

# Goal Planning Essentials

## *Workbook*

### **Unit 4: Ensuring Project Success**

TOWES - Test of Workplace Essential Skills

**TOWES**

## **TOWES Goal Planning Essentials**

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## How to use this eWorkbook:

This workbook is meant to guide learners in a step by step method to attaining the stated learning outcome listed on the first page. Print this workbook out and write notes in the margins. Fill in the learning activities using a pencil to allow for mistakes and brainstorming during your learning process.

You may choose to complete this workbook on your own, but it may be helpful to locate a mentor or trusted friend or advisor to give you feedback on your completed learning activities.

Make sure to explain or summarize the main concept of the unit and the purpose of each learning activity to your mentor before you ask for feedback. The purpose of this collaboration is NOT for your mentor to tell you that something is right or wrong, but rather just to give you some constructive and objective feedback that may allow you to look at things in a new way or from a different perspective. Chances are that if you can clearly explain the concepts of the unit and your mentor understands what you have completed in your learning activities - you are on the right track.

Essentially, you have the final say on how you complete your learning activities, and how you use the templates provided in this course, but generally a good rule of thumb is that two heads are always better than one! If you are having difficulties working on your own, ask someone for help or feedback.



**Step 1:** Read the entire workbook.



**Step 2:** Complete the learning activities.



**Step 3:** Ask for feedback on learning activities from a mentor or trusted advisor.



**Step 4:** Use the templates for school, home, or work situations.



## The Story: Eliza's Mission

Welcome to Unit 4 of the Goal Planning Essentials Learning Series. This unit is about strategies that can help you to stay focused on your goals and projects in order to help you be successful.

Meet Eliza. This is her story and how she learned a few simple strategies or ways of thinking to ensure that she was able to... stay focused, create positive relationships, and work independently when she needs to.

Eliza is a student at Bow Valley College. As a working student, she was feeling overwhelmed at trying to get all of her school work done and meet work commitments for her part time job as an office receptionist. She decided to meet with her Student Advisor Casey at the College to seek a bit of advice and support. Casey gave her some words of advice "Look to your co-workers and friends for support, stay focused, and figure out how to best work independently so you can get everything done that you need to do!" he exclaimed.

Eliza thought about what these things meant to her, but wanted to take the time to explore the ideas a little further. She decided to set aside an entire afternoon and try to research the topics a little bit to see if she could find personal meaning in some of the ideas that her Student Advisor Casey mentioned. Eliza was on a mission to help solve her feeling of being overwhelmed and to empower herself through learning and knowledge.

Throughout this unit you will be shown some basic strategies and approaches that Eliza found to help her with cultivating positive working relationships, staying focused and working independently.

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## Unit 4: Ensuring Project Success

**Q:** *What kinds of things can I do to ensure project success?*

In this learning series we have shown various tools or strategies for setting goals, and making specific plans to reach them. It is also important to consider personal skills or abilities, like staying focused, working with other people and working independently.

**Q:** *How long will it take me to complete this workbook?*

It should take learners about 1 hour to complete this unit.

### Learning Outcome

*When you complete this unit you will be able to...*

Utilize various strategies or approaches to encourage positive relationships, stay focused and work independently to successfully complete projects to reach our SMART goals.

### Learning Objectives

*Unit 1 focuses on the following Objectives:*

1. Outline key strategies that help to create positive working relationships while collaborating and communicating with others.
2. Describe methods or strategies that a person can use to help stay focused.
3. Outline various approaches, behaviors and attitudes that can help a person work independently.

### Learning Activities

*Please complete the following learning activities:*

- Learning Activity 1: Positive Working Relationships
- Learning Activity 2: Staying Focused
- Learning Activity 3: Independence vs. Group Work



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# OBJECTIVE ONE

*When you complete this objective you will be able to...*

Outline key strategies that help to create positive working relationships while collaborating and communicating with others.

