUIZ ABOUT YOUR LIFE & FUTURE**

You Have Three Minutes Per Question to Create the Following Lists

I. Question # 1: What are the 10 things you want to accomplish in your lifetime.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

II. Question # 2: What are 10 things you want to accomplish before \_\_\_\_\_ date.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

III Question # 3: What 10 things do you want to accomplish before \_\_\_\_\_ date.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

IV. Question # 4: List 10 key characteristics that you want your "life partner" to possess.

- |    |     |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 2.  |
| 3. | 4.  |
| 5. | 6.  |
| 7. | 8.  |
| 9. | 10. |

**LIVING WILL HEALTHCARE DIRECTIVE**

TO MY FAMILY, MY PHYSICIAN, MY CLERGYMAN, MY LAWYER, MY ATTORNEY-IN FACT, IF ANY,  
AND MY COURT-APPOINTED GUARDIAN OR SURROGATE, IF ANY:

I, NAME, being of sound mind, make this statement as a directive to be followed if I become incompetent, incapacitated, or in any way permanently unable by reason of a physical and/or mental disability to participate in decisions regarding my medical care. These instructions reflect my firm and settled commitment to refuse medical treatment under the circumstances indicated below.

I direct my attending physician to withhold or withdraw treatment that serves only to prolong the process of my dying, if I should be in an incurable or irreversible physical and/or mental condition with no reasonable expectation of recovery.

These instructions apply if I am (a) in a terminal condition, (b) permanently unconscious, (c) in a vegetative state, and/or (d) if I am conscious but have irreversible brain damage and will never regain the ability to make decisions and express my wishes.

I direct that treatment be limited to measures to keep me comfortable and to relieve pain, including any pain that might occur by withholding or withdrawing life-sustaining treatment.

If I am in any of the conditions described above, I feel especially strong about the following forms of treatment:

- I ( ) do ( ) do not want cardiac resuscitation.
- I ( ) do ( ) do not want mechanical respiration.
- I ( ) do ( ) do not want tube feeding or any other artificial form of nutrition (food) or hydration (water).
- I ( ) do ( ) do not want blood or blood products.
- I ( ) do ( ) do not want any form of surgery or invasive diagnostic tests.
- I ( ) do ( ) do not want kidney dialysis.
- I ( ) do ( ) do not want antibiotics.

Other instructions: \_\_\_\_\_

If it does not jeopardize the chance of my recovery to a meaningful and sentient life or impose an undue burden on my family, I would like to live out my last days at home rather than in a hospital.

I ( ) do ( ) do not want to make an anatomical gift of all or part of my body, subject to the following limitations, if any: \_\_\_\_\_

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
NAME  
\_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS

The above named declarant knowingly and voluntarily signed this writing by signature in our presence.

\_\_\_\_\_ RESIDENCE \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ RESIDENCE \_\_\_\_\_

**DURABLE POWER OR ATTORNEY FOR HEALTHCARE**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (name) of \_\_\_\_\_ (address) being of sound mind, voluntarily create this Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare.

**PRIOR DESIGNATIONS**

I revoke any prior Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare.

**APPOINTMENT OF AGENT**

In the event that I have been determined to be incapable of providing informed consent for medical treatment and surgical and diagnostic procedures, I wish to designate as my agent for healthcare decisions:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship: Husband/Wife \_\_\_\_\_

**APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATE AGENT (ATTORNEY-IN-FACT)**

If I revoke the above identified agent's authority or if the above named agent is not willing, able, or reasonably available to make a health care decision for me, I designate as my alternate agent:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship: Husband/Wife \_\_\_\_\_

**AGENT'S AUTHORITY**

My agent is authorized to act for me in all matters relating to my healthcare. My agent's powers include, but are not limited to:

- Full power to consent, refuse consent, or withdraw consent to all medical, surgical, hospital and related healthcare treatments and procedures on my behalf, according to my wishes as stated in this document, or as stated in a separate Living Will, Healthcare Directive, or other similar type document, or as expressed to my agent by me;
- Full power to make decisions on whether to provide, withhold, or withdraw artificial nutrition and hydration on my behalf, according to my wishes as stated in this document, or as stated in a separate Living Will, Healthcare Directive, or other similar type document, or as expressed to my agent by me;
- Full power to review and receive any information regarding my physical or mental health, including medical and hospital records, in accordance with the *Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996*, 42 USC 1320d ("HIPAA");
- Full power to sign any releases in order to obtain this information; and
- Full power to sign any documents required to request, withdraw, or refuse treatment or to be released or transferred to another medical facility.

My agent does not have the authority to act for me for any other purpose unrelated to my healthcare. All of my agent's actions under this power during any period when I am unable to make or communicate health care decisions have the same effect on my heirs, devisees and personal representatives as if I were competent and acting for myself.

**WHEN AGENT’S AUTHORITY BECOMES EFFECTIVE**

The designation of my agent will become effective as soon as this document is signed and will remain in effect until my death, or until I revoke it. This designation will not be affected by my subsequent disability or incompetence.

**AGENT’S OBLIGATION**

My agent will make healthcare decisions for me in accordance with this document, and in accordance with any instructions I give in a Living Will, Healthcare Directive or such other document (either included in this document or as a separate document), and my other wishes to the extent known to my agent. To the extent my wishes are unknown, my agent will make healthcare decisions for me in accordance with what my agent determines to be in my best interest. In determining my best interest, my agent will consider my personal values to the extent known to my agent.

**EFFECT OF COPY**

A copy of this Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare has the same effect as the original.

**SEVERABILITY**

If any part of this Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare is found to be invalid or illegal under applicable law by a court of competent jurisdiction, the invalidity or illegality of such part or parts shall not in any way effect the remaining parts, and this document shall be construed as though the invalid or illegal part or parts had never been included herein. But if the intent of this Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare would be substantially changed by such construction, then it shall not be construed.

