



Future Based Discussion Guide

The Future functional area is the most abstract of the six areas of leadership development. It is the endeavor to align our goals with our values, set better goals, manage our time more wisely, and strive to achieve the most production possible for our waking hours. To guarantee optimal productivity one can follow specific, established, and proven formulas of personal and group organization that can be neatly charted out in day, week, month, and yearly planners. Most Marines have such resources at their fingertips and use personal smartphones or other technology to organize daily plans. It is not so much the “how to” of goal-setting and time management as it is the why. Why do Marine leaders want not only ourselves but also our Marines to set better goals and manage their time more wisely? Why does the LDP mention such skills as foundational to leadership development?

Before we discuss setting goals, it is important to understand the goals that we set, and we encourage our Marines to set are anchored in core values. Most Marines personal values are a mix of religion, family, upbringing, and hometown experiences. Leaders are not in the business of judging such individual values. What is important is that Marine Corps core values are consistently reinforced. USMC values are the one thing that unites us all, regardless of background and are proven to result in battlefield success.

Why do we set goals and encourage our Marines to do the same? Most importantly, discussing goal setting and time management is just another way to interact on a personal level with Marines and at the same time project a positive message. Conversations between leaders and junior Marines can include the following questions:

1. *How is PME going?*
2. *What are you reading?*
 - a. *What do you think of the book?*
3. *What MCI are you working on?*

These are simple questions that will contribute to an ongoing relationship between leaders and Marines. Repeated interactions organically develop and are part of official and unofficial mentoring relationships. Secondly, by better organizing our own lives and more effectively using time at work and at home, we as leaders will be able to assist our Marines to do the same thing. Being more productive individually will make us more productive collectively.

By focusing on some of the popular techniques of leadership, goal setting and time management we are able to adopt and absorb some of the best methods of doing this from the business community and civilian sector. Most important and vital of this is that we as leaders continuously

focus on the why. And the why of setting goals and properly managing both ours and our Marines time returns to the focus of what we are doing. Starts with core values, the values, clearly laid out in the fidelity functional area, and the endstate is to improve readiness. From this foundation we describe our mission statement:

Future Mission Statement: Set SMART goals rooted in core values and manage time in accordance with foundational priorities IOT improve individual and unit readiness.

Goal Setting

The Leadership Development Program believes the SMART method of goal setting is the most effective, and fits well with Marine Corps norms and values.

All goals, as all actions start with our values as Marines. Core values outlined in the fidelity area of leadership development shape who we are as Marines. The Marine Corps, and Marine leaders have a great advantage compared to motivating in the private sector, or even in the other services of the military. Marine culture is well ingrained during entry-level training. This provides all Marines a common set of principles. It also teaches all Marines that they are accountable for the things they do and fail to do. This foundation is the most important point of proper goal-setting and goal achieving.

During OIF I, due to the tempo of the movement to Baghdad, a shortfall was identified that missions were being executed without leaders issuing 5-paragraph orders. In response, 1 MarDiv Commander General Mattis, prior to returning to Anbar Province for OIF II stressed that no movement, patrol or action of any sort will take place without leaders issuing a proper 5-paragraph order. This is the type of rigor we can be attaching to our personal goal setting plans.

SMART Goals

A useful way of making goals more powerful is to use the SMART mnemonic. This is not an original concept and a simple internet search will provide additional info on this issue. While there are plenty of variants, SMART stands for:

- S - Specific (or Significant).
- M - Measurable (or Meaningful).
- A - Attainable (or Action-Oriented).
- R - Relevant (or Rewarding).
- T - Time-bound (or Trackable)

These are some questions that leaders can use to begin and continue a dialogue on goal setting: A leader can identify the themes from the six functional areas and then dwell down into a discussion on setting proper goals.

- 1) What is the units mission?
- 2) What is your role in accomplishing that mission?

3) What things will help you improve and increase your impact to this unit?

- From this question, the leader can go deeper into the six functional areas encouraging the Marine to think about and set personal goals.

After Marines identify goals, both personal and professional, a leader can assist by identifying and/or providing certain resources. It is of course not required the leader is aware of every goal a Marine has, but having a general idea is required. From there the leader can help guide the Marine to the proper resources to achieve goals.

The six functional areas of leadership development assist with identifying and setting goals that meet all aspects of a Marines life. For example, fitness: a leader can provide a HITT training team to come to the unit to assist in PT or even better, send a Marine to become HITT certified and conduct unit training. Sending Marines to become MCMAP instructors also provides organic resources.

Another way the leader can assist Marines with goal setting is simply by setting the goals for the Marines. Hold weekly discussions on books on the Commandants Reading List.

It is following this process that Marines have discovered personal goals, and identified resources to assist the Marine accomplish those goals.

Time Management

Time management refers to a range of skills, tools, and techniques used to accomplish specific tasks, projects, and goals. Time management encompasses a wide scope of activities which include but not limited to planning, setting goals, delegation, analysis of time spent, monitoring organizing, prioritizing, and personal activities. Below are some questions leaders can use to begin discussions on time management with their Marines.

1. *How do you spend your time each day in the context of competing activities of family, work, self, friends, etc.?*
2. *Do you find yourself overwhelmed by the number and complexity of projects that need to be completed at work each day?*
3. *Do you frequently need to respond to a crisis or put out fires? If so, how do you go about attacking the problem?*
4. *Do you have little time for actually planning ahead and sorting out priorities? If so, what changes have you made in setting aside time to focus on those issues?*
5. *When you leave work "on time", do you feel guilty or anxious because of what has been left undone?*
6. *What do you consider "free time"?*
7. *Do you have difficulty controlling distractions that waste time?*

The Time Management Matrix, outlined in the Future POI divides the way we spend our time in four quadrants:

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Crises - Pressing Problems - Deadline Driven Projects, meetings, preparations 	II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparations - Presentations - Values Clarification - Planning - Relationship Building - True Recreation - Empowerment
Not Important	III <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interruptions, some phone calls - Some mail, some reports some meetings - Many proximate pressing matters - Many popular activities 	IV <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trivia, busywork - Junk Mail - Some phone calls - Time wasters - "Escape" activities

By spending as much time as possible in Quadrant II we are prioritizing our time on the things that are most important, and focusing on long term goals. For more info on this tool see the mind tools website: http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newHTE_91.htm

The Mind tools website in addition to the matrix, provides a broad amount of classes, products, and ideas for success in both goal setting and time management. Leaders can use the website to generate ideas when counseling or mentoring Marines, but also can push it to the Marines themselves for personal use. <http://www.mindtools.com/index.html>

To summarize, the most important thing about goal setting and time management is that it provides another opportunity for leaders to engage with their Marines while projecting a positive message. The tools above are just that, tools. Nothing can replace an engaged leader who takes the time to care about his or her Marines. Goal Setting and Time Management are simply ways to assist this.