

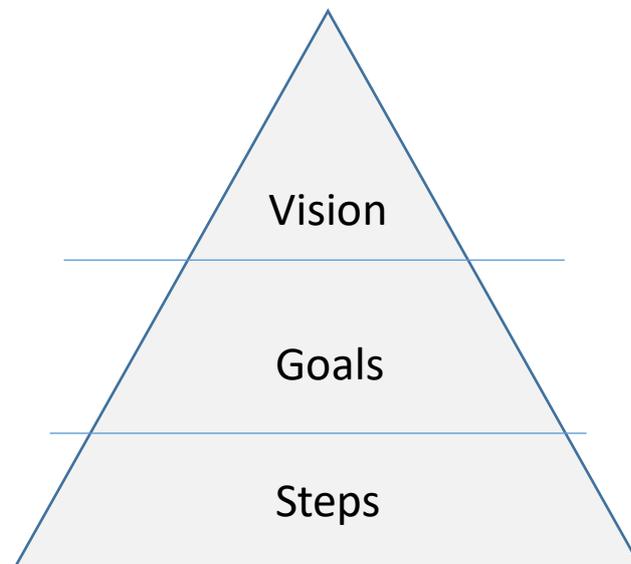
Staying motivated with the **GOAL-SETTING PYRAMID** by Maja Storch

Setting goals is one thing. Actively pursuing them can be a very different story. Sometimes we simply lack the necessary get-up-and-go, even though we know very well what we should do. Why does that happen?

New insights from research on goal setting and motivation show that we need to have a **positive, emotionally charged picture** of the target state we want to achieve to be able to pursue our goals efficiently. In other words, we need to have a clear idea why the effort will be worth it, a vision that motivates all of our senses.

The model of the goal-setting pyramid shows how this vision sits on top of a broad base of steps we need to take to achieve specific goals:

- Picture the pyramid. The top points the way to where you want to go. That's your **vision**. This vision is essential because it helps you to take specific (sometimes tiresome) steps to achieve your goals and to keep up your work. For example, your vision could be a successful career in a certain field: being a successful lawyer or the dynamic founder of an exciting start-up.
- The second level is the level of **specific goals**. You may already be familiar with these kinds of goals from the management by objectives approach or the S.M.A.R.T.¹ goals acronym. Examples of such goals may include things like completing a specialization or studying abroad. These goals are the stepping-stones that will bring you closer to fulfilling your vision.
- The bottom level is the level of the **individual steps** required for achieving your goals, for example making a plan for studying efficiently, reading literature for your bachelor's thesis, or conducting interviews.



