

The ENGINEERING CAREER COACH

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The ENGINEERING CAREER COACH PODCAST SESSION #41

7 Steps to Engineering Powerful Personal and Professional Goals – EYOS Part 1 of 7

Show notes at: engineeringcareercoach.com/goalspodcast

Anthony's Upfront Intro: In this episode I'm going to give you seven steps that you can use to set powerful, personal, and professional goals for the upcoming year. Let's do it!

Episode Intro: Welcome to *The Engineering Career Coach Podcast*, where it's all about helping real engineers to overcome real challenges and get real results. And now for your host, who is on a mission to inspire as many engineers as possible, professional engineer and certified career coach, Anthony Fasano.

Welcome to The Engineering Career Coach Podcast. This is the show for engineers that want to create extraordinary careers and lives. And I welcome you and I wish you a happy new year as this is the first episode in 2015. And whether you're listening to this and it is the New Year for you or not, you can still use the seven steps I'm going to layout for you today to set new goals, personally and professionally, or revisit existing goals and make sure that they're really aligned with your true desires.

My goal for this upcoming year is very simple. Not only do I want to inspire engineers, I want to inspire engineers to take action. So I'll be doing a lot of things with this podcast in The Engineering Career Coach website to really inspire action like new courses that I'll be coming out and other creative ways to help you to do something. I mean it's great to listen to a podcast and read blog posts and do all that kind of stuff.

But it's another thing to implement them in your career, and that's what my goal is for this year and it kind of kick it off. I'm going to be doing a full webinar on January 7th in the evening that you can register for. It's completely free and that I'll be recording in case you can't make it live. But I would recommend reserving your seat because, again, we are getting a lot of interest in it and the webinar software only has limited capacity. You can reserve your seat at engineeryourgoals.com. And if this is after the 7th, you can still go to that website and get some great goal setting information. Again, that's engineeryourgoals.com.

This podcast episode is going to be the first in the series of seven where I'm going to walk through the seven key elements to creating an extraordinary engineering career from my book, which was my biggest accomplishment in 2014, was getting that book published, the updated and expanded edition

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of my book. And so kind of celebrate that and to have a real good guide that I can refer to any engineers that contact me.

I'm going to record the seven podcast episodes, probably over the next three months or so and this will be the first one obviously focusing on goal setting, which is such an important thing in your career in life, and I'm so passionate about it and I hope that my passion comes throughout this episode as I walk through these steps.

So let me start off with a quote, and then I'll jump into the seven steps to help you with your goal setting. And the quote is as follows: "***The future you see is the future you get,***" and that's by Robert Allen. Again, "The future you see is the future you get." Alright. Let's do it!

Coaching Segment:

Anthony: Alright. So before I dive into the seven steps I want to lay out here today on how to set goals effectively, goals that you're going to be really passionate about, you'll be engaged in and you really want to chase and go after, let me talk a little bit about goals in general.

Goals act as a destination in your career and in your life. So what do I mean by that? What I mean by that is, imagine getting up every day and going to work, just to go to work, and not because you want to accomplish something. Is that exciting? No, it's not. The analogy I always use is, if you're going to, let's say, a job site for the first time, there's a critical piece of information you need, right? You need the address. If you don't have an address, you might get in your car and drive around the circles forever. So your goals with that address in your career and your life, something that you're looking at and saying, "I'm moving towards that."

But here is the key, the whole journey towards it you want to be exciting and engaging. And unless your goals are aligned with your true desires of what you really want, then that whole car ride so to speak is not going to be fun and that's the last thing you want to do. You don't just want to spend three years trying to get somewhere just to get there and the whole ride isn't fun. So I'll dive into that here today.

And the other thing that's important about goals is, how many decisions do you have to make in your career and your life every day from what do I have to wear each day to what books should I read, what course should I take or what new calculation or calculator should I get, you know whatever the case may be. All these decisions will be a lot easier for you if you understand what your goals are, and we'll dig into that a bit, too.

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So with that, let's walk through these seven steps that you can use to define your goals, to find what success is for you. And if you want to get more details on this, the show notes for this show will be at engineeringcareercoach.com/goalspodcast. And if you want to get all the details on this, you can check out my new book Engineer Your Own Success, which is on Amazon or the Wiley website. Everything we're doing today is covered in Chapter 3, which is Goal Setting.

