



**TIME
FOR
CHANGE**

Growth Map Preview

Guided Strategies for Sustained Progress

Where am I going?

We spend the majority of our waking hours at work, with the average person spending 90,000 hours at work in their lifetime. More than 10 years. Regardless of how you break it down, that's a significant amount of time, and it's important that work provides a strong sense of fulfillment. Work should be something that makes us better as people, while also allowing us to contribute something of value and significance. Work should be remarkable.

You may be starting on this journey with some feedback. It could be formal, such as participating in a 360-feedback survey or completing a development profile. It could also be self-driven – you may simply be looking for ways in which you can grow as a person, build your skills and attributes, and increase your contributions. Whatever your objectives, this guide will provide you with a roadmap to grow. A **Growth Map**. If used intentionally and without haste, you'll have a chance to think about your **ultimate why**:

- What you seek to achieve in your career
- How you can make a greater contribution to the success of your organization
- How you'll navigate around the obstacles you face in reaching those goals

Here's something to keep in mind: most development plans, strategies, and goals fail – or fall way short of expectations. The time, intensity, and intentionality that you put into using this Growth Map will impact your growth, potential to contribute something remarkable to your organization, and ultimately, the ability to reach your big “why.”

Let's begin there. What is your “why”?

Start with why.

Our actions, energy, and effort will make us more successful – and are more meaningful – when we work toward goals that get us where we want to go. You may have several whys for your career and work. You may seek to make a unique impact on the world, provide specific financial contributions or other rewards for yourself and/or others, or want to contribute something meaningful in a greater way. Sometimes the big why is hidden in the why that comes to us first. Let's start by thinking of **three whys** for your career and what you seek to contribute with your life.

Here's an example. James is a manager of a non-profit healthcare clinic. There are two main whys that are important to him. 1) Providing affordable access to quality care for those in his community that would struggle to find it elsewhere. 2) Seeing his team grow and achieve more for themselves and their families. These are his whys. When he finds himself feeling demotivated or disengaged, encounters obstacles that derail his performance, or struggles to move forward, he thinks of how he has helped his team grow and contributed to people living longer and more fulfilling lives because of the preventative care and treatment provided by his clinic.

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Let's begin with identifying the drivers and biggest motivators of your work.

What are your whys?	Why are your whys important to you? Is there another why behind them?	How do these relate to your ultimate whys for your personal or professional life?

Next, where are your team and organization going? How can you help them reach greater levels of success?

We can achieve the remarkable and unimaginable when we combine our own why with the whys and objectives of our team and organization. In fact, we know you're **35% more likely** to reach your goals when they are shared and aligned with those of your team and organization. Additionally, productivity around reaching goals increases by **56%** when you align your goals with those of your organization. Separate from your personal whys, consider these two questions:

What are some of the key objectives your organization is striving to reach?	What can you and/or your team do to reach these goals quickly and with intensity?

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What makes goals powerful?

You'll soon be on your way to developing your **Growth Map** – your specific goals and what you want to achieve!

But first – why do we have goals? According to research by Industrial-Organizational (I-O) Psychologists, goals can do three powerful things:



1. Keep your attention



2. Inspire commitment to strategize



3. Motivate you to persevere

They do this because goals that are effective are both **specific** and **challenging**.

In fact, our I-O Psychologist friends statistically summarized almost 400 studies and found that specific (i.e., measurable) and challenging goals are more successful than general, “do your best!” goals – **in more than 90% of cases**.

Here's what we mean. Imagine that James, the clinic manager from our last example, wants to focus on his big why of developing and growing his team. He is more likely to be successful if he holds himself accountable to having weekly performance feedback conversations with each member of his team – it's specific, and he easily knows if he's on track to reaching his goal – than if his goal is broader, such as “supporting team members in tackling their shortcomings.”

Here are some additional examples of powerful goals that can drive performance instead of those that often fall short.

- Reduce first 90-day turnover by 10% (instead of) Reduce turnover.
- Increase sales this quarter by 10% (instead of) Increase sales overall.