**SIGNATURE**

This Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare is made after careful reflection, while I am of sound mind. I am fully informed as to all contents of this document and understand the full import of this grant of powers to my agent. I fully understand that by signing this document, I will permit my agent to make healthcare decisions for me. I understand that my signature on this document gives my agent authority to provide, withhold, or withdraw consent to healthcare treatments or procedures on my behalf; to apply for public benefits to defray the cost of my healthcare; and to authorize my admission to or transfer from a healthcare facility. I further affirm that I am not signing this document as a condition of treatment or admission to a healthcare facility.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Place: \_\_\_\_\_

**STATEMENT OF WITNESSES (Use if document is not notarized.)**

I, the undersigned witness, declare that \_\_\_\_\_, the person above who signed this document, is personally known to me and appears to be of sound mind and acting of her own free will and under no duress. He/She signed (or asked another to sign for her) this document in my presence. I further declare that I am at least 18 years of age, I am not entitled to any portion of this estate, not financially responsible for \_\_\_\_\_’s healthcare, am not named as \_\_\_\_\_’s healthcare representative in this document, and that I am not married nor related to \_\_\_\_\_ by blood or adoption.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of first witness)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of second witness)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print name of first witness)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print name of second witness)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Street address of first witness)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Street address of second witness)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(City and state of first witness)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(City and state of second witness)

# **STEPS FOR PLANNING AND ACHIEVING GOALS**

By Mary Bryant, VMD, & James F. Wilson, DVM, JD

## **CREATING A VISION OF YOUR FUTURE**

**Definition: Vision is what we visualize as possible and worth doing. Visualize the mountains you choose to climb! Go ahead, dream a little!**

Whereas a mission statement is very practical, a person's **vision** is more idealistic, imaginative, long-range and fanciful. A vision statement should enrich and expand the mission you create, bringing it to life. Vision is not based on current reality, understandings or paradigms. Your vision should break through your present day thinking and limitations. It focuses on where you want to be and what you want to be doing five, 10, 15 or 30 years from now. Vision statements tend to be bold, challenging, idealistic and optimistic. Vision closes the gap between how things are now and what you envision them to be in the future. Vision inspires commitment, passion and creativity!

## **FORMULATING A VISION STATEMENT**

Here are some examples:

- Own an entire or a portion of a veterinary practice within five years of graduation.
- Become a board-certified oncologist who teaches at a veterinary school.
- Be appointed Secretary of Agriculture by age 42.
- Have a spouse and family within five years.

## **FORMULATING A MISSION STATEMENT**

Mission statements have been defined in countless ways. However, all effective **mission statements** have one common characteristic: **they are intensely personal and unique**. In establishing your personal mission statement, great consideration must be given to the precise human being and professional you wish to become.

Often it is helpful to think of a mission statement as one that **sets forth the culture** of the person and/or businessperson you want to become. Will your future be driven by the pet-vet-client bond for which you always do what's best for the patient – regardless of the client's finances or behavior? Will it be driven by your desire to help producers become more profitable while improving the welfare of the food-animals they are breeding or raising? Or, will it be driven by the emotional, financial, personal, and family needs of your staff and yourself? Will the mission focus on such altruistic ideals as educating the community about animal healthcare matters and making pet population control a primary concern, or will it focus on making money and having time with family and friends? Finally, keep in mind that your mission statement will likely change as you go through life.

## **DEFINING YOUR CORE VALUES**

As short- and long-term plans are made, personal values always enter the picture. Many people entitle these “core values” because they illustrate the center of one’s head and heart. Sometimes these values are more family oriented, wherein remaining close to an existing family unit is of utmost importance. If this is the case, obviously plans should eliminate searching for jobs long distances from home! Often, values include moral and ethical positions regarding our animal patients and their welfare. In these cases, how one’s employer feels about ear crops, tail docks, declawing of domestic cats, convenience euthanasia, and even the presence or absence of anesthetic gas scavenging systems to safeguard employee health all come into play. Having similar core values as your employer will be immensely important as you enter your new career. To help define one’s core values it is a valuable idea to pick the top seven words or phrases from the following list that you feel are most indicative of your personal philosophies.

### **Words or phrases to which you might aspire as part of your personal CORE VALUES:**

Team-oriented	Excellence	Empowering myself & others
Quality medicine	Equitable relationships	Controlling or dominating
Patience	Self-confidence	Professional growth
Client service-directed	Compassion	Strong leader
Humanitarian-directed	Respect for self & others	Pragmatic
Perpetual learner	Human-animal bond driven	Ownership-oriented
Opportunist	Flexible	Humble
Trusting	Ethical	Open to ideas & change
Fair	Honest	Hard worker
Personally & professionally stable	Sense of humor	Abundance mentality
Problem solver	Tolerant	Outstanding implementer
Emotionally resilient	Positive thinker	Competent manager
Financially secure	Visionary thinking	
Strong interpersonal communication skills	Integrity	

### **Sample Core Values for a Veterinary Practice:**

**Excellence:** We strive for excellence in the provision of veterinary care (“state-of-the-art”) and work to become leaders and innovators in veterinary medicine. This includes providing “cutting edge,” updated technology, a trained staff and a state-of-the-art facility.

**Patient Care:** We are committed to providing the highest quality, compassionate, comfortable and ethical care to our patients. We treat patients as if they were members of our own family. We actively support the family-animal bond.

**Client Service:** We are committed to providing the highest quality service in an efficient and empathetic manner.

**Communication:** We are committed to the respect of the individual and, when dealing with interpersonal communications, subscribe to the principle that “it is better to be talked to than talked about.” In an effort to promote better communication we are committed to ongoing training in communication skills and personal leadership. We seek to “understand before being understood.”

The practice will implement communication systems that allow all staff members to feel they are “informed” members of the team.

**Team Work:** We have a stimulating place to work, with team spirit and camaraderie; a supportive environment where individual needs are recognized. Our practice actively promotes an environment that supports learning and participation along with sharing of ideas and concepts.

**Fees:** The fee structure for our business shall be high enough to provide for the quality of care we espouse. High-end fees, good budgeting, and financial management will allow us to reward and retain staff, produce sufficient income to purchase contemporary equipment, maintain an attractive and contemporarily designed facility, provide annual continuing education for each staff member, fund a retirement plan for the practice owners and all long-term staff and produce bonuses for exceptional competence and service. The owners and staff will tolerate modest client complaints and concerns about fees in order to provide the infrastructure within which the practice can grow and we can all succeed.

You are invited to **pick seven core values that you have identified as being important and enter them below** with appropriate dates. This way you will be able to see how they change over time.

	<u>Initial Date</u>	<u>After First Year in Practice</u>	<u>Five Years Post Grad</u>
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			

## **GOALS VS. OBJECTIVES**

**DEFINITION OF A “GOAL”:** A goal is an end toward which you direct specific effort.

**Goals** have everything to do with the end result. One’s professional goal could be to buy, start or buy into a practice within five years after graduation. One’s retirement goal could be \$2 million in assets + ownership of a home with no mortgage.

**Objectives** focus on the rationale behind the end result. The aim of my effort to become a practice owner within five years is to control my career and employment destiny, thus creating an asset that I can sell (if I want) after 10 or 15 years. The sale of this asset will allow me an opportunity to redirect my career to one that is more personally rewarding. My objective in retirement is to have a life of good health and leisure with the financial security to support this desire.

The three key components of a goal are:

- A specific **accomplishment to be achieved.**
- A **measurable outcome** that will be sought and produced.
- A **specific date** and time within which the goal can be accomplished.

Achievement and accomplishment are the most satisfying pleasures of all. Neither happen accidentally! They are the results of clearly defined goals that are developed, updated, and worked on until completion. Goals determine what you will or will not become or accomplish.