## Learning Material

### Why do Positive Working Relationships Matter?

Positive working relationships are essential to happiness and success. They are what allow us to achieve our goals and manage barriers or challenges that we might have to face. Having support and input from others in what we do whether in a work, home or school situation can be the difference between success and failure. Working environments are becoming increasingly more complex and may require multiple skill sets, expertise or input from your co-workers or colleagues in order to solve an issue effectively and minimize any negative impacts that we might not be able to manage or handle by our selves. Taking the time to invest in building positive relationships can benefit us now and in the future when we are trying to expand our networks or look for future opportunities.

Let's take a look at various questions that can help us to think about positive relationships in our lives and how we might start to strengthen them:

- ✓ Who are the people that enable the success of your work?
- ✓ Who are the people that can be a barrier to the success of your goals or work?
- ✓ Are you listening to truly understand what someone is saying at a deeper level?
- ✓ Can you learn more about the people who are important to your success and try to understand or observe what barriers they might face to try to offer your support to them too?
- ✓ Are your relationships mutually beneficial? Meaning is there a balance between the "giving" and the "taking" happening within each of your relationships to keep them positive?
- ✓ Are you genuinely interested in building a authentic relationship with the individual(s) and do they have the right balance of personal disclosure and asking questions about the other person?

On the next page review some simple and practical things that anyone can do to build stronger and more positive relationships at home, school or work:

<p><b>1. Have a Positive Attitude</b></p>	<p>Try to avoid negative thoughts or topics of discussion. Make sure not to be judgemental and be accepting of other people's ideas and attitudes.</p>
<p><b>2. Do not jump to Conclusions</b></p>	<p>Try to gather as much information as possible before reacting to a negative situation. Know the difference between responding to a situation and just "reacting" to one. Give people the benefit of the doubt if you are unsure.</p>
<p><b>3. Deal with conflicts as soon as possible</b></p>	<p>When a negative situation or misunderstanding happens, do not just leave it alone. Try to deal with and resolve the issue as soon as possible. Make sure to be direct and courteous but respect the other person's feelings or position on the matter.</p> <p>Work together to try to resolve the issue, come to a compromise if needed. If in a work situation don't forget to bring up the issue to a supervisor when appropriate.</p>
<p><b>4. Improve your communication skills</b></p>	<p>Improving your communication skills is something everyone can do as an activity of life long learning.</p> <p>Make sure that you are listening carefully to a speakers message, and that you try not to interrupt when it is not your turn to speak. Make sure to repeat back what you have heard to the speaker in your own words to reinforce that you are hearing what the other person is saying.</p>
<p><b>5. Try to see things through the other person's eyes</b></p>	<p>When building positive relationships with others try to see things through the other person's eyes.</p> <p>Everyone has his or her own unique life experiences and knowledge. Be respectful of what others bring to the table. Try to be empathetic to life challenges others may face that you may not know about. Sometimes people react negatively to stress. A negative reaction to you may not actually be about you. If this happens try to 'respond' to the conflict with respect and empathy for unknown factors. Life can be difficult for all of us sometimes!</p>

## Learning Activity 1: Reflection on Relationships



*Complete the Learning Activity listed below...*

*Who is most important?* These are people that enable the success of your work, home or school or could potentially be a barrier and stand in our way. Our boss is just one of many people that may be considered important, others may include our peers, direct reports, internal and external customers and any opinion leaders, or even our own family or friends.

Make a list of 3 to 4 important people that have a direct or indirect impact on you and your ability to reach your goals in your work or home life. Assess the level of your relationship with each of them by answering the following questions:

- ✓ Which ones are strong relationships and which ones need work?
- ✓ What can you do to improve upon each relationship?

Important Person's Name:	What connection does the person have to a specific goal? OR are they a barrier to accomplishing one of your goals?	Is it a strong relationship (#1) or does it need work (#2)?	2-3 things you CAN realistically do to improve the relationship:
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			





*Ask your mentor for feedback on this activity once you are done!*

## OBJECTIVE TWO

*When you complete this objective you will be able to...*




Describe methods or strategies that a person can use to help stay focused.

