

Sticky Goal Setting with Kate Southerby

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Summary

Research tells us that only [8% of us actually ever actually achieve our goals](#). But it's not our fault, we just don't get taught HOW to set goals properly.

The model that I use for successful goal pursuit is the AIM model. It's a brain-friendly framework that helps you set, strive, maintain and achieve your goals.

The AIM Model

It was developed by David Rock (who wrote your Brain at Work) and Eliot Berkman. Both neuropsychologists.

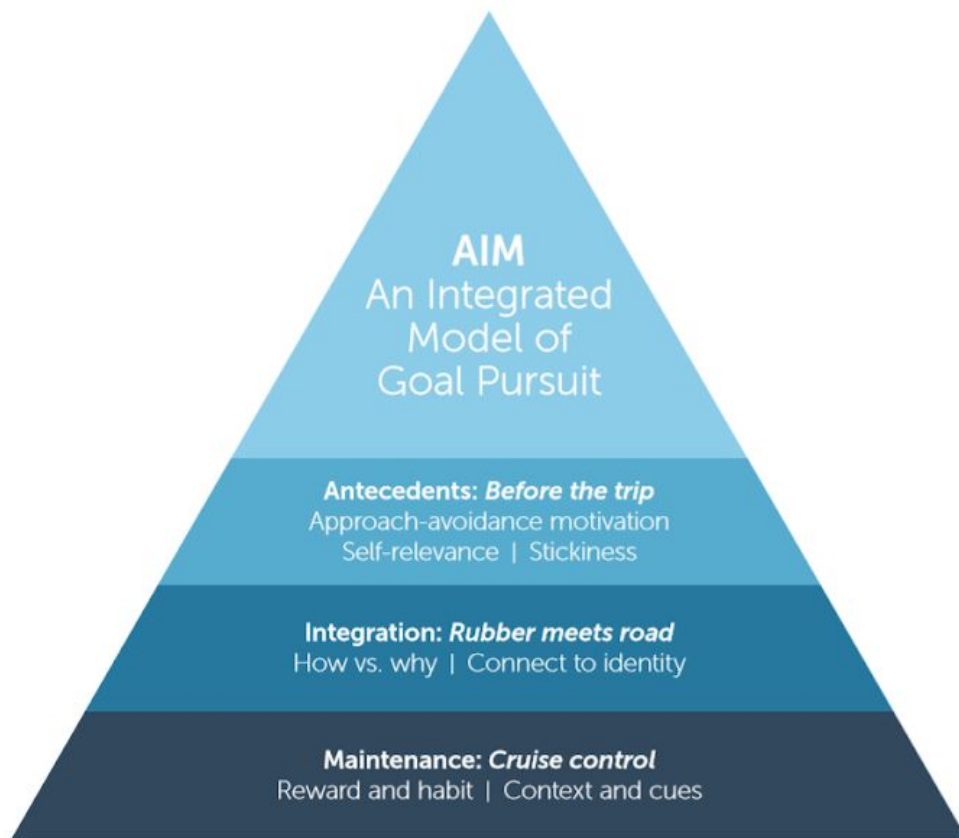
The goal of this model is to help us to THINK before DOING. To think about what we WANT from our goals and to then SET the goal and then SET, STRIVE and ACHIEVE those goals. So there's three parts to this model.

Antecedent - Why

Integration - What / How

Maintenance - Obstacles / Habits

You start at the top and then work your way down.



The first is ANTECEDENT. This is all about the WHY... Why do you even want this goal? The second is INTEGRATION. HOW and WHAT do I need to do? How am I going to integrate this goal into my life? So like any kind of goal (e.g. weight loss goal, or a new business goal), it takes time. And we have to think about the tools and the time and the plan.

And then finally, the number one reason why goals break down and fail, is because we don't have a maintenance plan and we have obstacles and habits that get in the way.

So to really understand goal pursuit, we have to pull it apart and look at why, what / how and what's going to get in the way.

So another fact to this model is that it's brain-friendly. Meaning it keeps the brain in-mind. To understand brain-friendly goals and to understand how your brain works, we looked at a few brain basics that will help us with success.

1. Brain Basics For Goal Pursuit

The Healthy Mind-platter

A healthy and balanced life helps goals succeed. If you'd like to use this tool, I suggest giving yourself a score against each category. What ideas do you have to improve the score of one of the categories? What small action could you take over the next 7 days and what difference would that make for your mind to support your goal pursuit?