¹S.pecific / M.easurable / A.ttractive / R.ealistic / T.ime-limited

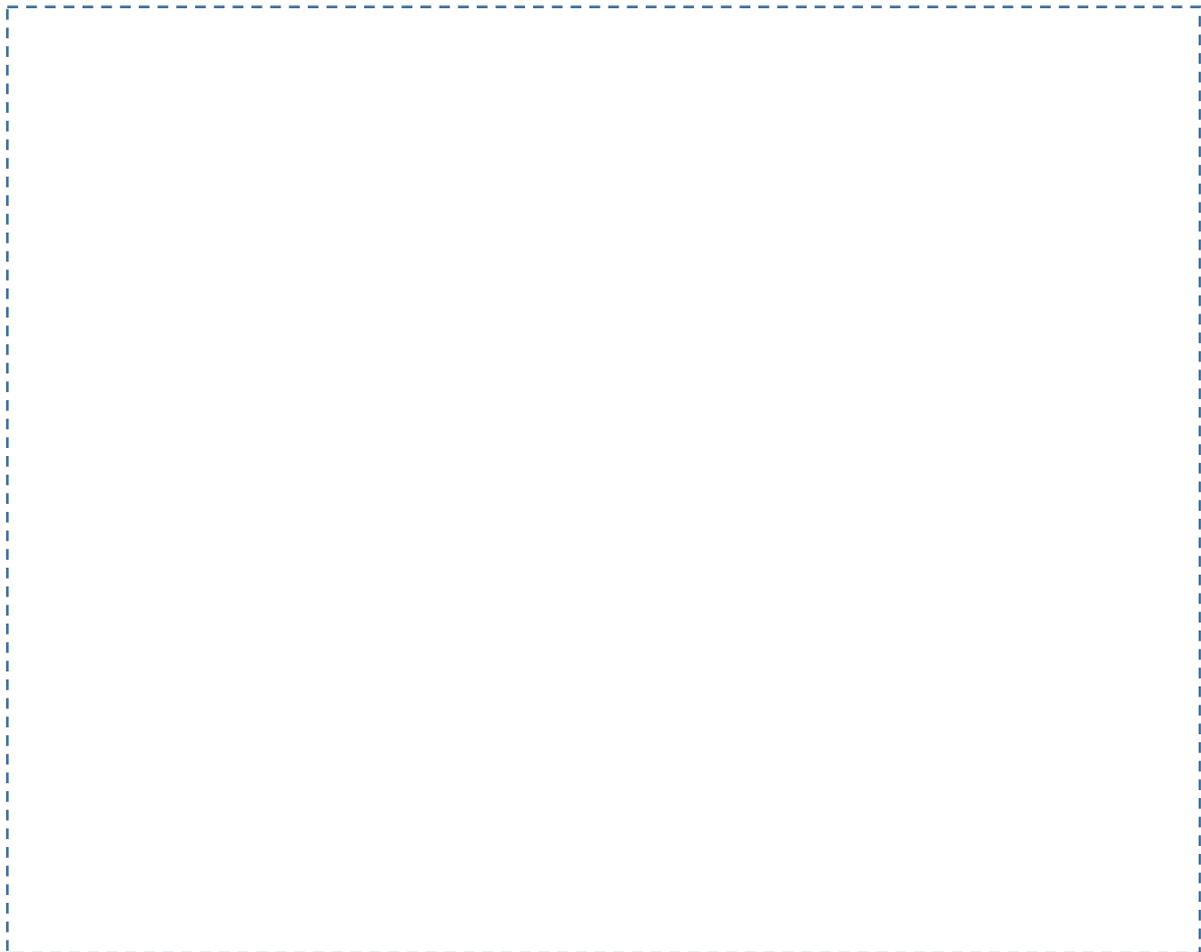
To stay motivated, it is important that all of these levels line up with each other. If you lack one of the levels, you may run out of steam along the way. You can use the following worksheet to work on any of these levels to develop them properly, depending on which of them you feel needs closer attention.

1) Working on your vision

Many of us have a clear picture of our specific goals. “Completing my bachelor’s degree” is a specific and measurable goal for many students. But do they also have a clear vision behind this goal? Where do they see themselves after completing their degree? Where do they want to go from there?

If you don’t have a clear picture of this vision behind your goals, it may be a good idea to take a closer look at your vision and develop it properly.

As a first step, you might want to try to visualize your vision. Set aside an hour of your time and dream up a future scenario that you want to aim for. You can also discuss this scenario with fellow students, friends, or roommates. Do you have any dreams or ideas of your ideal future? Write them down:



2) Define specific goals

Some people have a very clear picture of their vision and identify strongly with the future scenario they're aiming for. However, some of these "visionaries" lack the perseverance needed to develop a concrete plan and define specific goals for moving towards their vision.

What about you? Do you think it would be helpful to take a S.M.A.R.T. look at your goals? This section is intended to help you define the individual stepping-stones for achieving your vision.

Please always make sure that your goals are in fact specific, measurable, attractive, realistic, and time-limited (i.e. they can be achieved by a specific date).

Here are 2 examples:

| | <i>Anna</i> <i>"Being a successful business lawyer"</i> | <i>Jens</i> <i>"Launching a start-up for sustainable sportswear"</i> |
|---------|--|---|
| Goal 1 | Bachelor's in Business Law | Bachelor's in Business, Economics and Social Sciences |
| Goal 1a | Fundamentals of Civil Law | Working part-time at a sporting goods shop |
| Step | Course, exam preparations... | Send out job applications |
| Goal 2 | Internship at a law firm | Participate in the Entrepreneurship Avenue |
| Goal 3 | Master's in Business Law | Master's in Socio-Ecological Economics and Policy |
| Goal 4 | | Participate in the WU Start-Up Challenge |

You can adapt this table to fit your personal vision.

- Which specific goals do you have to complete on the way towards achieving your vision?
- Which specific steps result from these goals in the near future?

Goals and steps are closely interrelated. Taken by itself, each step can also be seen as a small, preliminary goal.

Distinguishing between all these levels will help you maintain a clear long-term perspective and evaluate the usefulness of the individual steps you're taking.

If unforeseen developments force you to change some goals, it may be a good idea to adapt the pyramid. If you feel you need support in going through all of these items, we're available to assist you.

Source & further reading:

Storch, Maja (2014): Das Züricher Ressourcen Modell ZRM: Ressourcen aktivieren mit Motto-Zielen. In: J.Schaller & H. Schemmel (Eds.) 2014, Ressourcen...ein Hand- und Lesebuch. pp. 247-259