



Goal Card

By Shaun McGill

Creating a goal card is a great way to help keep you focussed on your goal and to train your subconscious mind. Before we go into how to create a goal card I want to explain the importance of training your subconscious mind and how a goal card is one of the best ways to do this.

Your brain is incredibly complex, incredibly powerful and the subconscious part of your brain is the most powerful part of all. Based on brain scan research where scientists can actually see what parts of the brain are working, scientists estimate that at least 5/6 (83%) of your brain's functions take place on the subconscious level. Some experts even believe the subconscious makes up as much as 95-99% of the brain's functions. This means that at the very most our conscious thoughts only make up 1/6 of our brain power.

Whatever the actual percentage, there's no question that the subconscious mind is a lot more powerful than your conscious mind. This means that your subconscious mind will always win over your conscious mind in the long run and that habit (subconscious) will always win over will power (conscious). An example of your subconscious mind taking control over your conscious mind is when you're driving a car. Even though it requires conscious attention, driving a car is a highly subconscious activity. Do you remember how complicated it seemed the first time you tried to drive? But after a while it becomes second nature and you change gears and indicate without thinking. Research has proven that this is what the subconscious mind does best. It takes over routine tasks and helps you do them automatically or at least very easily with little conscious thought.

Because your subconscious mind is so powerful then it is important to train your subconscious mind to work for you rather than against you. Once you learn to train your subconscious mind achieving your goals becomes far easier.

When programming your subconscious mind it is essential to not only think about your goals, but to visualise them. This is because your subconscious mind thinks in pictures and can't tell the difference between pictures that are real and those that are vividly imagined. An example of your mind thinking in pictures is if I say the word house, you don't see the letters h-o-u-s-e, you see a picture of a house. Another example of this is if I ask you to remember your last holiday, you see mental movies and pictures of your holiday. Extensive research has proven that when you visualise a skill, performance or behaviour in your mind, you're firing the same neurons in your brain as if you actually carried it out physically. This is why visualising your goals and not just reading them is an essential part of effective goal setting.

As your subconscious can't tell the difference between real and imagined, it also can't tell the difference between a truth and a lie. It has been scientifically proven that your conscious mind can accept or reject an idea, whereas your subconscious mind accepts everything that reaches it as true. This means you can trick your subconscious mind into thinking something is true to help you reach your goal faster. When you think something is true which isn't real or hasn't happened yet to help programme your mind, then this is known as an affirmation. When thinking as an affirmation it doesn't have to be true, but it does at least have to be believable. If you don't believe it's possible, or if you believe you don't have the ability to achieve your goal, then your subconscious mind shuts off all goal-

directed behaviours and/or triggers self-sabotaging behaviours. In this case, you either have to work on changing your entire belief system, or the easiest option is to adjust your affirmations and goals so they're believable. It is essential that when you first set your goals that you truly believe that you can achieve your goals, when you create your visualisations that they are clear and vivid and when you create affirmations that they are truly believable. This is because doing so greatly increases your chances of reaching your goals.

Because of the way your subconscious mind works, it's extremely important for you to focus ALL your thoughts on what you want to achieve and not what you want to avoid. Your subconscious mind's sole purpose is to obey and carry out your conscious mind's orders, whatever they are, right or wrong orders. Whatever you think about the most, regardless of whether it's positive or negative, you will always move towards it.

Your subconscious mind accepts commands most easily when they are given in present tense and with faith and emotion. For instance, if you think 'I'm sick of being fat and I want to lose weight and want to lose such and such number of pounds' unfortunately your subconscious mind accepts the command that you are fat rather than the command to lose weight. This is because the command of being fat is in the present tense. Even if the future command is the most important to you, the present thought is what your subconscious mind moves you towards. This happens because your subconscious mind distinguishes your commands as the most present command as the most important, whether it actually is or not. In order to move towards your goal you must think about achieving your goal in the present tense as much as possible consciously, so you subconsciously move towards your goal. When you write your affirmation it is essential that it is all in present tense and that it is all positive.

Another important fact to remember is that your subconscious mind orders things in order of importance. If your brain didn't have this filtering function, known as the Reticular Activating System (RAS) and you noticed all of the millions of stimuli bombarding your senses at any given moment, you would go crazy. Your brain needs and has the ability to block some of it out and only call your attention to what's really important. This is why you need to make sure your goal is very important to you, so your actions are brought to your attention and you can stop yourself from taking any negative actions towards reaching your goal.

The final thing you need to know about your subconscious brain is that the best way to train it is through repetition.

The subconscious is the part of your brain which is responsible for your automatic behaviours and habits. To keep all those automatic functions running, your subconscious mind works automatically 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. You can't turn it off. It works whether you want it to or not and it works whether you realise it exists or not.

Through training your brain with repetition you can develop new habits, behaviours and skills and put them on auto pilot. Going back to the example of driving a car, when you first start driving you consciously think about what you are doing and you find driving difficult. Once you practice driving, your subconscious mind gradually takes over until eventually you

are driving on auto pilot and you're not thinking about what you're doing. Once your subconscious takes over, driving becomes a lot easier. It's the same with your goal and behaviours, the more you think about them and do them the easier it becomes.