SLEEP TIME
PHYSICAL TIME
FOCUS TIME
TIME IN
DOWN TIME
PLAY TIME
CONNECTION TIME

Neuroplasticity

Our brain has the capacity to create new pathways all the time and even the process of setting goals changes the structure of your brain. Your prefrontal cortex is the area of your brain where you feel conscious. Where you get to plan, and keep time, and organise and have a schedule. Your hemispheres of your brain, the right hemisphere and your left hemisphere actually allow you to pause and inhibit so that you can either look at the 'FOREST' - (right) the big picture. Or the TREE the DETAIL (left) of the situation before responding. And then you have tons of neural networks and lots of chemicals. One is the task-positive network and the other is the default mode network. They allow you to DO and BE in the world.

Our brain builds these wires or pathways from when you are born and they don't disappear, they don't crumble and they don't get replaced. So that means our old habits and our gremlins don't just disappear and when our brain gets tired for example, it's easier for us to go to old stuff. The old wiring. So we have to remember that we have the power to change. BUT habits are hard to break.

Your Beliefs

Where you put **your thoughts, your energy goes** - where your energy goes is where your neural-connections form. What you feed, you grow. Think of it like water. Do you water the flower or do you water the weed? When you water the wrong thing, the wrong activity, the wrong goal - that grows too. Are you inadvertently watering the wrong thing? Have you planted that seed, or has someone else?

What's your limiting belief (weed) that could be holding you back?

Think about putting this insight into a statement...

"When I'm in circumstance X, I tend to do Y...."

Brain Bias

What do you see v's what is really possible? We have to be careful about what we are watering because our brain can create bias to protect us. We all have brain-bias. And we also like to predict things to feel secure and also our brain loves certainty and to control and manage things.

So we inadvertently put obstacles up that aren't real. Our brain likes to assume sometimes the worst because we worry about fear or what we're going to lose rather than what we might gain. That's a typical thing for our brain to do. We like to think about what might happen, to predict things and stay safe. So your goals can succeed if we keep our bias in mind and if we think differently and take the time to truly explore our goals.

02. Identify & Define Your Most Important Goals

Mining for goals

The intention of this exercise was to uncover all the main areas of your world, everything that is important to you. It's not about the detail of your goals, it's simply about creating a list of all the areas, a brainstorm, a shopping list if you will, that are currently in your work and / or personal life. The main things you are dealing with (15-20 things). Try this exercise again if you like, on a rested brain. Keep asking yourself 'what else, what else' - try it alongside a friend.

N.B. If you avoid going into the detail, it reduces the noise in the brain and supports your PFC.

3 is the magic number

Just set 3 Primary goals at a time. You may like to set Secondary goals in addition to the 3 that you can work on alongside the larger 3. However, these Secondary goals are of less importance and potentially smaller and more easily achieved.

It is suggested that you only work on 90 day goals. The brain works well to a shorter deadline, it's less overwhelming and you can always stretch the goal out in 90 days if you need to reset and expand the goal.

When choosing your 3 think about 6 S's; *satisfaction, significant, structured, not too similar* (scoop up), not *someone else's* idea for you and finally, is this a *secondary* goal?

Your WHY - The Antecedent Level - step 1 of the model is Antecedents. And it's the WHY. Try these questions for each goal to spark insights and create your defined goal:

- *Why do you want this goal?*
- *Why is it important?*
- *What's going to make it forward? And centre? And stick?*
- *Why do you need it?*
- *What would happen if you achieved it?*
- *What would be an exciting goal in this area?*

- *What would you like to be different in 90 days time?*
- *Can you pull your thoughts together in one sentence? (7 words)*
- *Is this goal achievable yet challenging?*
- *How inspiring is the goal on a scale of 1-10 (10 being super-inspiring)*
- *How will you know if you've achieved it?*

If you take a step back, and look at it and THINK before you GO, you actually use that right hemisphere, the big picture thinking. And you can start to see the forest. Now that may often feel overwhelming (especially with a big goal like career change, pivot or starting or growing your business), but it's a really good activity to do so that you start to think about what your options are.

Shine your goals

Shining is taking what are great goals from the defining stage and pushing them to a new level that energises you even more, makes them more 'you'. Shining goals creates a vision for you every time you read them or say them aloud. In terms of the AIM model, shining helps create "stickiness" at the start by making it more memorable.

Questions to help shine your goals:

- If you were to wear the goal on your T-shirt as a slogan, what would it say?
- If the goal was a book title, what would it be?
- What are three key emotions that describe how you'll feel when you reach this goal?

DEFINED GOAL	STICKY GOAL
Promoted to senior consultant	Handing out my new business card
Team happiness scale 9/10 consistently	Best work culture ever
Business expanded by 20%	100 satisfied customers worldwide
Feel 100% more energized	Leaping out of bed every day
Relaxed every day	Every day feels like a Sunday

03. Creating a Brain Motivating Roadmap

Your Integration Level - step 2 of AIM is all about the HOW. The roadmap, the plan, the strategies and the actions. If your sticky goal is a book title, I like to think of this step as creating your chapters for your book. The book chapters / strategies are the major stages we go through in order to achieve a primary goal. They are a series of high-level milestones that make it clear how each goal will be achieved. They give the journey some shape.

