

## Motivational Development and the Importance of Goals

A research study completed at Harvard in 1972 showed that for every 100 people who retire at the age of 65, 27% are dependent on government, family, friends, or charity. In addition, it showed that 60% lived week-to-week, or paycheck to paycheck, while 10% lived well with some surplus of income and finally, the top 3% were totally financially independent. Their data revealed some significant differences in other characteristics among the top four groups.

The top 3% share very similar characteristics with the next 10%---they had the same social class background and similar amount of education, among other things, yet the top 3% was on average 10-100 times as wealthy as the next 10%. The major distinguishing characteristic was that the Top 3% has set clearly defined goals and had placed them in writing.

The next 10% had goals in mind but had neither placed them in writing or developed written plans for their accomplishment. The middle 60% did not have clear goals “in mind”, but rather had numerous “New Years Resolutions.”

The final 27% by and large had few if any goals they had hopes of achieving. Most started life “behind the 8-ball” and their day-to-day and year to year goal was to survive.

The Harvard study supported by the research findings by David McClellan who studied the characteristics of high-achieving men and women in a variety of cultural and social settings.

McClelland found that high achievers set clear goals, take personal responsibility for planning, organizing and making things happen in their lives, take moderate risks, and enjoy and profit from challenges, value personal growth, seek feedback on the results of their actions, and persist in the face of difficulty.