1. Define what success means to you. Everybody that I know wants to be successful. There's nobody that I know that says, "No, I don't want to be successful." But the thing about success is that everybody has their own definition of it. And if you don't define what success means to you, then what are you chasing?

So let me give you an example. Maybe for you success means you want to have money to do things with as much money as you can save, let's say, for the next five years. So with that, it's going to come less time that you can spend with your family or on the personal side of things. But you know that you're focused that you want to take that money in five years, maybe go traveling or do something. So right now, you're thinking more money, less time versus someone else who might say, "Money is not the driver right now. Family, I have young kids. I need to be home for them. I want to eat dinner with them every night." So maybe your definition with success is, "I want to make enough money to spend X amount of time with my family," and that's it, so kind of less money but more time. So that's what you have to think about. You have to really think about your definition of success and what that means.

When you're doing this, you should get help whether it's from a coach or a mentor or a colleague or really your spouse would be the best, right, because your spouse you can talk to about what you really want especially on a personal side of your goals.

So when you're trying to define success, talk to people about it. Don't you try to keep it to yourself. Make sure that you're considering both personal and your professional aspirations when you think about this overall vision of success, and I'll give you my definition. We'll try to list in Section 3.9 on my book. I'll read it to you but I really emphasize the idea of having some kind of a personal success statement, a professional success statement, and the kind of your overall vision. It's very, very, very important and I'm going to read you mine right now, and my definition of success is as follows: I want to inspire as many engineers as I can on a regular basis while being able to spend as much time as possible with my family doing things we like to do.

So again, that's just an overall definition of success. And the thing about your success definition is it can change over time and often it will. What I've seen from working with a lot of engineers is that often early on in their career, their success definition is heavily driven by the professional side of things because you know they just started their career. They want to

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move up. They want to run as fast as they can. Then as they get older, often times I see that they're trying to tone that back a bit and getting more involved with family and traveling and things to that nature and it doesn't have to be like that. It could be the reverse. But it certainly can change and you should revisit your definition of success over time.

2. Now that you've thought about your definition of success and you can kind of lean on that for everything else going forward, step two is to identify your values. What are values? You can think of values as your principal standards, qualities in your life that are important to you. What are the things that you really value? This is an absolutely critical step in the entire goal setting process because your values act as a foundation for your goals and everything that you do essentially. If you're not going to take this part seriously, then you might as well just stop now. Turn off this podcast. Forget about goal setting. Because if you don't think about your values and identify them early on, you're going to set goals that maybe of absolutely no interest to you. It's literally like building a building with a shoddy foundation that could collapse at any time.

I'm going to read to you right now, and this will be in the show notes. It's also in page 33 of my book *Engineer Your Own Success*. I'm going to read to you some sample values: family, friends, honesty, integrity, freedom of, whether it's financial freedom or religious freedom, time freedom, faith, religion, happiness, service, respect, community, responsibility, excellence. So think about these values. Is happiness important to you? Or, is serving others important to you? Is being part of a community important to you? How important is your family? Do you want to stay located near them for your job? Or, would you take you a job that you want on a different side of the country or the world? So drill down on this and list your values out and have a real good handle on them.

3. Set your goals. Now, you've got this overarching definition of success, you understand what your values are. Now, you're going to get into actually setting your goals. And success definition or your values, they may not change that often. So you literally might do this goal setting process every year and your values may remain close to being the same every year. But your goals typically will change, and that's what happened for me the last few years. My goals changed.

So when you set your goals, you literally can think about setting three to five personal goals and three to five professional goals for a total of six to ten goals, no more, no less. I've done a lot of studying research and went through a lot of goal setting courses myself. And I know that if you have too many goals, you're going to spread yourself too thin.

So let's talk a little bit about this step here in actually setting your goals. How do you do this? So obviously, you want to think about what's important to you.

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And I'm going to give you some questions here that you can ask yourself to try to go through setting goals. The first four questions can be focused around where, why, what and who, right? Where do I want to be in my career in two – five – ten years? Project manager and you want a PE license, so you started throwing out doing brainstorming like that.

Next question, why do I want to be there? So, so, so important. This is getting back that idea of building that strong foundation. If you're chasing a goal that's not truly important to you, then, why you can do it? Why you have been setting it as a goal? So if you say you want to get your PE license, ask yourself why. Why do I want to get that? How is it going to help me?

What skills will you need to achieve this goal? So if one of your goals is to become a project manager, what kind of training are you're going to have to get? Now, what question will help you start to think about that.

