

# How to Create a Personal Development Plan

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Nobody ever wrote down a plan to be broke, fat, lazy, or stupid. Those things are what happen when you don't have a plan! – Larry Winget

Before I share with you a powerful **personal development plan example**, I want you to fully understand why it is important to have a [personal development](#) plan.

## Why Do You Need a Personal Development Plan?

Have you ever gone on a holiday with no or little planning?

I did, and instead of having an adventurous and spontaneous journey, I ended up being frustrated because I needed to plan everything during the journey.

It is very hard to fully enjoy the trip if you constantly need to think about where to sleep, what to eat, and where to go.

It is much easier to travel when you have at least some big picture vision and an idea of where you want to go, as well as a basic plan of the things you want to do.

It's even easier if you have a more detailed plan.

It is the same with the journey of life. Many people just live life with no or little planning, so it is no surprise when they end up being frustrated or asking themselves "How did I end up here?"

That's why it is important to prepare a plan in advance.

Jim Rohn said:

I find it fascinating that most people plan their vacations with better care than they plan their lives. Perhaps that is because escape is easier than change.

If you don't think and plan in advance, you can easily end up being angry, frustrated, and not satisfied with your life.

There are other benefits of having a **personal development plan**.

If you ever find yourself feeling lost in life, you can just look into your plan and remind yourself where you want to go. *A personal development plan* is your guideline for life!

By "developing" your future, you will get a better sense of control over your life and you will make [better decisions](#) on the way.

If you are a driver, and you want to make your journey more pleasurable, you need to know where you are going and how you will get there. Good preparation decreases the risk of things going wrong with your journey.

It's the same with a personal development plan – it increases possibilities that your life will go in the right direction.

If you like the idea of having a personal development plan, you are probably asking yourself: “Where to start?”

## So, Where to Start?

A *personal development plan* helps you to structure your thinking. We constantly plan and think in our head, but very often we miss important details and we don't create a realistic strategy to realize that plan. That's why many “plans” stay just in our dreams.

A **personal development plan** is a process that consists of defining what is important to you, what you want to achieve, what strengths you already have that help to achieve your goals, and what you need to improve and develop with time.

When you are developing or designing something new, that's usually not finished overnight. That's why you need to be prepared that every important plan will take time before it's realized.

To make things easier, it's a good idea to have a **personal development plan template**.

## Personal Development Plan Template

I've designed [this personal development plan template](#) to help you structure your thinking and create a strategic plan for achieving your goals.

If you want to achieve anything important, you need to take time to make a detailed plan.

There are some important things to consider when creating a *personal development plan*. Here are 9 steps that can help you to create a good *personal development plan*:

1. Define your goals
2. Prioritize
3. Set a deadline
4. Understand your strengths
5. Recognize opportunities and threats
6. Develop new skills
7. Take action
8. Get support
9. Measure progress

## Define Your Goals

What is important to you? Which new skills do you want to get? Which achievements would make you happier? Do you have any unfulfilled dreams which you are now ready to accomplish? Do you want to move ahead to the next stage in your career? Do you want to get a better job?

The first step is to define goals that are really important to you. It can be something related to your career, but also something that will enrich or improve your personal life (like lose weight, start a new hobby/activity, or learn a new language).

**Step 1:** Write down 5-10 goals which are important for you to achieve.



## Personal Development Plan Template

### Step 1:

Important goals that I want to achieve:

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

### **Prioritize**

Out of all goals you wrote down, which one is the most important? This is your key goal which will be your **focus**.

Maybe you want a career change or you want to achieve a good physical shape or acquire some new skills.

Are there any transferable skills (skills which you can transfer to different areas of life) that would be important for your success? For example, if you improve speaking skills, the result can be more confidence, better relationships and communication with others, and even business success (e.g. more successful negotiations and more sales).

The purpose of a personal development plan is to help you expand your knowledge, develop new skills, or improve important areas of life.

**Step 2:** Take a good look at your list and select one goal which is the most important to you and that you will work on first.

### **Set a Deadline**

If you have a goal but don't know when you want to achieve it, chances are it will never happen.

Also, if you are planning to achieve a big project in a very short period of time, again, chances are it will not happen.

When planning, you need to be realistic, specific and make good assumptions time-wise.

Rather than saying "I want to be a millionaire someday," it's better to make a plan to double your income this year.

How long will it take you to achieve your goal?