### Learning Material

#### Staying Focused

*Eliza was finding it difficult to focus, not only on her goals, but also on her day-to-day activities. She decided to research some different approaches that might help her think differently to see what she could find that could help her to stay focused.*

Some of the things that she noticed that kept coming up where:

	<p>1. <b>Get Rid of the Clutter...</b> Try to clarify what you are trying to achieve. Having too much on your plate at once can interfere with your ability to focus. Try to accomplish 1 or 2 things at a time rather than trying to multitask to many things at once.</p>
	<p>2. <b>Visualize the Task...</b> Try to paint yourself a mental image of yourself doing the task, during this visualization you see yourself enjoying the experience and doing it well. Make sure to think about the ideal process involved or how you will feel in completing the task, rather than obsessing over the desired perfectionist results.</p>
	<p>3. <b>Take Regular Breaks...</b> Don't try to keep going if you are feeling over tired or become uninterested in the task that needs your focus. Instead, take a 10-15 minute break, have a cup of tea, look at a picture with pretty colors in it, do some yoga, take a quick walk or phone a friend for a quick chat. Then once your break is done – get back to it. You will feel refreshed and refocused!</p>



#### 4. **Create a Positive Working Environment...**

Make sure you set up your workspace or environment to *support* the tasks you need to do. Constant distractions or unnecessary interruptions can make you lose focus. Turn your phone off and remove distractions. Set up a positive and productive workspace for yourself.

One of the other things that Eliza noticed in her research on *staying focused* was the difference between really successful people and every one else... It has been noted that really successful people have an ability to accept that not every step of the way towards your goal is going to be exciting and adventurous! Actually that it will be quite the opposite. Successful people are the ones that can handle the day-to-day boredom and monotony of doing the same things over and over without expecting to see immediate results. They accept the process or the journey towards the goal, and EXPECT a bit of boredom and repetition and just accept it, rather than focusing ONLY on the end result.

Focus on the baby steps and enjoy the journey towards your goal and the rest will take care of itself!



#### **Professor E says...**

**Successful people maintain a positive focus in life no matter what is going on around them. They stay focused on their past successes rather than their past failures, and on the next action steps they need to take to get them closer to the fulfillment of their goals rather than all the other distractions that life presents to them.**

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## Learning Activity 2: Sharpen your Focus



*Complete the Learning Activity listed below...*

We all have distractions! Ask yourself these simple questions to help you make a plan to sharpen your focus.

1. What kinds of things stop you, interrupt you, or make it difficult for you to focus? List 5 to 6 things that interfere with your ability to focus:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Make a list of 3 distractions that you can eliminate to help you sharpen your focus:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What time of day or night do you do your best work?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What kind of work environment can you set up that will help you to avoid distractions and will allow for you to focus?



*Ask your mentor for feedback on this activity once you are done!*

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# OBJECTIVE THREE

*When you complete this objective you will be able to...*

Outline various approaches, behaviors and attitudes that can help a person work independently.

## Working Independently

In today's workplace it is important to be able to set your own goals, make plans to meet those goals, work with and collaborate with others. Although working with others and mastering good communication skills (listening, written and verbal) are essential characteristics, it is also important to be independent:

- **Self-Motivated**
- **Ability to Work With Little or No Supervision**

Your goals belong to you, and you only. If you are not motivated to make them happen, then they are unlikely to happen. As much as you will need to collaborate with others to reach your goals, there will also be times that you will need to work independently.

## What does it mean to be independent?

Being independent means:

- Having the ability to self-monitor /self-correct.
- Being clear about what you need to do and how you will need to do it.
- Taking the initiative rather than waiting to be told by someone else on what to do and how to do it.
- Doing what is asked of you to the best of your ability, without requiring that someone check up on you.
- Working until the job is done.
- Learning to work at a healthy and reasonable pace that you can handle.
- Taking ownership of your mistakes without looking for excuses.
- Doing what you say you will do.
- Refusing to let self-doubt or negative emotions due to negative past experiences interfere with your activities and what you need to get done.