Goals like these are powerful and effective because they are specific, challenging – without being too difficult where we risk falling short or losing motivation – and success is able to be measured and tracked. We can hold ourselves accountable – and so can others.

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Goal Relevance: The Big Picture and “Line of Sight”

Beyond being challenging and specific, goals should be **relevant and important to you** – your big whys. Research shows that your motivation to achieve your goals will be incredibly high when two things are in effect:

1. You set your own goals, rather than having someone set them for you. If there are specific goals set by your organization – or any situation where you are not responsible for setting your own goals – you will be more motivated to reach them if you can:
 - a. Actively contribute to fine-tuning them and devising a plan to reach them.
 - b. Gain clarity around how your performance will help your organization reach those goals and how they will benefit you and your team.
2. Achieving goals will positively impact your team and the organization.

Consider the following when setting your goals – How will reaching this goal impact...



1. Success in my current position?



2. Success as I work toward my desired career path?



3. Success of my team or company?

The last point is very important. It represents the big picture and “**line of sight**” – your understanding of your organization’s objectives and how you can contribute to reaching them by adapting your behavior and achieving your own goals.

Research shows it’s valuable when there is alignment between an organization’s goals and your own. You can imagine how frustrated or even disengaged you might become if you were required to work toward a goal that will unlikely benefit the organization or you.

We already talked about how much of our lives we spend at work – over 10 years, on average – and it’s important that we feel valued. Our engagement research shows that increasing feelings of value and significance by just 10% can reduce intentions to quit by **6% or more**. Naturally, we feel valued when we perceive – and are provided feedback – that we are bringing value to our organization or our team through the work that we do, or what we’re able to achieve. **This makes the whys you considered earlier so important!**

Why Goals Fail

If you were to do a quick search of how often people fail to reach their goals, you might not be too surprised by the statistics. On average, **70%** of people fail to achieve their goals. Even more alarming, a study that looked at the percentage of individuals who succeeded in achieving their personal New Year's goal revealed a success rate of **less than 10%**. So, what are some of the main reasons why we are often unsuccessful in reaching our goals?

Common reasons include 1) Lack of understanding about effective goal-setting; 2) Lack of planning; and 3) Lack of commitment. Luckily, the Growth Map is designed to educate you about effective goal-setting and help you map out your path to reaching your whys – this takes care of #'s 1 and 2. For #3, this again emphasizes the importance of the whys that you considered earlier – if your whys have little to no relevance or importance to you, your commitment and likelihood of success will be low.

The latest research shows that our failure to reach our goals is caused by focusing too much on the **effort** required to be successful when working toward the goal, and not enough on the actual outcome or **rewards** we will gain. It's an **effort-reward focus imbalance**. Rewards – or your big why (or whys) – are critical in influencing the effort that you put forth toward achievement. When we set out to achieve a goal, our focus is naturally on the reward it will bring.

James, from our previous examples, will naturally focus on the expected growth and commitment of his team. We envision how we will feel when we reach our goal, and that spurs us to action. What often happens, however, for people who fail to reach their goals is they are faced with the reality of the actions and steps they must take (i.e., the effort they need to put forth) to make it happen. Their focus shifts away from the reward to the effort required once they get started, which becomes demotivating. Instead of refocusing on the reward as we begin and progress on the journey to reaching our goal, **we focus too much on the effort required** – resulting in a greater chance of failure. **The problem is that we fail to refocus on the reward** as often as needed to keep our efforts and actions in perspective as the only way to reach success. What does this mean for you?

- You must pursue your whys with as much realistic understanding of the effort needed to be successful.
- Your whys must be important and motivating to you – enough to counter any negative feelings toward the effort you have to put forth to reach them.
- Once you begin working toward your goal, you must refocus on the reward – your big why – as often as needed to stay motivated. Focusing too much on the effort will derail you.

Navigating Obstacles to Goal Achievement

On your journey to achieving your whys, you will likely encounter different roadblocks, setbacks, and even failures. If you are unprepared to navigate these challenges, it will be extremely difficult for you to get back on track, if at all. Below, we highlight some of the latest behavioral strategies and research on goal-setting that you can use to ensure you are successful when the going gets tough.