And then lastly, who can help me with this goal? Is there a mentor out there you can contact? So you're setting the goal, but you're also using these questions really make the goals specific. And once you've done that and you've set the goals, then you can ask the last question of how for each goal. How does this goal match up with my values and my success definition? Because if one of your values is family and you want to be close to your whole family and lives like, let's say, in the Northeastern United States, and then one of your goals is to get an international construction management position, then that's kind of conflicting you. Because your family is a really important value to you and you want to be able to be around your family, be close to them and then you have this job of leaving the country, then it's not going to line up well, so you have to consider that and maybe adjust as needed either one.

I'm going to recap all these at the end for those of you listening who want to take notes or I'll be going through all these steps again just briefly at the end of the episode. We've got to defined success, identify values, and set your goals.

4. Think big. Most people settle for less than what their ideal is and I don't want you to do that.

When I rewrote my book *Engineer Your Own Success* last year, I definitely had doubts. I mean you have to understand this is a book that I wrote originally back in 2011. I started writing it when I had the flu one day. I wrote it at home in about two months and I self-published it. And so now talking with one of the biggest publishing companies in the world and working with them and seeing them take my words, it was definitely overwhelming. They would try to take my information transformed. It helped me with it and they did a wonderful job. About the first book, it was really good. But I think this one is a hundred times better but it was very overwhelming. And for me, it was... I kept doubting myself, "Why would this publisher

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want my information?" I wasn't thinking big enough. And luckily, I started to think big with some help from some people and I think that helped me to finish up this book and finish up strong.

So one way you can do this is to go back through the goals that we just talked about setting and use the word 'ideally' in front of them to make them as big as possible. So you may want to say like, "Ideally, in five years, I want to be a partner or own my own engineering company," instead of saying, "I'm never going to be able to have my own company. It's just too much work and especially not in five years."

So think big and use words like 'ideally' or you know shoot for the stars. It's going to push you. And if you can build in some accountability like a coach or a community or support or mentor, that's going to help you to think bigger and then push towards those big goals.

5. Finalize and prioritize your goals. You want to finalize and you want to write down your goals once you've gone through this process. There's a study that I talk about all the time. It's in my book and by Doctor Gail Matthews. It's a very well-known study where she showed that people that write down their goals have a success rate of 42%, which is ridiculous if you think about it. So it's very, very, very important that you write your goals down or type them out or have them somewhere where you can look at them.

Once you've done that prioritize your goals, put them in priority order. Usually, you might want to prioritize them by the timeline. So if you have a short-term goal of one year and then a longer term goal of two or three years, you can prioritize them in order. But it's up to you on how you want to actually prioritize them and what's most important to you. Alright. And then at that point, you've actually set goals. You've set goals that are in alignment with yourself.

Now, the next two steps we're going to talk about are going to taking those goals to the next level. But at this point, I mean, you've got the success definition, you've got your values, you set the goals, you've thought big about them, you've tweaked them, and then you've prioritized them.

6. Make your goals smart using the SMART process, which is an acronym. The S standing for specific, the M for measureable, A for achievable, R for relevant, T for time bound and there are modifications of that. But I like to you really use the SMART process to make the goals actionable and break them down.

So let me give you an example and walk through this, and I'm going to use the example of getting a PE license. Someone might say, "I want to get my PE license, that's my goal." Alright. Now, let's take that goal and make it smart.

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First of all, you want to make it as specific as possible. Is getting your PE license too big of a goal for this year? In other word, this year just be get accepted to it, the test, and then maybe you're going to study in the following year? I don't know. That's for you to decide.

But let's just say we go with get your PE license, okay. Is it specific? Yes, it's very specific and you're getting a PE license. Is it measurable? M for measurable. Absolutely measurable. It's measurable because you'll know if you got it whether you have your license or not. And, how can you track your progress on it? You can track your progress through your studying habits. Well, I have a study guide. I've gone through half the guide and I have six months to go. I'm on track. So there's definitely ways to measure your progress. You need to build that into your goal. Is it something that is achievable? Can you really get a PE license? Are you qualified for it? Do you have the knowledge? Can you learn? That's what this A is for achievable. It's just kind of a check like, is there something that you can do.

Because, for me, I'm not going to say I want to go climb Mount Everest this year. Not achievable for me. I'm not a mountain climber. It will take a long time for me to learn that and do that or at least longer than a year most likely. And you don't want to waste time and effort on a process that doesn't make sense for you to do.

