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## Goal Setting

### V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

#### **Themes:**

- Making meaningful, professional goals that emphasize the ideal life-work balance for the lawyer, both personally and professionally.

#### **Conversation Starters:**

- Think about a goal that you set at some point in your life that is unrelated to your legal practice. Why did you set that goal? What steps did you take to achieve that goal?
- What type of goals do you think lawyers should make at different stages of their careers? Why should lawyers make those goals?
- What qualities do you think a life or career goal should have? Why should a goal have those qualities?

#### **Activities:**

- Let's begin by finding your greatest strengths. Although many people create goals to improve their weaknesses, goals can also help you maximize your strengths. Answer the questions below to help determine some of the good qualities you already have that you would like to make better.
  - What do you consider to be your greatest abilities and talents?
  - How could you make the most of them in the future?
  - Where do you find yourself most often wanting to help or be of assistance to others? In your day-to-day practice? In your life?
  - What tasks are you most motivated to do? In your day-to-day practice? In your life?
  - What would your closest friends say are your top ten strengths? Do you agree? Why or why not? How are you/could you put those strengths to work in your practice?
- Attorneys can also set goals to improve their professional standing. Consider some of the questions below to assess your current professional standing and where you would most like to grow.
  - What are the top three professional successes (big or small) you have achieved in the last 6 to 12 months? What made those successes stand out? What skills did you harness in achieving those successes?
  - What are your values and how can use those values to guide you in finding balance between your personal and professional goals?

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#### Activities (continued):

- Looking forward, what would you consider a large and profound professional success for you? What steps do you need to take to achieve that success? What does that success tell you about your career trajectory?
- Who are your preferred clients? What is it that you like about these clients? How can you get more clients like these?
- What career opportunities have you taken advantage of? What career opportunities are you not taking advantage of? Are you happy with your choices? Are there any opportunities you want to take advantages of in the future?
- What stock do you put in lawyer rating systems like Martindale-Hubbe, AVVO.com, Super Lawyers, etc.? What is the difference between these systems and traditional word-of-mouth ratings used by lawyers for centuries? Are these rating systems helpful in evaluating how effective you are as a lawyer?
- Over the next five years, what do you want to see in your future? Consider not just your professional career but also your non-lawyer life. Consider what changes in your non-lawyer life will do to your professional career and vice versa.
- Find your favorite goal setting method in the list below. Use that methods to create 3 to 5 goals for your legal career.
  - S.M.A.R.T. Goals are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound. This goal method is one of the most popular and can be traced to an article by Peter Drucker in 1981.
  - Aspirational Goals are affirmative statements that motivate you towards achieving them. Aspirational goals need to create a sense of urgency but do not necessarily require all the elements of S.M.A.R.T. Goals. Often, aspirational goals are based on a statement about why the goal is valuable and important rather than a specific target.
  - Locke and Latham's 5 Principles of Goal Setting is based on the concepts of clarity, challenge, commitment, feedback, and task complexity. You can find more by reading Building a Practically Useful Theory of Goal Setting and Task Motivation: A 35 Year Odyssey, American Psychologist 57(9):705-17 (October 2002).

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#### **Activities (continued):**

- OKRs are based on Objectives and Key Results. The objectives are what you hope to accomplish and are not normally measurable. The key results are based on the objective and are almost always defined with a specific number.
- BSQ goals are “Think Big – Act Small – Move Quick.” One “Thinks Big” when they define the ultimate goal, they then “Act Small” by identifying the milestones that will help achieve that goal, and then they “Move Quick” by coming up with a timeline for achieving each milestone. This theory was developed by psychologist David Van Rooy and published in his book Trajectory.
- BHAG (pronounced BEE-hag) goal setting tends to be big-picture goals with a visionary aspect. BHAG stands for Big Hairy Audacious Goal. These goals are “audacious 10 to 30 year goals” that propel you toward your vision. For example, Microsoft’s BHAG was “a computer on every desk and in every home.” It was developed by authors James Collins and Jerry Poras in Built to Last.

#### **Resources:**

- Discuss what additional resources the mentor/mentee have found useful in their own practice.
- [S.M.A.R.T. Goals](#)
- [Locke and Latham’s 5 Principles of Goal Setting](#)
- [BSQ goal setting framework](#)
- [BHAG](#)