Most common mistakes in goal setting

Mistake	How to avoid it
Setting unspecific goals Example: Write a book.	Make sure your goal is specific and clear. Define what exactly you want to accomplish. Example: Write a the first draft of a 80,000-word historical romance novel by July 15.
Setting unrealistic goals Example: Write 5,000 words each day.	Set goals that are achievable for you, taking into account the time and resources you have. Example: Write 500 words each day.
Setting goals that are too small Example: Write 50 words a day.	Set goals that challenge you, but are still attainable. Example: Write 500 words a day.
Setting goals that aren't relevant to you Example: Write a dystopian young adult novel because that's what seems to sell these days, even though it doesn't interest you at all.	Set goals that are your own, no matter what everyone else thinks. Example: Write a science fiction novel if that's what you want to do, even though everyone says science fiction doesn't sell.
Setting goals that aren't time-bound Example: Outline your novel someday.	Set a deadline for each of your goals. Example: Outline your novel by March 15.
Setting negative goals Example: Don't waste so much time on Facebook when you should be writing.	Phrase your goals in a positive way. Example: Get your writing done first thing in the morning.
Not identifying the motivations behind your goal Example: Write a nonfiction book for writers.	List the reasons why your goals are important to you. Example: Write a nonfiction book for writers because I want to give back to the community of writers.
Not writing down your goals	Write your goals down and put them somewhere where you can see them every day.
Not making yourself accountable	Share your goals with selected friends, family members, or fellow writers who will hold you accountable.
Setting too many goals	Set priorities and focus only on two or three goals.

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Not having an action plan	Create a step-by-step list of actions that will move you toward accomplishing your goals.
Not knowing where to start	Break your big projects down into small, manageable short-term goals and tasks that you can accomplish with one session.
Not setting rewards	Create a reward system for achieving important milestones on your way to your long-term goals.
Not taking enough action	Take one action toward your goal every single day, even if it's just a small step.
Not tracking your progress	Track your progress toward your goal regularly and adjust your action plan if necessary.
Not reevaluating your goals	If your circumstances change, you might need to update, change, or give up on your goal or add new ones.
Not expecting setbacks to happen	Accept challenges along the way as a normal part of the process. Identify the most likely obstacles early on and find ways to overcome them.
Not seeking help from other people	As part of your action plan, write down a list of people you could contact for help or advice.
Not taking the time to gain new skills	If you don't have the skills necessary to take the next step toward your goal, make acquiring those skills your next mini-goal.
Not having enough time to work on your goal	Learn to use little pockets of time. Trade in other activities, e.g., watching TV, for an hour of writing time.