## **DECIDE WHAT YOU WANT!**

It is important that your goal is something you sincerely want to achieve. If you are pursuing a goal just to satisfy someone else's desires, that goal probably will not be completed. This is why it is important to have your "vision statement" clearly in mind. Good managers make their employees a part of the goal setting process for the practice. To have a harmonious and satisfying workplace, it is also essential that employees are willing to make the company's goals part of their personal goals.

The first ingredient for achieving a goal is a **VISION**, something that was previously discussed. In the case of this Professional Foundations or Career Development course, it is a clear vision of what you wish to do or where you want to be 1) personally, 2) professionally, and 3) financially during the next three years of your life.

The word "goal" sometimes lacks inspiration. Therefore, it is frequently more productive to think of your goal plan as a dream, or a wish. When you're making a list of goals, you're making a wish list! For example, compare these two sentences:

"Today I'm going to work on my goals." vs. "Today I'm going to make my dreams come true!" Which of these would get you jumping out of bed in the morning?

First, you must believe in your goals. Belief causes persistence, and persistence brings success. Ignore doubt and negativity arising from the opinions of those who have not achieved or attempted goals similar to yours. Do not be constrained by the "status quo" or the state of affairs around you. Ask yourself the following questions:

- (1) Do I believe I can make these goals come true?
- (2) Do I believe these goals are worth the effort?

Remember, success flows from passion, not only from self-discipline.

You must consciously set goals – wishing gives you the freedom to dream. BUT remember:

- You must be willing to pay the price to get what you want;
- You must be willing to persist until you get what you want; and
- What you want must be humanly possible (*if only just barely!*)

## **BRAINSTORMING WITH YOURSELF**

So, what do you want? People who don't get what they want from life often put themselves in this position and are stuck with the outcome because they don't know what to wish for. How do you start that process?

Brainstorm with yourself!

1. Write the topic you want to brainstorm in the form of a question.
2. Write whatever pops into your head.

3. Accept with gratitude whatever pops into your head.
4. Keep your pen moving or your fingers typing.
5. Save criticism for later (brainstorming is a tool to generate ideas, not to evaluate and/or plan them).

Just remember...

1. Wish for only what you can control;
2. Wish for what you want, not what you don't want;
3. Be brief; and
4. Believe in it!.

### **VALUES TO BE GAINED FROM PRACTICAL GOAL SETTING**

Alice: "Will you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"

Cheshire Cat: "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to."

Alice: "I don't care."

Cheshire Cat: "Then it doesn't matter which way you go."

Lewis Carroll's, *Alice in Wonderland*

#### **GOALS and GOAL SETTING:**

1. Establish direction for your life. If you never set a goal, how do you know where you are going?
2. Identify results. If no goal exists, how do you measure your progress?
3. Challenge you to grow. If you never set a goal, how do you move out of your comfort zone?
4. Improves your self-image. It improves you today and makes you feel better tomorrow.
5. Gives you confidence. Your frustration is immediately lowered when vagueness and doubt are replaced by focus and concentration.
6. Forces you to be specific. It is the first positive, obvious step to success.

### **RESPECT YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

You have...

- The right, privilege, responsibility and honor to set and achieve a goal;
- The right to be successful, happy and prosperous;
- The right to pursue your own path in life;
- A responsibility to follow through on all your commitments;
- A responsibility to teach and share with others what you have learned in life; and
- A responsibility to become all that you are capable of becoming.

### **YOUR GOALS MUST BE S - M - A - R - T!**

**Specific:** "I need to complete all my application materials for taking the national and state licensing exams in (Name of state) by (Date) of my senior year so I have two weeks of extra time in case I run into some glitches."

**Measurable:** You must make your goal something you can measure. You could be winning and think you're losing because you aren't keeping score. "I plan to limit my expenditures for next year's school year to \$X. That will be a reduction of ~\$1,000 from this year's expenses."

**Achievable:** "With good planning and an intermittent review of my spending patterns and budget, it will be possible for me to meet this goal, especially if I stop spending an average of \$3 a day on coffee, soda and snacks."

**Relevant:** "The more money I borrow to complete my education, the more I have to pay back at five percent interest, and the longer it will take before we can buy that first home we've always dreamed of. Even though interest rates are low right now, that doesn't mean I should borrow any more than I have to."

**Trackable & Time Sensitive:** "I will find 30 minutes once a month to cumulate and organize receipts and tally my expenses so that I can see if I'm on track to succeed with each year's financial goal." AND... "I have to begin thinking in a framework that makes my finances and **ME** the focus of **MY** attention **NOW**, not a week from now, a year from now, after I graduate, get a job, own a practice..."

## **WRITE YOUR GOAL(S) DOWN**

When we write down our goals, we are announcing our commitment in a way that has permanence and that must be reviewed in its original form (sorry, no "selective memory loss" allowed). The Amway corporation is a great example of an entity which has embraced this fact to reach new heights. One of the last pieces of guidance given to new Amway salesmen by the company is as follows:

*One final tip before you get started: Set a goal and write it down. Whatever the goal, the important thing is that you set it, so you've got something for which to aim – and that you write it down. There is something magical about writing things down. So set a goal and write it down. When you reach that goal, set another and write that down. You'll be off and running.*

Whether you believe in the Amway product line or the company's underlying strategy is irrelevant. The company knows that when you write down your goals, they become undeniably (and inescapably) your own. Amway, among others, has made a point of benefiting from this truth. Writing it down makes it real and tangible.

It is also interesting to note that the effort and time required to put your goals on paper is inexplicably binding. As we can all attest from personal experience, the more time and effort we put into an activity, organization or goal, the greater our dedication to it. This concept is exemplified everywhere from rigorous boot camps in the American military to fraternity and sorority pledging at universities across the country. The effort required to write down your goals is small, but it is infinitely larger than simply imagining them.

Writing them down is a crucial step in achieving goals. Write them down or kiss them goodbye!  
and...**BE SPECIFIC:**

That way, you can track your progress,  
Avoid ambiguity and unintended results as you write so that you truly focus on your  
**BRAINPOWER!**

Some of the benefits of writing it down are that it allows for the following:

- Helps to FORMULATE & FOCUS...On each goal and visualize all of the benefits you will receive by achieving it. By focusing, you train your brain to know what requires attention.
- Helps you CONCENTRATE...To crystallize your thoughts on all of the possible ways to achieve your goal(s).
- Helps to make good DECISIONS...It's easier to decide upon a course of action when you know specifically what you want to achieve.
- Saves TIME...Clear and specific goals help to reduce irrelevant activities and, thus, establish priorities in your life.
- Adds a sense of VALUE...Help's you to reflect on your values and direction in life (i.e., your mission).
- Creates a sense of PURPOSE...Establishes commitment and improves motivation and enthusiasm for achieving them.
- Builds CONFIDENCE...In your ability to achieve when you know specifically what your goal are and succeed.