The reason why your subconscious takes over is because your subconscious neurons can fire 800 times faster than your conscious neurons. This means your subconscious mind can trigger instantaneous behaviour faster than you can think. This is very helpful in situations such as driving a car where you have to make split second decisions, which affect your safety and well being. Unfortunately, your subconscious is also why you eat things impulsively and stuff your face with unhealthy food when you're consciously trying to lose weight. If you don't train your subconscious mind to work for you then it can work against you.

You need to train your subconscious to learn positive habits and behaviours through repetition. The more you repeat something the more chance you have of it becoming an automatic behaviour. When it comes to weight loss the more you repeat positive behaviours and the more you repeat positive thoughts about achieving your goal, the faster your automatic behaviours will become positive habits in order to help you reach your goal. Once your automatic behaviours become positive habits rather than negative habits then achieving your goal is very simple.

When you practice something or repeat something over and over again, it's telling your subconscious mind that it's important to you and also that you're going to keep doing these behaviours over and over and that your conscious mind could use a little help.

Through repeating something over and over you're basically telling your subconscious mind to make it easier next time you do it and if you repeat something long enough you're telling your subconscious to do it on auto pilot. Usually it takes a minimum of 21-30 days of constantly repeating something for it to become automatic. However, when it comes to habits and behaviours to help you lose weight it will probably take longer. This is because there is so much temptation to eat unhealthy and be unhealthy that you need to programme your mind for longer in order to make it easier not to give into those temptations.

So how does the goal card work in helping you achieve your goal. The first thing is to write it as an affirmation so your brain thinks you have already achieved it. This helps to change your actions to actions of someone who has achieved that goal. The next thing is to visualise having achieved your goal because your mind works in pictures. The final thing is to repeat these visualisations over and over again because it reminds you of how important your goal is and repetition trains your subconscious mind. Pretty simple tool to train your subconscious mind and get all these amazing benefits.

Creating your goal card

Your goal card is going to be written as an affirmation. An affirmation is a type of positive thinking where you declare that something is true that hasn't happened yet or isn't true.

But remember you must believe it. If you don't believe in the goal or that you can achieve it then it won't work. I would rather you set your affirmation as a smaller goal than a massive one that you don't believe will come true.

The whole of the goal card must be positive and in present tense. You must say what you are going to achieve and not what you want to avoid, e.g. you want to be 14% body fat, not lose 4% body fat. The more emotion you use, the more effective the goal card will be.

- You will need a piece of card the size of a business card. If you have a one side business card you can use the blank side or you can cut a piece of cardboard the same size as a business card.
- Write down the date you want to achieve your goal by at the top of the card. This can be the date of the end of the 8 week programme or if you have more weight to lose than 2 ½ stone then you may want to set a different date to give you a more realistic time frame to achieve it.
- Begin your affirmation statement in present tense 'I am'
- Write an emotion 'I am really happy'
- Write that your thankful 'I am really happy and grateful'
- Emphasise the present tense 'I am really happy and grateful that I am now'
- Add your goal as a positive statement 'I am really happy and grateful that I am now 12% body fat and weigh 80kg'
- Add as much emotion as possible to finish off the statement. Use as many senses as possible, sight, touch, hearing and feeling.

Example goal card

<p style="text-align: center;">Goal Card</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1st June 2013</p> <p>I am really happy and grateful that I am now 12% body fat and weigh 80kg. I have dropped a jeans size and my jeans now fit comfortably. I can now see definition in my arms for the first time ever. I have a lot more energy throughout the day and am able to play in the park with my kids. My friends and family are complimenting me on how healthy I look, which makes me feel good about myself and my wife is giving me more attention, as she finds me more attractive.</p>
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Once you have created your goal card, if possible you should laminate it, as you will be handling it often. You then need to carry your goal card with you everywhere you go. Keep it in your wallet, purse or credit card holder. Every time you open it you should read your card or anytime you have a spare few seconds you should take out your card and read it. The more often you read the card, the more you will subconsciously think about the goal. You want to read it so often that every time you go in your pocket you think about the goal without even reading it. When you read the card, make sure you read it with belief and

faith. You must believe what you are reading is true in order for it to come true. Training your subconscious mind to believe the statement will ensure your automatic behaviours change to habits that will move you towards your goal rather than away from it. Once your behaviour makes a positive change, then the results you achieve will be positive.

When you are reading the card you want to visualise already having achieved your goal. Don't just read the card, actually visualise your affirmation. Picture it in your head. Use all of your senses when you are visualising. The most important thing is to visualise how you feel. Visualise how happy you are and how good it's made you feel achieving your goal. This is because how you feel having achieved the goal is far more compelling than the goal itself.

You may still be sceptical about whether it works or not and may think it's a waste of time. But if you think about it, if you read the card 10 times per day during the 8 weeks that would mean you think about your goal 560 times during that period. You will have to admit, if nothing else that it helps you stay incredibly focused and motivated on achieving your goal. It's like having a personal coach with you all the time, keeping you accountable for your goal.