And you got the R, relevant. Is it relevant? Make sure that this goal is relevant to where your success definition or where you ultimately want to go. Like we talked about in the beginning, is a PE license relevant for you to get you where you want to go or another certification that you're seeking or a project manager in your company? Are these relevant to where you really want to go in your career ultimately? Because if they're not, again, don't waste time. I've often had the engineers come up to me asking, "Should I get an MBA?" And again, I go down this track, well, is it relevant for where you want to go? Or, should I get a PhD? Well, is that relevant for where you want to go?

And the last one, which is maybe the most important of all these letters is T for time-bound. You have to have a deadline on a goal. You should know this as an engineer already. Most engineer in projects get done the night before the deadline, right? We cranked the room with the specs. We do a lot of stuff because that's the way people operate. So you have to have a deadline on your goal. And if you aligned it with the rest of this acronym, it's going to be measurable and relevant and you'll have time to achieve it.

So again, that's S-M-A-R-T, specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound. Go through all your goals, the six to ten you set, and use this process to make them "SMART".

7. Stay in tune with your success definition or your vision. Make sure that as you go through your careers, you chase these goals that they're all heading in that direction of your success

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definition, however you define it, and not anybody else's. And if at any time it feels off, then, go through this process again. It doesn't have to be the beginning of the year to do this process. You can do that anytime. And the Take Action Today segment in a moment, I'm going to go through these steps again summarizing for you.

But, please, if it's before January 7th, you can go to engineeryourgoals.com and you can sign up for the free webinar. And if it's after January 7th, you could still go to engineeryourgoals.com. I've created an entire course that will launch on January 7, 2015. That's going to walk you through these steps and give you a spreadsheet. Yes, it's a spreadsheet because I know engineers, we love spreadsheets. You can enter this information in a spreadsheet a little bit each day and you'll have goals and you'll have steps to achieve them. And it's a phenomenal program in a very affordable price based on help I've gotten from people to put it together. And I hope that it's going to help hundreds of engineers this year to set very clear goals and make positive impact. And again, all that can be accessed through engineeryourgoals.com.

Let's jump into a summary and then get you on your way with goal setting.

So once again, here are the seven steps to set clear powerful goals both personally and professionally to help you boost your engineering career and really your life overall.

1. Define what success means to you, not what it means to anybody else. Talk to someone, coach, mentors, spouse, and figure out what that true meaning of success is for you and post it in your office and do get it somewhere where you can look at it, be happy with it and move towards it.
2. Identify your values. I gave you that list of sample values which, again, will be in the show notes at engineeringcareercoach.com/goalspodcast. Family, happiness, service, community, go through those values and understand what yours are so you can line everything up with them.
3. Set your goals. Set three to five personal goals, three to five professional goals. No more than ten. You do not want to spread yourself thin. Use your questions, where, why, what, who and then lastly, how does this goal align with my values and my definition of success.
4. Think big. Remember to use the word 'ideally' when you're setting your goals so that you can ensure that you're really shooting for the stars and not just shooting for what others are trying to shoot for. You're shooting lower because you're not being pushed enough.
5. Finalize and prioritize your goals. Get them written down and then put them in order of what's absolutely important to you. If you could only work on one or two this year, what would they

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be? You should know that. In case something comes up, you get busy and you can only focus on a couple as your goals.

6. Make your goals smart. Go through the SMART acronym, S-M-A-R-T; specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound for each one of your goals. I just finished doing this for my 2015 goals. It's an awesome experience. It really helps you to break down your goals and put them into steps that are achievable.
7. Stay in tune with your success definition. So keep an eye on it. If you feel out of alignment, you feel like you're not engaged at work or even at home, something is going on, think about what your definition of success is. It doesn't need to change or that some of your actions need to change. One or the other is going to have to change.

Anthony's Closing Remarks:

Anthony: So with that, I want to wish you a wonderful and amazing new year. I planned to put out resources that will help you in your engineering career and there's tons of free ones at engineeringcareercoach.com that you can use right now. And I hope to make this your best year ever as an engineer and as a person. I will continue to help you engineer your own success.

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You can also follow Anthony Fasano on Twitter @anthonyjfasano or Facebook at facebook.com/engineeryourownsuccess. Until the next time, thanks for listening!