

Onto the bull's eye

Beenish M. Chaudhry

School of Informatics and Computing, University of Louisiana, Lafayette, LA, USA

Correspondence to: Beenish M. Chaudhry, Assistant Professor, School of Informatics and Computing, University of Louisiana, Lafayette, LA, USA.

Email: Beenish.M.Chaudhry.3@nd.edu.

Abstract: People set goals to improve their overall health and well-being. Unfortunately, people often lose motivation to achieve their goals because they fail to set proper goals. Goalify is a free mobile app with paid features that can help people set, achieve and maintain goals. It follows Locke and Latham strategies for successful goal setting. To gain greater control over their lives, we recommend readers to use a theory-based mobile app to set, log and achieve their goals.

Keywords: Goal setting; SMART; well-being; motivation; theory

Received: 28 September 2017; Accepted: 16 October 2017; Published: 01 November 2017.

doi: 10.21037/mhealth.2017.10.04

View this article at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21037/mhealth.2017.10.04>

Goal setting is a powerful motivational tool that helps people focus on themselves and strive for a better future. Therefore it is common to find people setting goals related to their careers, health, and other life events. When individuals set goals according to their personal dispositions and emotional needs, they are able to redirect their focus away from negative thoughts and connect to their innermost desires. This leads to an overall improvement in their subjective well-being.

Unfortunately, many people do not know how to choose, pursue and achieve their goals. All of us have set goals at some point in our lives that we forgot about or failed to achieve. So how do we address this recurring problem in our lives. In their highly cited work on goal setting and task performance, Locke and Latham outline a strategy to set successful goals. Until recently, people needed expensive life coaches to help them create goals according to Locke and Latham's goal setting principles. The mobile app revolution has changed this trend. In this article, we analyze how Goalify follows these principles to help us set, pursue and achieve goals.

The first goal setting principle states that goals should have clarity. In other words, goals should be S.M.A.R.T, i.e., specific, measurable, achievable, results-focused and time-bound. With the help of a mobile application, it is easier to set SMART goals because an app can guide you through the entire process. Goalify helps in setting SMART goals by

taking the user through a set of screens. To set a goal, the user first chooses one of the eight main categories (*Figure 1*) and then picks a specific goal under that category. The sequence of screens that follow asks the user to specify how the goal will be measured, how frequently it will be performed, what will be the end result and what is the target date (*Figure 2*). In this way, the user is able to set quantifiable goals. This directed effort of the app may also help the user to analyze their expectations of themselves from different points of view. With this deep understanding of the contingencies around the goal ultimately increases their commitment towards their goal.

Another important principle of goal setting and pursuance is feedback, recognition and progress reports. Goalify achieves that by providing the user with feedback on goal completion. When the user reports that they have completed their goals, the interface generates a celebratory icon on the dashboard (*Figure 3*). In addition, the user gets encouragement and more information regarding their goals on the dashboard keeping them involved in pursuing their goals (*Figure 4*). The app also allows the user to generate report about their goals. Reports can help people understand their commitment to their goals with respect to other aspects in their lives. This level of engagement with one's data can help people develop a deeper understanding of their behaviors and change themselves for the better.

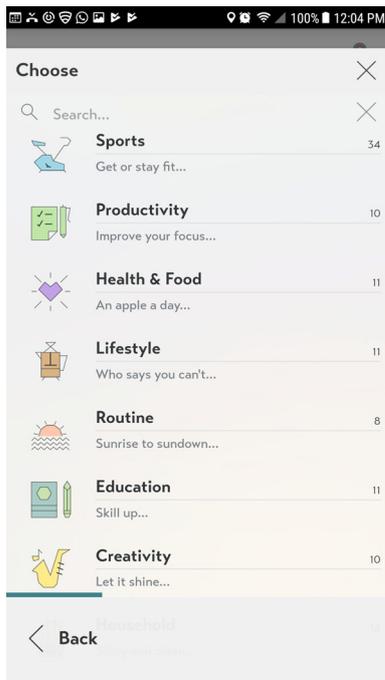


Figure 1 Goal categories.

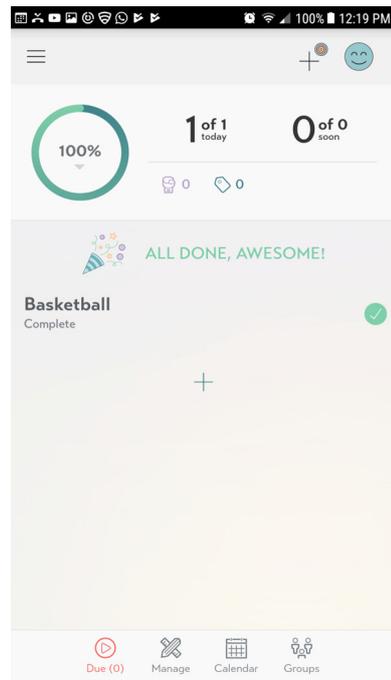


Figure 3 Celebratory feedback.

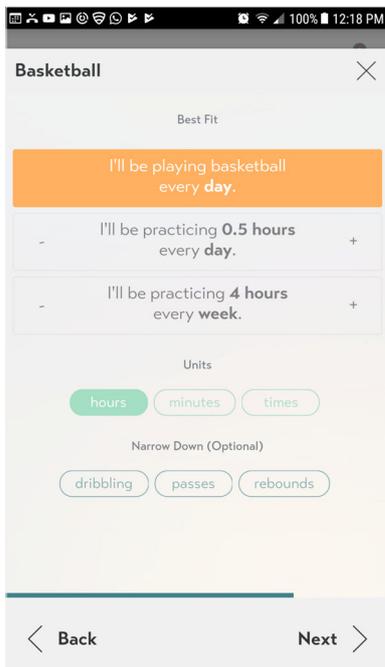


Figure 2 Specifying goal parameters.

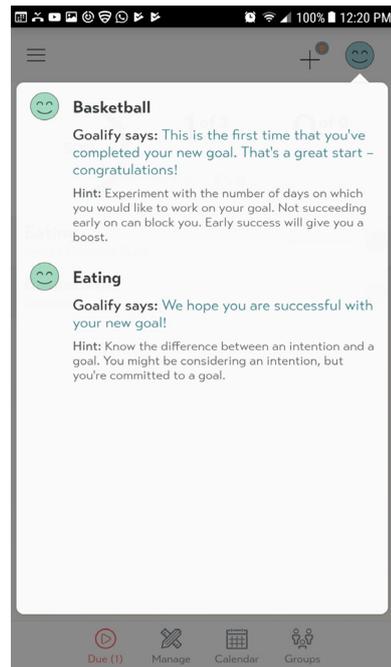


Figure 4 Encouraging notifications.

Finally, Goalify offers social networking and coaching features to its users. These two features can help people gain motivation to pursue their goals when they are emotionally low. Using the social networking site, users can share tips and learn how they can overcome obstacles standing in their way. Most importantly, users can share their achievements and gain recognition for their commitments.

If you are looking to organize your life better and achieve your goals, give Goalify a try. In the free version, you can set up to three goals that should be enough to get started. You will find that when you are mentally organized, you will be

motivated in all aspects of your life.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank onebytezero GmbH for letting her review their app Goalify.

Footnote

Conflicts of Interest: The author has no conflicts of interest to declare.

doi: 10.21037/mhealth.2017.10.04

Cite this article as: Chaudhry BM. Onto the bull's eye. mHealth 2017;3:48.