Planning Fallacy

Planning Fallacy is the tendency to underestimate how long it will take to complete a task – or to reach a goal. This can even happen with tasks that are familiar to you and that you have completed before! Our I-O Psychologist friends explain that this happens due to our tendency to be optimistic. When we're asked how long it will take to complete a task or achieve a goal, we consider the best-case scenario, even when asked to present the most realistic one. What often happens is the worst-case scenario. In planning, we tend to focus on the overall goal, rather than all of the smaller steps along the way, which causes us to overlook key actions or obstacles that we should consider when determining how long it will take us. To avoid being a victim of the planning fallacy, you should:

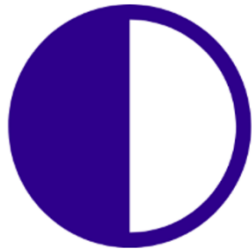
- Break down your goals into easily **actionable steps** and consider how long each will take to complete.
- **Leverage data** (if available) to determine how long similar goals have taken to achieve.
- Operate on the **worst-case scenario**. For example, if your goal is to reduce time-to-hire by 20%, one of your tasks may be to review different Applicant Tracking Systems. You would need to consider all of the time it will take just to vet these different systems, along with worst-case scenarios (e.g., finding an optimal system only to find out that it won't integrate with your other essential business technology).
- Use **time-motion words** (e.g., You only have five days to complete this task), rather than ego-motion words (e.g., You still have five days to complete this task) to increase your sense of urgency.

Mental Contrasting

Mental Contrasting is a strategy you can use to visualize the positives and benefits of achieving a goal, along with obstacles that may get in your way, and then take action. First, think about the goal you want to achieve and how you would feel if it became a reality. How would it benefit you? Your team? Your organization? Then, consider the obstacles that could get in the way of reaching your goal, how to address them, and what would happen or how you would feel if you failed. This is the key to mental contrasting – **visualizing the obstacles that are likely to get in your way, and the impact of not reaching your goal.**

For example, let's say that your goal is to reduce 90-day turnover by 10%. The benefits may include strengthening your culture and building committed, stable, and high-performance teams. The obstacles that may get in the way could include poor leadership causing employees to leave, or insufficient training and onboarding. Your goal to reduce turnover may require you to first focus on the training and onboarding piece – that might be one of the smaller steps on the way to achieving your goal – which will have its own steps! Mental contrasting forces you to think about what could go wrong to change your approach to reaching your goal, with the idea that the consequences of failing to reach your goal will be greatly outweighed by the benefits you will gain from being successful.

Once again, research by our I-O Psychologist friends tells us that mental contrasting leads to greater goal commitment by balancing your present reality with where you want to be or what you want to achieve. **When your expectation of achieving your goal is high**, despite any possible obstacles, mental contrasting provides the energy and drive you need to make your goals a reality.



Mental Contrasting



Framing



If-Then Thinking

Framing

Framing is the idea that how a goal is presented (i.e., framed) impacts how you act and persist to achieve it. This strategy is useful for when you first set goals, as well as when you encounter roadblocks.

Let's imagine that one of your goals is to be viewed by your team as more empathetic. This goal can be framed in a couple of ways:

- Negative – “I want to be a more empathetic leader because my team thinks I’m a jerk.”
- Positive – “I want to be a more empathetic leader because it will allow me to build stronger relationships with my team.”

When goals have negative connotations, self-criticism and demotivation can occur from failures or setbacks. However, when those same failures or setbacks occur when goals are framed positively, you're more likely to view obstacles as challenges to overcome, and to reflect on any mistakes that you make as learning opportunities.

Our I-O Psychologist friends are back with more research! When performance goals are framed positively, people perform significantly greater than those who frame their goals negatively.

If-Then Thinking

If-Then Thinking is another type of framing. You first begin with your goal and then use **if-then statements** to frame what you will do about any anticipated obstacles that will prevent your success, helping you to stay on track and be accountable.