### **GO PUBLIC (SORT OF)**

Revealing your goals to friends and family members can also increase your chances of success. Companies selling weight-loss strategies and products have put this knowledge to use since their creation. These companies realize that a goal conveyed to others will be supported by a degree of willpower that is often absent from silent resolutions. Fortuitously, Jean Nidetch, who founded Weight Watchers in the early 1960s, began her company not with a new food product or diet, but with weekly group meetings held in her Queens, New York apartment. As a result, more than 40 years later the “support group” structure of national weight loss companies remains a large reason for their continued survival and success as diet fads come and go.

The motivational advantages of announcing goals and intentions is well known, and consequently, the application of this technique is widespread in our society. For example, the sharing of goals is a key part of drug and alcohol rehabilitation treatment groups (i.e. Alcoholics Anonymous). The Betty Ford Center for drug and alcohol rehabilitation even allows one family member to accompany patients during their “family program” at no additional cost. Religious groups frequently pray together, at least in part, for the purpose of strengthening their spiritual commitment and resolve.

Dave Ramsey, a national talk-radio personality who discusses personal finance, encourages listeners to state their name and their determination to get out of debt over the airwaves, and sports figures openly “guarantee” playoff victories to heighten their determination and unify their team. The prevalence of this technique, coupled with what we know about human nature, strongly indicates its effectiveness. Who could doubt that Babe Ruth's desire to hit a home-run during the fifth inning of the third game of the 1932 World Series was significantly greater after he pointed to the outfield bleachers than it was before?

Imagine attending your graduation (wait, it doesn't stop there) and announcing to everyone that you will own a large or small animal veterinary practice within five years. Four years later, would you feel a greater motivation to pursue this goal than you would have if your plans had remained private?

For most people, the answer is obvious. If put in this position, some students would rather car-jack a mobile veterinary practice than attend a five-year reunion sans practice ownership. The determination to accomplish goals of which others are aware is a powerful resource, and it is inherent in each of us. Use it to motivate the accomplishment of your own goals.

## **LIST BENEFITS OF ACHIEVING YOUR GOALS**

Keep your goals in front of you. (Use Post-It™ notes on the bathroom mirror, refrigerator, bedpost, etc.) This step is what keeps you motivated when things aren't going well and obstacles occlude your way. Always visualize these benefits in your mind. See yourself enjoying the benefits NOW. Develop a "Goal Poster" with pictures of what you want to have, be or do and show the benefits. If you really want to accomplish a goal, put a picture of your goal (African safari, Alaska's Denali Park with a moose in the foreground) in the upper right hand corner of the mirror in your bathroom. Pictures stimulate action. They change a "nice to do" thought into an "I can and will do" action!

## **SET DATES FOR COMPLETION**

"A goal is a dream with a deadline."

- Napoleon Hill, *Think and Grow Rich; Law of Success*

"A dream is just a dream. A goal is a dream with a plan and a deadline."

- Harvey Mackay, *Swim with the Sharks Without Being Eaten Alive*

Always set a deadline. No timeline means no commitment! The litmus test of commitment is a clearly understood deadline. If you are unable or unwilling to establish a deadline for your goal, you probably need to examine your commitment.

This is the step that keeps the pressure on you. The date you set should be one that makes you stretch, but it should not be out of sight. It may be necessary from time to time to adjust the date because of some unexpected obstacle that appears.

The deadline provides a sense of urgency. Be reasonable with your deadline. The deadline serves to make you focus, not panic!

***Plan your finish, finish your plan!***

"A mediocre plan, violently executed, is more effective than a perfect plan that is executed half-heartedly." General Patton

## **LIST OBSTACLES TO OVERCOME**

Almost without exception there will always be obstacles standing between you and your goals. It's best to list these obstacles up front. This will put you in a strong position to handle them as you chart your strategy in your ACTION PLAN. Of course, there will probably be a few obstacles that show up unexpectedly as you are working on your goal. This is why you must remain flexible.

## **IDENTIFY HELP NEEDED: The Importance of a MENTOR**

Find a mentor (or two!). Surround yourself with people whose knowledge and judgment you trust, then make good use of them. The most successful people are winners because they surround themselves with "experts." They realize the importance of having mentors.

Great leaders recognize that in almost ALL cases, achieving goals requires the help of other people. It's important that you recognize a need for help. Identify those people who you will need to ask for help and get them excited about helping you. However, be sure they know what they are supposed to and are expected to do. To accomplish this, ask for something specific. Express to them your appreciation for their help. Provide them with appropriately intermittent communication, positive feedback, and maybe even a gift from time to time.

## **DEVELOP A PLAN OF ACTION**

This is the major step in achieving goals. The Action Plan must include:

1. A description of actions to be taken and placing appropriate priorities on each.
2. The name(s) of the person/people who is/are to take the action.
3. A date to start and finish the action.
4. A strategy to overcome obstacles identified.
5. A schedule to review progress made.

Scheduling bridges the gap between planning and doing. Give yourself intermediate targets – "milestones" – that are designed to keep you on track toward your main deadline. Schedule progress reports: Have I met the milestones I planned to meet since my last progress report? Do I need to change my plan to reach my milestone? Do I need to change my milestone?

## **TAKE ACTION ... GO TO WORK!**

This is the step that makes it all happen. It's the secret to growth, productivity and happiness. When you achieve your goal great things happen. Your confidence increases, your self-image improves and you develop a more positive self-esteem. New goals should always be undertaken as soon as one is achieved. The only way to grow is to constantly strive toward new goals. That's what makes life fun.

## **A WORD ABOUT FAILURE**

Learn to manage failure and setbacks. If you don't let it devastate you, failure can be an opportunity – for learning, for recovery, for the creation and demonstration of character. Remember, life is not always about standing tall. It is often about getting back up when you are knocked down.

## **BEWARE OF THESE TWO GOAL KILLERS:**

1. **Fear:** The more you focus on your fear, the less likely you are going to bring your goals to fruition. Break your fears into their manageable pieces so that you can plan the action that will diminish them. Eventually, you will overcome them.
2. **Thinking like a victim:** Thinking like a victim lets you “off the hook” – it's the “I'm not responsible” excuse – someone else is doing this to me. It is normal at times to feel like nothing is going your way, but your ability to change that is entirely yours. It's not about what happens to you in life, it's what you do about it.

## **HAVE PATIENCE WITH YOURSELF!**

When it comes to achieving goals, patience really is a virtue. Resist the urge for instant gratification. The “I want it now” syndrome can cause much grief in goal planning! In veterinary school, you are on a schedule that allows you to see the results of your hard work (studying) almost immediately or at least within a few months. Only occasionally will things in your life happen that immediately. Just because you are not seeing ‘instant results’ doesn't mean that your goal planning isn't making a difference in your life. Be patient.

