

The 4 Levels of Goal Setting - ikario.com

This is a reference guide to the goal setting concept from episode 22 of the ikario Podcast: ikario.com/022

There are 4 levels of thinking about and setting goals, going from low level/immature to high level/mature. These are:

Level 1: Having Goals

Having goals are about what you want to have, right now. This is a way of thinking where you wish you had already reached a specific end state, ideally with no strings attached.

Examples of having goals:

- I want to have a billion Dollars in my bank account.
- I want to have cars, mansions and beach vacations.
- I want to have lots of social media followers.
- I want to have fame and the adoration of countless fans.
- I want to have the perfect girlfriend/boyfriend/spouse.
- I want to have the perfect relationship.

Level 2: Being Goals

Being goals turn more towards yourself. Here, we think about who we want to be, instead of what we want to have.

Examples of being goals:

- I want to be rich and successful.
- I want to be attractive.
- I want to be charismatic, sociable and well liked.
- I want to be seen as intelligent and sophisticated.
- I want to be a good person.

As you can see from the examples, some being goals are empty and powerless, much like having goals, because they put you in a position of wishing for something good to happen. However, some being goals at least hint at the fact that you have some agency. For example “I want to be charismatic” gives you a little more power than “I want people to like me”. It contains at least the suggestion that you can develop certain traits to get what you want.

Level 3: Becoming Goals

Thinking of goals in terms of *becoming* is constructive. It acknowledges that there is a process to reaching your goals and the frame suggests that it's up to you to do the right things and make the right choices, in order to get what you want.

Examples of becoming goals:

- I want to become rich and successful.
- I want to become highly attractive.
- I want to become charismatic, interesting and intelligent.
- I want to become a better listener.
- I want to become a better teacher and mentor.

Level 4: Doing Goals

The final level is a doing goal. This is when your focus is on what you want to spend your time doing, instead of focusing on a distant end goal. The ultimate outcome is that you spend your time doing the things you want to be doing and this activity happens to move you towards your goals. In short, doing goals are process oriented.

Examples of doing goals:

- I want to build my skills.
- I want to create a successful business and serve my customers exceedingly well.
- I want to work out and eat well to keep my body fit and healthy.
- I want to cultivate deep social connections and work on my listening and communication skills.
- I want to read regularly, feed my curiosity about the world and keep challenging my mind.

Level 4 goals give you the most power, because they aren't about lack (the lack of stuff or accomplishments you've yet to reach). Doing goals are about the process and you win every day when you engage with the process. And it just so happens that if you focus on the process of growing your skills, cultivating social connections, feeding your body and mind etc. that is much more likely to lead to a fat bank account, amazing relationships and all the other stuff a level 1 goal setter can only dream about.

As a final note, you can frame doing goals as a choice: *"I choose to build my skills..."*