Once you have a realistic timeframe for your goal, it's important to commit that you will really do it. Be serious about it. If you are not the one who is taking your plan seriously, nobody else will either.

Instead of focusing on problems and obstacles that could happen, think about how great you will feel when it's done. You can also define how you will reward yourself when you manage to achieve your goal.

**Step 3:** Set a deadline.

## Understand Your Strengths

Everyone in the world is good at something and has above average skills/strengths in some specific areas. Even if you are not a talented singer, actor, or artist, you can still be a good parent, excellent listener, or a caring person.

What are your key strengths?

If you are not sure about the answer, then ask your friends and family.

Ask them "What do you think are my biggest strengths?"

Maybe you will be surprised with their answers. Your key strengths are something what makes you unique and special. No one can ever take that from you.

It's very important for your confidence to be aware of your strengths.

Are you a well-organized, patient, persistent, outgoing, intelligent, brave, fast-learner, talented, open-minded...?

**Step 4:** Once you understand what your strengths are, write down which of these strengths can help you to achieve your goal.

## Recognize Opportunities and Threats

Your current behaviors and habits can either support or not support you to achieve your goal.

Which of yours habits or actions are threats to your goal achievement?

These are the things you need to stop doing.

For example, if your goal is to live 100 years, then you need to stop smoking, stop buying junk food, stop worrying about things, etc.

Write down at least 5 things that you commit you will stop doing.

On the other hand, there are some new actions that are opportunities for you to achieve goals much easier.

What actions can you choose to start doing that will help you to achieve your goal?

If you want to save more money, then for example you can start managing your money, you can start writing down your expenses, you can start spending less, etc.

Write down 5 things you commit to start doing.

**Step 5:** Create a start doing and stop doing list!

START DOING	STOP DOING
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

## Develop New Skills

A personal development plan is a plan for how to get from the place you are now to the place where you want to be.

If you want to get something, you will need to give something in return.

For example, if your goal is to move ahead to the next stage in your career, you will have to learn new skills.

If you want to start your own business, you will have to learn about marketing, sales, entrepreneurship, finances, etc.

A Quote by Brian Tracy:

For everything you want in life, there is a price you must pay, in full and in advance. Decide what you really want and then determine the price you'll have to pay to achieve it. Remember, to achieve something you've never achieved before — you must do something you have never done before. You must become someone whom you have never been before. Whatever you want, you'll have to pay a price measured in terms of: sacrifice, time, effort, and personal discipline. Decide what it is and start paying that price today.

In other words, to achieve something you have never achieved before, you need to develop skills you have never had before and start working on those skills as soon as possible.

Which skills or knowledge will help you to achieve your goal?

**Step 6:** Write down the list of the skills you need to develop, which will help you achieve your goal.

## Take Action

If you want to achieve a big goal, there will be many actions you will need to take.

**Step 7:** Write down at least 3-5 most important actions you will need to take within your defined timeframe.

## Get Support

Who can help you to achieve your goals faster?

For example, if you want to change your career, you can consider talking with a career adviser; if you want to lose weight, you can have a fitness coach; if you want to improve your finances, you can talk with a financial adviser...

**Step 8:** List anyone who you can think of who would be able to help you to achieve your goal.

## Measure Progress

The best motivator to stay persistent in achieving goals is your own progress. Even if it is a little progress, it is still something.

It is important to recognize that you are moving forward and to write down things that you are doing well.

If something is not going so well, what can you do differently?

If something is not going well, that means that you need to change (or improve) the strategies you are using. By doing the same things, you will be getting the same results. If you want better results, you need to change something.

**Step 9:** Write down things that you need to improve and define new strategies which you will try. Your responsibility is to make things work for you.

What's working well (my accomplishments)	What do I need to change (improve)

This 9-step [Personal Development Plan Template](#) helps you to create a detailed plan for the goal that is the most important to you. You can use the same template to work on the other important goals or you can use [this short version of the template](#) to quickly plan less prioritized goals.

A personal development plan is a very powerful method to assess your life, define what is really important for you, and to start working on things that matter the most. Often in our life we are so busy with our day-to-day activities that we rarely have time for important thinking and planning.

Exercises like this can help you to get more clarity about goals that are the most important to you and to create realistic strategies for how you will achieve them.

I suggest that you create a new personal development plan every year, and there is no better time to do this than beginning of the year (January).

[Personal Development Plan Template.pdf](#)

[Personal Development Plan Template Short Version.pdf](#)