## **CELEBRATE YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS!**

**Celebrate big and (SOME) little accomplishments. Of course you'll celebrate graduation, but haven't you also celebrated the end of a quarter? Or the end of the week? Celebrating both big and small milestones with those who understand the importance of your accomplishments can help you enjoy the journey towards your goals and not just the destination.**

## **REFERENCES:**

1. *The Ten Commandments of Goal Setting*, Gary Blair
2. *Goal Setting 101*, Gary Blair
3. *The Magic Lamp: Goal Setting for People Who Hate Goal Setting*, Keith Ellis
4. *Influence: Science and Practice*, Robert Cialdini

## **THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF GOAL PLANNING**

### **I. Thou Shall Be Decisive.**

Success is the intentional, premeditated use of choice and decision. Don't accept table scraps by default! The difference between what one person and another achieves depends more on goal choices than on abilities. Never overlook the obvious: the nature and direction of your life change the instant you decide what goals you want to pursue.

### **II. Thou Shall Stay Focused.**

The more focused your energies, the more power you generate, and the more you will accomplish

### **III. Thou Shall Write Down Thy Goals.**

The evolution of a goal begins in the mind and immediately takes shape when pen is put to paper. Would you go to the supermarket without a list?

### **IV. Thou Shall Plan Accordingly.**

A well-defined plan properly executed is your meal ticket to success!

- It promotes focus.
- It stimulates thinking.
- It offers an Exit Plan.

“Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity.”

- Lucius Annaeus Seneca

### **V. Thou Shall Involve Others.**

The benefit of involving others in your plans is your instant accessibility to experience, knowledge and wisdom. You must surround yourself with good people who possess solid experience and ask for their input.

### **VI. Thou Shall Welcome Failure.**

Failure has an ulterior motive...not to get you to quit, but to stop you long enough so that you may learn something, re-strategize, and launch your efforts again more prepared than ever.

“Opportunity often comes disguised in the form of misfortune, or temporary defeat.”

-Napoleon Hill, *Think and Grow Rich*

### **VII. Thou Shall Take Purposeful Action.**

A good plan will get you in the door but it is action that seals the deal! Without purposeful action, the only guarantee is failure and mediocrity!

### **VIII. Thou Shall Inspect What Thou Expects.**

Unless performance is reviewed regularly, growth becomes stunted. Inspection tells you where you are in relation to where you want to be and how you are doing with the pursuit of your goals.

### **IX. Thou Shall Reward Thyself.**

We need rewards to give ourselves encouragement and to remind us that we have achieved important goals. After all, you probably kick yourself when you screw up. Why not pat yourself on the back when you achieve your goal?

### **X. Thou Shall Maintain Personal Integrity.**

Personal integrity means maintaining a commitment to your, mission, vision, goals and objectives. It is also about setting goals and keeping your promise to achieve them.

## **ESTATE PLANNING**

If you're like most Americans, a will could be the most important legal document that you ever sign. Without one, the courts, and not you, decide what happens to your assets. If you do not have a will or any document declaring who the legal guardian(s) should be for your children, they can even decide who will take responsibility for rearing them!

Established in 2001, LegalZoom ([www.legalzoom.com](http://www.legalzoom.com)) offers the ability to create customized wills, living trusts, living wills, powers of attorney, and even pet protection agreements at a fraction of the cost of hiring an attorney to draft these documents. They use a three step process that makes it incredibly easy and less time consuming to create these important documents. First, you complete their simple, online questionnaire. Next, LegalZoom reviews your answers and creates your custom document. Finally, your document is mailed to you within 48 hours.

## **STEPS FOR ACHIEVING MY GOALS**

(Pick ONE - Financial, Professional, Personal)

**SHORT TERM**

**INTERMEDIATE TERM**

**LONG TERM**

1. My Goal:

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2. Specific Description of Goal:

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3. Benefits from Achieving Goal:

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4. Date for Completion:

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5. Obstacles to Overcome:

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6. Help Needed:

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7. Action Plan (list tasks with due dates):

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**TAKE ACTION . . . GO TO WORK!**

## **SAMPLE SEVEN-STEP PLAN FOR**

### **ACHIEVING A SPECIFIC PERSONAL GOAL**

UP V '06

Professional Foundations

**My Goal:**

To train for my first marathon (Philadelphia Marathon 2006) while living in several different cities during various externships as well as intramural clinical rotations.

**Specific Description of Goal:** Growing up in the United States as an immigrant from Russia, I was never exposed to any team sports as a child through my family because they were focused on more on re-establishing themselves in a new country. During my teenage years I became slightly overweight and was never active at all until I finally decided to make a change at the start of vet school. I began with a daily 25-minute exercise routine and began watching what I ate. This slowly developed into a more intense daily 45-minute exercise routine during my second year of vet school and by the end of that year I was feeling and looking much healthier. Currently I run 25 miles per week with a local running club, bike and do weight lifting at the gym. Completing my first marathon will be the ultimate reward to a progressive long-term goal I began working toward at the start of vet school.

**Benefits from Achieving Goal:** I can pride myself for being an athlete, something I never thought possible for me. This is also great confidence builder as well as a way to meet new interesting people (through the running club), and building a better school/life balance. Becoming an athlete is also allowing me to feel reward, a new appreciation and pleasure from something that I can always do that does not require spending money. This is very liberating.

**Date for Completion:** Marathon Date: November 20, 2007

**Obstacles to Overcome:** In January, I will begin clinical rotations. This will be stressful, exhausting and will allow less time flexibility than I have enjoyed during my first two years of vet school. In addition, I will be spending a total of three months on three different externships located in New York, Boston and Los Angeles, as well as New Bolton Center. Having to constantly move around will make it more difficult to stick to a strict routine and will require even more discipline and determination.

**Help Needed:** To help me achieve my goal I have been lucky enough to get a mentor/coach. David Sylvester is my friend and a physical fitness consultant who rode a bicycle 3,600 miles across America in honor of a child who was tragically killed in the September 11 World Trade Center attacks. His goal was to raise money for a scholarship fund at The Philadelphia Foundation. He also completed a 6,600-mile bicycle marathon across Africa. He will be helping me train for the event.

**Action Plan:** To continue running three five-mile runs during the week along with long runs on the weekend with my running group. To discipline myself to do the same when I am not in Philadelphia on my own, regardless of which city I am living in. In July when I am scheduled on Philadelphia rotations for the rest of the year I will begin cross-training with my trainer David, followed by an extensive 20-week beginner's marathon training program which begins with 10-mile runs and slowly builds up to the marathon distance right before the race day itself.