Key characteristics to being independent are:

- ✓ Self-awareness
- ✓ Self-motivation
- ✓ Self-regulation / Self-correction
- ✓ Self-reliance

Let's define the following characteristics related to independence:

Trait:	What does it mean?
<b>Self Awareness</b>	<i>Self-awareness</i> refers to your knowledge and understanding of your emotions, beliefs, assumptions, biases, knowledge base, abilities, motivations, interests, etc. Taking a conscious effort to learn about yourself - your abilities, beliefs, likes and dislikes.
<b>Self Motivation</b>	<i>Self-motivation</i> refers to your ability to identify effective methods of getting yourself to move from thought to action. Keeping in mind that everyone is different and that some individuals are highly self-motivated while others require set deadlines or some type of reward or penalty in order to move from thought to action.
<b>Self Regulation</b>	<i>Self-Regulation</i> is the regulation of ones own behaviors and actions without outside control or external monitoring. It also refers to “our ability to direct our own behavior and control our impulses so that we meet certain standards, achieve certain goals, or reach certain ideals. Self regulation involves being able to set goals, monitoring one's behavior to ensure that it is in line with those goals, and having the willpower to persist until goals are reached.” <sup>1</sup>
<b>Self Correct</b>	<i>Self-correcting</i> is when a person has the ability to look critically at oneself (and the work that they do) and be willing to correct mistakes and make adjustments to improve upon the end result or outcome.
<b>Self Reliance</b>	<i>Self-reliance</i> is having the ability to depend on yourself to get things done and to meet your own needs, rather than looking towards other people for help when it isn't actually needed.

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## Learning Activity 3: Independence Day



*Complete the Learning Activity listed below...*

Think of examples of times where you acted independently. Fill out the chart below. Use a separate piece of paper if necessary to fill in your answers.

Example of a time where you demonstrated each trait...
I demonstrated <b>self awareness</b> when I...
I demonstrated <b>self motivation</b> when I...
I demonstrated <b>self regulation</b> when I...
I was able to <b>self correct</b> when I...
I demonstrated <b>self reliance</b> when I...



*Ask your mentor for feedback on this activity once you are done!*

## Unit 4: Building Vocabulary



### Directions:

- Read the list of the 26 terms below
- Use either Google, or an online dictionary, to define each word.
- On a piece of paper, write down the meaning of the word in English
- If English is NOT your first language translate it into your native language using an online translator tool such as <https://www.babelfish.com/>
- Do this for each word listed below

1. Cultivating
2. Independently
3. Utilize
4. Strength
5. Attitudes
6. Barriers
7. Genuinely
8. Authentic
9. Disclosure
10. Judgmental
11. Situation
12. Misunderstanding
13. Reinforce
14. Peers
15. Successful
16. Immediate
17. Monotony
18. Repetition
19. Motivated
20. Immediate
21. Distraction
22. Regulate
23. Reliance
24. Monitor
25. Independence

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## References

Self Regulation. (n.d.). In *Alleydog.com's online glossary*. Retrieved from:  
[http://www.alleydog.com/glossary/definition-cit.php?term=Self Regulation](http://www.alleydog.com/glossary/definition-cit.php?term=Self+Regulation)

Why Relationships at Work Matter?  
<http://excelle.monster.com/benefits/articles/1098-why-relationships-at-work-matter>

Positive Working Relationships  
<https://web.stanford.edu/group/scie/Career/Wisdom/positive.htm>

Staying Focused  
<http://www.lifehack.org/articles/productivity/7-strategies-stay-super-focused.html>

Key Strategies for Staying Focused  
<http://carriegreenecoaching.com/5-strategies-to-stay-focused-and-on-track/>

Working Independently  
<http://www.webguru.neu.edu/professionalism/professionalism/working-independently>





# Open Educational Resource

*TOWES – The Test of Workplace Essential Skills is Canada’s premier literacy and essential skills assessment. Over 120,000 people have used TOWES on their pathways to success in education, employment and life.*

*TOWES’ suite of assessment products have been used by various learning institutions and employers, with over 100,000 TOWES assessments completed by individuals across Canada.*