Strategies provide a more practical understanding of how the goal can be achieved. Until there are strategies, the goal may simply be a desire or dream. Without strategies it may not be clear that some actions need to be done before others. Working out the strategies provides a logical order to follow before starting any action. The strategies should give you the path to the goal.

Without them, people will often draw up a series of action steps that they need to follow, then get overwhelmed looking at this list.

Strategies inhibit you from doing things the way you automatically do, and improve the quality of your thinking. They help you think beyond your current knowledge.

If you put strategies in place such as, "Understand the current reality," "Research all options," and "Plan for success," you hold back from rushing in and doing things the way you usually do. Rather than working with only goals and actions like most people do.

I suggest you set some time aside to create your strategies, using this format but having fun with them. Link the language to your book title! :

Create Chapters For Your Goal

1. Define the starting point for the goal
2. Create a vision of where you want to be (see Resources below for tips)
3. Explore options and choose the best way forward
4. Create a plan to achieve the goal
5. Implement the plan
6. Monitor progress and adjust as you go
7. Celebrate what has been achieved

Your Maintenance Level - level 3 is all about looking at your habits and considering who you need to be to achieve this goal and considering the obstacles you might face. It's OK when obstacles come. They happen, but we can often have a plan for them.

A habit is a brain pathway that we are comfortable walking - when we get tired we like to walk the easy path not the hard path. And our brain says "I'm tired... I don't want to walk this change path".

But we have to really think about it differently. We have to set an **implementation intention**. I like to plan my known obstacles using a tool called an implementation intention.

If X then I will

If I want to do this... then I will do this Too

Because we often get the urge to give up.

Maintenance Partnership

Another really important part of Maintenance is saying it out loud. Then YOU are more likely to achieve it. When you say your goal publicly, or to someone else, because you're owning it, you're creating that pathway in your brain to achieve. So even just thinking about it and sharing it, is important.

So get a GAP. A goal accountability partner. Someone who won't beat you up but will lift you up. Who shares your excitement, a cheerleader, or a coach.

Create a vision board or a mood board so you can see your goals ALL the time.

Do keep in touch. I'd love to hear your thoughts, insights and sticky goals!

Best,

Kate

Recommended Resources

Healthy Mind-platter

Article: Healthy Mind Platter

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/your-brain-work/201106/announcing-the-healthy-mind-platter>

Video: Dan Siegal

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3EQ2tzHI3Ks>

Habits

Book: Tiny Habits - BJ Fogg

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Tiny-Habits-Changes-Change-Everything/dp/0358003326>

Video: BJ Fogg

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AdKUJxin-R8&t=299s>

Emotional Regulation

Video: Matt Lieberman

<https://tedxstlouis.com/speakers/matthew-d-lieberman-ph-d-professor-of-psychology-psychiatry-and-biobehavioral-sciences-university-of-california-los-angeles/>

Leadership and Neuroscience

Book: David Rock

[Your Brain at Work: Strategies for Overcoming Distraction, Regaining Focus, and Working Smarter All Day Long](#)

Decision Making

Book: Thinking fast and slow: Daniel Kahneman

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Thinking-Fast-Slow-Daniel-Kahneman/dp/0141033576>

Why we lack motivation

Video: Mel Robbins 5 second rule

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X54GQFS_ouM

Creating a vision

Video: Jim Carey and Oprah

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nPU5bjzLZX0>

Video: Marie Forleo - selection of videos on this topic

<https://www.marieforleo.com/2013/04/life-vision/>

"You're Gonna Die"

Listen: Gary V and Ryan Holiday (also on You tube)

<https://soundcloud.com/garyvee/askgaryvee-262-ryan-holiday>



ABOUT KATE SOUTHERBY

Kate Southerby is a highly collaborative and dynamic Leadership Coach and is certified by the Neuroleadership Institute of brain-based coaching ICF, TotalSDI® facilitator, DISC and MBTI practitioner specialising in driving behavioural change and culture creation.

With a proven track record and two decades of experience of delivering transformational change programmes, Kate is unique in her ability to energise and inspire teams and individuals.

Kate founded I am ME Coaching to help creative and curious minds think, work, lead and live with clarity, purpose and impact <https://www.iammeoaching.com>.

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*Work with me on your goal setting - £199,00 for 90 minute session - JANUARY 2021 ONLY *