# **SAMPLE THREE-YEAR GOAL PLAN STARTING**

## **WITH SENIOR YEAR**

As assembled by Mary Bryant, VMD and JF Wilson, DVM, JD

### **PERSONAL PLAN (Better Known as the “Forgotten Basics”)**

- ✓ **Make eating a more nutritionally balanced diet a high priority while facing pressures to “eat on the go” in clinics.**
- ✓ Take time each Sunday to go grocery shopping with a pre-determined list of items for the week’s meals and do this when I am not hungry!
- ✓ Limit TV watching during the week to < 60 minutes/day and especially after 11:00 p.m.
- ✓ Get in the habit of checking your *Facebook* or *Myspace* accounts daily and email accounts two to three times per day. Otherwise these can be a bigger drain of mental energy and focus.
- ✓ Read at least one book on Dr. Wilson’s “Life Skills Reading List” from the following choices: 1) *The Four Agreements* by Don Miguel Ruiz, Amazon \$12.21; 2) the *Handbook of Veterinary Communication Skills* by Carol Cook and Jennifer Moffett [www/wiley-blackwell.com](http://www.wiley-blackwell.com) \$49.95 or 3) *Emotional Intelligence: 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition; Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* by Daniel Goleman, Amazon \$19.14.
- ✓ Utilize the internet site known as [www.zillow.com](http://www.zillow.com) to look up the price of residential real estate in areas where I might be interested in living that are a decent commute from my job. Check the classified ads to monitor real estate rentals or sales in \_\_\_\_\_(city)\_\_\_\_\_ (state), thus, refining my awareness of potential residences for the next place to live after vet school.
- ✓ Make sure all of my notes on business management, personal finance, and career development issues are in one binder for easy future reference.
- ✓ Continue regular pet playtime and training with my dog to diminish his canine aggression and separation anxiety behaviors. Walk him for 10 minutes at least five days each week – for my mental health and his! Also, exercise my cat(s) with the “fishing pole” I buy for this purpose!
- ✓ Communicate with the important people in my life no less than every two weeks, especially family. Setting aside 30 minutes on Sundays to call all (or at least one) of them will help me restrict the time. If need be, send a monthly e-mail report on my “life in the veterinary school fast lane” to them and send birthday cards and thank you notes on time.
- ✓ Continue developing my understanding of how to use Veterinary Information Network (VIN) to locate materials relevant to my clinical cases and courses.
- ✓ Learn to use Excel spreadsheets sufficiently so I can use it for creating budgets and plans.
- ✓ Organize files on my desktop or laptop computer for easy future reference.
- ✓ Clean and organize the garage by the end of Thanksgiving vacation and DOWNSIZE the volume of possessions by April 1 of my senior year. Determine what is important to me and start getting organized!
- ✓ Read at least five pages of \_\_\_\_\_(insert your favorite leisure reading material here)\_\_\_\_\_ each night before I go to bed so I can relax, be distracted from the day and sleep better!

### **FINANCIAL PLAN**

- ✓ Purchase or borrow a copy of Dr. Wilson’s *Contracts, Benefits, and Practice Management for the Veterinary Profession* textbook from my VBMA or school library.

- ✓ By January 1 of my senior year, or at least before I begin interviewing for jobs, read the chapters on compensation and benefits in the *Contracts* book so I know as much or more on these issues as the employers with whom I am interviewing.
- ✓ Read the “Five Tiers of Owner Compensation” section of the *Contracts* book, pages 78-92 so I better understand where the money goes in a veterinary business.
- ✓ Go to [www.anmlldr.com](http://www.anmlldr.com) and check on the growing applications for smart phones. Look at the grid that will help me determine which product to buy so that I can enter all important dates and contacts AND buy some memory cards to download all the incredible books and programs that are available from this site.
- ✓ Remember to back up my computer and sync my smart phone with my computer at least once weekly so data doesn’t get lost.
- ✓ Once I have a smart phone, purchase and download the Small Animal Veterinary Nerdbook, the ANMLDR equine or exotics formulary, *The 5-Minute Consult*, and any of the other products available from Dr. Linda Miller’s Animal Doctor Web site at [www.anmlldr.com](http://www.anmlldr.com).
- ✓ Set up an Internet-based banking and automatic withdrawal bill paying account by (insert date) and use this service extensively by January 15.
- ✓ Check interest rates at [www.ingdirect.com](http://www.ingdirect.com) to see if this is the best place to store any of my savings. See *Personal Finance* notes for more info on this.
- ✓ Discuss investment strategies for the future with my significant other (if applicable) and select a certified financial planner (CFP) to help me/us. I will determine whether it is best to pay off debt or save and invest for the future and/or develop an independent trade or business as a relief vet working a few shifts at the local emergency clinic so I/we can file a Schedule C tax return as Dr. Wilson taught me/us and, thus, “write off” expenses for books, a computer and instruments purchased while in vet school.
- ✓ Establish and adhere to a budget that keeps my spending down to no more than \$35,000, \$38,000, \$42,000, \$50,000 (pick your number here) for tuition, fees, and expenses for the entire school year.
- ✓ Research and start or continue a retirement investment account ([www.vanguard.com](http://www.vanguard.com) among others). I will focus on finding an IRA provider that allows me to minimize fees to maximize my retirement savings. If it is possible, I will add an additional investment to save money for a down payment on a house. (Keep in mind that a Roth IRA may accomplish both.)
- ✓ Based on what Fritz Wood, CPA, CFP says, gather information on the index stock fund offered as the Vanguard Total US Stock Market Fund VTSMX and its sister index fund titled the Total International Fund VGTSX to see if this no-load, low overhead stock fund would be the best place to park our money for retirement. I will also consider a no-load target retirement fund from any of a number of brokerages to accomplish this goal with minimal effort. Finally, I will review investment opportunities in ETFs (Exchange Traded Funds) that own stocks or commodities in sectors of the market and have none of the administrative costs that exist with mutual funds.
- ✓ **Review my notes from *Personal Finance* or *Contracts*, spend an hour on the [www.finaid.com](http://www.finaid.com) and [www.graduateleverage.com](http://www.graduateleverage.com) websites learning about repayment options. Talk with our school’s financial aids representative about extending my loans and various repayment options.**
- ✓ Create an educated, money-wise plan to buy a replacement vehicle within \_\_\_\_\_ years of graduation.
- ✓ Contact the school’s financial aid office and apply for at least one scholarship of \$1,500. If I need a supplemental loan, I understand that I can contact the American Veterinary Medical Foundation (AVMF) at [www.avmf.org](http://www.avmf.org).
- ✓ Track my expenses for three consecutive months (using the cash expenses program in my PDA) sometime prior to October of senior year to help me establish a more reliable budget.

- ✓ **Update the U of Minnesota computer-generated budget I created during our Career Development class by January 1 prior to graduation using: [www.finsim.umn.edu/](http://www.finsim.umn.edu/) so I know how to answer the “what salary are you going to need” question during job interviews.**
- ✓ Pack a lunch every day during clinics to save ~\$5.00 a day plus the time it takes to go get food! If I pay attention, I can still eat the food I love and save money over buying lunch every day.
- ✓ As suggested in Dr. Wilson’s notes, check out [www.salaryexpert.com](http://www.salaryexpert.com) for salaries in various ZIP codes or cities in the U.S.A. or by city, state and/or country.

