

Establishing Priorities and Goals:

1. **Narrow your objectives.** You probably won't be able to achieve every financial goal you've ever dreamed of. So identify your goals clearly and decide which are most important, and why they matter to you. By concentrating your efforts, you have a better chance of achieving what matters most. Put it in writing!
2. **Focus first on the goals that matter the most.** To accomplish primary goals, you will often need to put equally desirable but less important ones on a back burner.
3. **Be prepared for conflicts.** Even worthy goals often conflict with on another. When faced with such a conflict, you can sometimes choose by applying criteria like: Will one of the conflicting goals benefit more people, or benefit me, more than the other? Which goals will cause the greater harm if it is deferred?
4. **Put time on your side.** The most important ally you have in reaching your goals is time. Money stashed in saving accounts or invested in stocks and bonds grows and compounds. The more time you have, the more chance you have of success. Your age is a big factor.
5. **Choose carefully.** In drawing up your list of goals, you should look for things that will help you to be not only financial secure but happy and fulfilled also. For example most families will certainly want to build an emergency, get out of debt, and save for college tuition, but many also need to include charitable and church gifts, dream vacation, and hobbies if possible. Once you have your list, you will need to rank the items in order of importance.
6. **Include family members.** If you have a spouse or significant other, make sure he or she is part of the goal-setting process. Children, too, should have some say in goals that affect them.
7. **Start now.** The longer you wait to identify and begin working toward your goals, the more difficulty you'll have reaching them. The time for new beginnings is always now.
8. **Sweat the small stuff!** While long range goals are important, most of life is lived in the here-and-now and most of what you spend will always be for daily expenses – including some that are simply for fun. That's OK –so long as your long-range needs are also provided for and you realized how spending habits on a daily basis now will have profound affect on your long range plans.
9. **Spend your time as carefully as you do your money.** This will help to give your life meaning and purpose while you are making those hard financial choices. After all there is more to life than money, right?
10. **Be prepared for change.** Your needs and desires invariably change as you age, so you should probably reexamine your priorities at least every five years.

Short and Long Range Goals

Make sure your goals are S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and have a Time Table)