Let's use the 90-day turnover goal again as our example. An example of if-then thinking would be:

- **If** I begin to feel frustrated or overwhelmed about reducing 90-day turnover...
- **Then** I'll check in with my supervisor or a trusted colleague to discuss progress and share ideas for how to proceed.”

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The link between the driver of the statement (“if”) and the action (“then”) will become strong enough to help you change how you react going forward if you encounter setbacks, helping you to stay committed and motivated. A review of almost 100 studies on goal-setting found that people who used the if-then technique were **two to three times more likely** to reach their goals, compared to those who did not.

Audience Relative Status

It's well-known that making your goals visible and known to others significantly improves your commitment to and ability to reach them. However, new research goes beyond this to demonstrate that the **perceived relative status** of who you share your goals with affects your likelihood of commitment and success.

It's not enough for you to make your goals known to just anyone. **They should be made known to someone you perceive as having a higher status** – someone for whom you have tremendous respect and view as a leader in your organization. However, this depends on the goal itself and you as a person, as this can backfire in the form of something we call **evaluation apprehension** – the anxiety caused by being supervised and evaluated. Depending on your personality, sharing your goals with someone who you respect can make you more driven, but can have a negative effect on your ability or willingness to reach your goals. You may create so much anxiety in trying to impress someone that it could interfere with your performance.

The main takeaway is to know yourself well enough to determine if sharing your goal with someone on your team or organization for whom you have a tremendous amount of respect will be helpful for you, and to make sure that this individual is capable of providing you with positive, constructive, reinforcing, and motivating feedback.

Immediate Rewards

The pursuit of your whys is likely linked to a delayed, future reward. James, from our previous examples, isn't going to see notable improvements in his team's commitment and professional growth overnight. Being able to do without immediate benefits to reach your big why is important – but wouldn't immediate benefits along the way also help us follow through on our goals? Research says “Yes!”

The availability of immediate rewards along the way to reaching your big why is a stronger driver of goal commitment and persistence than delayed rewards. While delayed rewards may motivate your goal-setting and intentions to pursue your whys, research shows that **immediate rewards** are more strongly associated with actual persistence in reaching your big why. So, make sure to structure your goals in a way that allows for smaller, meaningful, and motivating rewards along the way to maintain commitment and ensure success.

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Let's recap what you've learned so far.

Planning Fallacy

You are likely to underestimate how long it will take to reach your goals. Instead, break your goals down into a series of smaller steps and anticipate obstacles you may encounter.

Framing

When goals are framed positively, rather than negatively, performance to achieve is significantly greater.

Mental Contrasting

Visualize the positives and benefits of reaching your goals, and the obstacles that may get in your way and how to surpass them. This leads to greater goal commitment.

If-Then Thinking

Using if-then thinking keeps you on track and accountable – and you are 2 to 3 times more likely to be successful in reaching your goals.

Audience Relative Status

Goal commitment and follow-through is significantly greater when you share your goals with someone for whom you have tremendous respect, such as a peer or leader.

Immediate Rewards

Goal commitment and persistence is significantly greater when there are immediate rewards to be gained along the way to reaching your larger goal.

Up to now, we have covered the science of what makes goal-setting effective and goal achievement possible, why goals often fail or fall short, and strategies you can deploy to prevent shortcomings. It's now time to create your Growth Map! The rest of this guide is structured to help you identify the goals you want to achieve and how to do so.



GROWTH MAP

Key Takeaways and Self-Reflection

Take a moment to reflect on any feedback – either formal or informal – that you’ve received recently or in the past regarding your performance and focus areas for growth. In reflecting on this information, it can be helpful to frame this feedback as strengths and focus areas (i.e., opportunities). As you reflect and record your thoughts below, consider the following:

- Does this feedback align with my self-perceptions of my strengths and opportunities?
- Am I surprised by any of the feedback that I’ve received?
- How can I leverage this information to help fine-tune my whys and set meaningful goals?
- How does this feedback potentially relate to my whys and what I want to achieve?

Use the space below to record your thoughts.