## PROFESSIONAL PLAN

- ✓ Continue to use **POSITIVE ENERGY** to stay balanced and centered when faced with adversity in clinics and/or the work place. Read one of the two books on positive thinking (*How Full Is Your Bucket* or *Zen and the Art of Happiness*) from the Life Skills Reading List in Dr. Wilson’s *Making the Transition* notes.
- ✓ Enroll in a Toastmasters International club. Check out local options at [www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org) to see when meetings are held so as to develop my time management, listening, and articulate, succinct communication and public speaking skills while, hopefully, meeting potential new clients.
- ✓ Seriously consider what I would look for in a mentor and start searching for someone who would be willing to mentor me as I embark on my professional veterinary career.
- ✓ **By the winter of my third year, check out all the AAVC matching internships in the country by reviewing their outlines at [www.virmp.org](http://www.virmp.org)** and decide if this is something I really would like to do. If “yes,” schedule an externship at the one or two that are highest on my list to enhance my chances of getting my first choice. Have application for matching program ready and send it in by the first Tuesday in December of my fourth year of vet school.
- ✓ **Complete the application process for the NAVLE** by August 1 of my senior year. Resources for applications and dates, cost, practice exam, testing times, sample Web-based examination, and much more are available at [www.nbvme.org](http://www.nbvme.org).
- ✓ **Go to the [www.AAVSB.org](http://www.AAVSB.org) web site, click on the Boards and Agencies button on the left hand side of the home page. Select the state(s) in which I plan to become licensed,** hit the veterinarian requirements button and submit. Once at the state site, click “See Veterinarian Requirements” and follow the options on the individual State Board’s site. Some are much better than others! Determine the costs for the **NAVLE (\$550) and the state board requirements and application fees for each state in which I wish to become licensed.** Build into my budget the costs of travel to and from the testing site(s), lodging, if needed, and any other related costs.
- ✓ **Complete the application for the NAVLE** and plan my studying to be ready to take the computer based exam during the April 11-23, 2011, November 14-December 10, 2011, or April 9-21, 2012 window. If I count back 92 days from the opening of each testing window, I will know the date by which my application must be submitted.
- ✓ Using this same Web site to navigate to state board sites, determine if any of the states I have selected provide temporary licenses in case I don’t pass the exams.
- ✓ By October 31 of senior year, review **Decide if I want to proceed with the “Long Distance Job Search” procedures** outlined in our “Career Development – Making the Transition From Student to Veterinarian” hand outs so as to find an ideal job.
- ✓ By December 31 of my senior year:
  - **Using Dr. Wilson’s *Making the Transition* notes, revise the resume I created in my second or third year of vet school and have it reviewed by one or more friends or colleagues;**

- **Rewrite and/or write my cover letter on at least five separate days, referring to the reference materials and samples in our Career Development or Professional Foundations class;**
- **Update my list of personal or professional references and make sure each party who is listed is prepared to provide a reference;**
- **Print the recipient reply post cards that will be sent out “shotgun style” to prospective employers in areas where I’m searching for jobs along with my resume and cover letter that we learned about in class.**
- ✓ If I decide to forego an internship, complete a list of top choices of veterinary practices for prospective employment by February 28 of my fourth year. To prepare for this exercise, I will start reviewing JAVMA’s classified ads in October of fourth year as well as the list of Web sites found in my career development (*Making the Transition*) notes.
- ✓ By December 31 of senior year, apply for membership in the state VMA(s) where I will most likely seek a job so I can arrange for that VMA’s newsletter to be mailed to me to see what veterinary jobs are available in their classified ads.
- ✓ At a minimum, locate Web sites of preferred state and local VMAs so I can track their classified ads. Use [www.avma.org/statevma/default.asp](http://www.avma.org/statevma/default.asp) and/or [www.iknowledgenow.com](http://www.iknowledgenow.com) as my source for state and other VMA classified ad pages.
- ✓ Send out my job application letters before January 10 (resume, cover letter, reply card) in order to “shot gun” all vet hospitals in the \_\_\_\_\_ area listed in AVMA directory and phone book – as we discussed in our Career Development or Professional Foundations course and *Making the Transition* notes.
- ✓ Carefully track each resume and cover letter I send out, customizing the spreadsheet presented to me in class, including where it went, date it went out, and when I told them I would contact them for an interview.
- ✓ Track replies to the letters and resumes I send out applying for jobs as they come in on a spreadsheet so I can keep an ongoing list of prospective employment opportunities.
- ✓ Respond to each job prospect with a personal phone call, conduct phone interviews with each, and keep records of communications and responses.
- ✓ Create a list of questions I want to ask prospective employers by the end of Christmas vacation of fourth year to be used during a) phone interviews and b) while I am responding to interview questions at the job site. **Review Career Development notes for a template of this document.**
- ✓ **Practice answering the 16 most asked questions that will probably be asked of me (see Career Development notes) with friends and or family – prepare and plan, prepare and plan!**
- ✓ **Research salaries and benefits for associate veterinarians/interns in the geographic areas I plan to interview in, and investigate the cost of living in each of these areas with [www.bestplaces.net/col](http://www.bestplaces.net/col) as described in *Contracts* and *Personal Finance* notes. Based on this information I will determine what I consider a fair salary/benefit package for each geographic area.**
- ✓ Send a handwritten thank you note after each interview.
- ✓ Sit for and do my best to **pass** all board exams in mid-December of senior year. If I don’t pass, I need to apply again for April administrations by February \_\_\_\_\_.
- ✓ Attend our state VMA meeting to find jobs closer to home and arrange for interviews.
- ✓ Find out where the local VMA meeting is in (county or city where I’m searching for work) and, if possible, attend to test the market for job prospects close to school.
- ✓ Complete state(s) VMA membership application(s) and notify all other associations wherein I am a student member of changes in my address after graduation by May 1 of fourth year.
- ✓ Select my first job based on quality medicine, mentorship, support systems and my financial constraints **using the grid provided at the back of our Career Development/*Making the Transition* notes.**

- ✓ Complete licensing application process by assuring that my diploma and correct current address info are provided to each state board at the time of graduation.
- ✓ **CELEBRATE** my graduation!

