

# THE VALUE OF SETTING FAMILY GOALS

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Possibly the most valuable method of successfully directing and managing a family is to set goals. There are three types of goals that are important. The first goal to be discussed is to introduce values for your family to live by. The second is for behavior modification, and the third are goals for achievement.

Values are standards, principles, ideals, expectations or a code of ethics that you wish your family to live by. Examples of core values are honesty, loyalty, commitment, obedience, respect, trust, forgiveness and integrity. Most parents have at least some of these values clearly in their minds but the application often becomes inconsistent or blurred due to situation or mood at any given time. Children can't read our minds and they don't learn only by osmosis. Unless you explain these values to your children, they can seem like puffy clouds floating in the air waiting to be interpreted as best suits the occasion. Values should apply equally to the whole family. It is not, "Do as I say, not as I do."

It is a good idea to create a chart to display your values. Decide which ones are most important and write them down in the first column in priority order. Beside each one, in the second column, write what that value will look like in your home. For example, if the value is 'respect', your description might be, "We speak kindly to one another." "We look after our stuff." "We do as our teacher says." "When we borrow something we give it back as we found it."

The third column is for your plan of action. The first step in introducing your family to your values is to explain and train your children to meet your expectations for that value. Then you give them time to practice to get it right and praise them for their efforts. For example, when a child is being disrespectful, explain how you want him to act. Give and allow him time to learn. When he speaks respectfully, praise him for it. If he continues to be disrespectful then explain the consequences and apply them. The fourth column is for a suggested time frame for the goal to be achieved in introducing that particular value.

Any time you want to change behaviors you can do so by using the chart suggested above. You might decide that bedrooms need to be neat and tidy. You might want to create more efficient routines for the smooth running of your household, or to teach children particular chores. Explain what you want and why. Demonstrate if necessary. Give the children time to learn how to get it right. Praise them for a job well done. Apply preset consequences if necessary.

The last form of goal setting using a chart system is to create goals for family members to meet. It might be learning to play an instrument, going on a

trip, studying for and passing exams or hiking a nature trail. You name the goal you want to achieve in the first column (run a half marathon), describe what it will look like in the second column (run the race in under 1 hour 45 minutes), then create a plan of action in the third column (get a coach, follow the training schedule, enter a half marathon) and a time frame for completion in the 4<sup>th</sup> column (run the half marathon in 2012).

We rarely achieve anything without having clear goals. We never learn to master a skill without practicing to become perfect. We never get anywhere in life without incentive and we never internalize values without training. It is a simple thing to create a plan to achieve goals. It is a wonderful way to become self-disciplined, tenacious and immensely satisfied with the end result.

If you have any comments or questions on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact us at [sally@forefrontfamilies.org](mailto:sally@forefrontfamilies.org). We invite you to also check out our website at [www.forefrontfamilies.org](http://www.forefrontfamilies.org) and our blog site at [www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com](http://www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com) for further assistance.