## **GOALS FOR YEAR 1 POST-GRADUATION**

### **PERSONAL PLAN**

- ✓ Begin my first **mentored** job as a veterinarian in August, after a break from school, well-balanced and refreshed.
- ✓ Continue my commitment to continued personal growth by reading at least two of the books on the reading list in our Career Development notes. If I haven't read them, this will be the year to read *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Steven Covey or *Working with Emotional Intelligence* by Daniel Goleman.
- ✓ Exercise 30-45 minutes at least three times weekly. See if this could be a fringe benefit provided by my employer.
- ✓ If in a committed relationship: **PRESERVE TIME for my significant other**. If single: **PRESERVE TIME to look for one!**
- ✓ Re-evaluate our career objectives and personal and family goals together by New Year's Day.
- ✓ Take one day trip monthly and one weekend trip every six months with my spouse to strengthen our relationship and commitment.
- ✓ Continue to keep in touch with family and friends.
- ✓ Keep my social life active by joining special interest clubs (biking, birding, reading), gym/spa or become involved in community projects. If I'm still single, use these opportunities as social outlets to make friends other than in my work environment. Also, use these opportunities to rekindle friendships that have may have struggled during veterinary school.
- ✓ Set aside 15-30 minutes/day to walk my dogs and find games to entertain my cat.
- ✓ Recognize that if something seems like an indulgence, but in reality improves my perspective on life, health and productivity, and prevents "burn-out" it may not be as indulgent as I thought.

### **FINANCIAL PLAN**

- ✓ Revise and develop a new budget by January 1 of this year, with my spouse, using the U of Minnesota computer budget program [www.finsim.umn.edu](http://www.finsim.umn.edu) and stick with it.
- ✓ Evaluate my income production and have my employer evaluate my staff and client acceptance at work at three, six, nine, and 12 months after commencing employment, so I can determine when, and if, I deserve a raise.
- ✓ Ask for and receive performance evaluations at each of the above dates.
- ✓ Be on track to earn at least \$65,000? \$75,000?, \$85,000? \$100,000 by the end of my first year as a veterinarian. Remember, I must produce revenue equal to 5x that amount in small animal practice or 4x that in large.
- ✓ Start or continue a retirement investment account if I don't have a 401(k) plan at my job and an additional investment to save money for a down payment on a house. (Keep in mind that a Roth IRA may accomplish both.)
- ✓ Save \$100?, 5%? 10%? of my income each and every month by paying myself first.
- ✓ Pay off \$6,000? \$9,000? of educational and other debts by the end of my first year of employment.

- ✓ Review and select the best medical and dental plans that suit my budget, planning for pregnancy coverage within three more years. I will remember to contact the School's AVMA Group Health & Life Insurance Trust agent to see about the AVMA plan that includes pregnancies and can be transported with me wherever I go.
- ✓ Attend business management, personal development, and personal finance lectures at the CE meetings I attend and not just go to scientific lectures.

## PROFESSIONAL PLAN

- ✓ Enroll in a Toastmasters International club. Check out local options at [www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org) to see when meetings are held so as to develop my time management, listening, and articulate, succinct communication and public speaking skills while, hopefully, meeting potential new clients.
- ✓ **Gather information about and arrange with my employer to complete AAHA's "The Art of Veterinary Practice: Success For Life" week-long seminar in Denver held during November and February each year.** (Maybe combine this with a ski vacation.)
- ✓ Attend at least one of the following major national conventions: the AVMA Convention (July), North American Veterinary Conference in Orlando (January), Midwest Veterinary Conference in Columbus, Ohio (February), Western Veterinary Conference in Las Vegas (February), Central Veterinary Conference in Kansas City, Baltimore or San Diego (August-October), AAEP (December) for networking, CE and job searching. Remember that JAVMA lists most upcoming CE conventions in each issue of that journal or I can find them on [www.avma.org](http://www.avma.org).
- ✓ Evaluate how my immediate career objectives and our family and personal goals will best be fulfilled by June 1 of this year.
- ✓ Decide whether or not to stay at current job.
- ✓ Begin looking for an alternate job and making contacts with vet practices in the area of interest that will be expanding in the next few years and may be looking for a new associate.
- ✓ Update my resume and cover letter using a skill based resume now that I have had one year of experience in private practice. See the Dr. Jonathan Thorn example in my *Making the Transition* notes for a sample of this kind of resume.

## GOALS FOR YEAR 2 POST-GRADUATION

### PERSONAL PLAN

- ✓ Locate a realtor, look at houses or condos, and have saved at least \$15,000 for a down payment on a residence so we can seriously contemplate buying a home or condo rather than renting.
- ✓ Read at least two more books from the life skills list provided with our Career Development notes, one of which will be the *E-Myth Revisited*, if I haven't read it join a book club that will force me to read good novels plus have a social outlet away from work.
- ✓ Set aside two hours each week and one weekend per month for no one other than my spouse so we continue to grow together in our relationship.
- ✓ Plan for two one-week vacations with my spouse: one in August and one in February.
- ✓ Begin discussing a time plan for the advent of kids and how they will affect our careers and financial status.
- ✓ Continue to expand my computer knowledge by taking at least one course focusing on the use of Excel spreadsheets or Quick Books for accounting purposes.
- ✓ Continue my fitness program, including good nutrition and walking with my dog.

- ✓ Join at least one outdoor activities organization such as a running or bicycling club to develop relationships in my new community.
- ✓ Prepare for and run in at least one 6K service organization run.

## FINANCIAL PLAN

- ✓ Evaluate our budget for the planned purchase of a house.
- ✓ Earn at least \$77,000? \$85,000? \$100,000? \$110,000? by the end of this second year of full-time employment. If not, I will meet with my employer and see what I have to do to achieve that type of compensation.
- ✓ Continue saving money – hopefully, 10% of my income can be automatically transferred to savings every month.
- ✓ Have a CFP help me decide whether to pay down debt or save money to buy a residence. Review *Personal Finance* notes from class where case examples illustrate the options.
- ✓ Continue paying off loans and debts on schedule.
- ✓ Start or, hopefully, continue to put a *minimum* of \$2,000 for myself or \$5,000 for myself and my spouse in a retirement fund (NOTE: \$5,000 is the maximum for single person starting in 2008), making sure that the fund is earning a five percent return on investment for me/us.
- ✓ Reassess my financial goals and position with my financial planner/advisor.
- ✓ Set a date with my employer by January 15 of this year to re-evaluate my medical case management skills and financial productivity at work.

## PROFESSIONAL PLAN

- ✓ Continue to expand and update my education by attending the state VMA Convention that exists in the state in which I am working. One third of my CE at that event will be in practice management, leadership training or starting a new veterinary practice.
- ✓ Become more involved by taking on a officer or committee leadership role in my local veterinary medical association to develop some type of network with the colleagues in my community.
- ✓ Update my resume or curriculum vitae using the sample in my *Making the Transition from Student to Associate Career Development* notes (the Jonathan Thorn, DVM example).
- ✓ Schedule a 1.5-hour meeting with my employer and the practice manager to evaluate my current status and determine how much longer I want to remain at this practice and the possibility of practice ownership.
- ✓ Begin making inquiries and strengthening contacts with vet practices in the expanding residential area where we are looking to relocate.
- ✓ Re-evaluate my career and family goals and to decide how best to fulfill them.
- ✓ Make sure I am balancing career and family.