

## The Many-One-New Goal-Attainment and Problem-Solving Method

This section describes a goal-setting or problem-solving model called The Many-One-New Method. It can be used to help yourself, another person, or a small group to systematically solve a problem or reach a goal. It's similar to many other goal-setting or problem-solving methods used in business or counseling.

I encourage you to learn all nine steps and begin to use them to help you create better goals and solve problems more easily. Even if you usually do well at reaching goals or solving problems, a systematic approach can save you much time, money, energy or heartache. This is because the extra effort you spend carefully answering the questions of the model usually stimulates you to create better, more fulfilling goals and more efficient plans.

The model is in three stages, each having three steps, for a total of nine steps. Each of the steps can be summed up in one question to ask yourself, the person you're helping, or the group you are leading. A table at the end of this section summarizes the nine steps.

The three stages can be remembered as "NOW-GOAL-TO:"

1. What's going on NOW? (Where are we?)
2. What's the GOAL? (Where do we want to be?)
3. How do we get from where we are now TO the goal? (The "TO" is the plan, the process.)

Each of these three stages can be further divided into three steps according to the words "MANY-ONE-NEW" for a total of nine steps. These nine steps follow, with a person's example response in italics after each step.

You can try this out at the same time: Think of a goal you'd like to achieve or a problem you'd like to solve. Then take a piece of paper and answer each question in as much detail as you think is necessary. Often you will get fresh insights that help you adjust your goals or plans.

The first stage, NOW, then becomes:

1. What MANY things are going on NOW? The answer to this question is a list of what significant things are happening, good or bad. In other words, what's going right or wrong, what problems or opportunities are present now?

*Don't enjoy my job, heard about an opportunity to go back to school.*

*Want to spend more time with my children.*

*Feel too busy, run down, drained*

*The dryer is broken.*

*There's too much housework and yard work to do.*

*Feeling lonely. I'd like to find new mate.*

*Can't control my youngest.*

*The medical bills of my middle child's chronic illness are mounting up.*

*Writing stories would give me a sense of fulfillment, but all I do is think of them.*

2. What ONE thing is most negative (or positive), critical, pressing, or key NOW? This step is for focusing on the issue with the most leverage, the most potential for positive or negative effects.

*Although being there for my children is the most important thing, getting a new, better-paying job would make me feel better, bring in funds, and might even allow me to pay someone a little to do errands so I'd have more time with my children.*

3. What NEW perspective, what new way of looking at what's happening NOW, can you think of? Usually a fresh way of looking at a problem or opportunity will change the whole situation. Sometimes this comes automatically by focusing on the *one* most key area. Sometimes you need to ask yourself, "How can I see this more creatively?"

*In my present situation without skills it might be hard to find a better paying job. Maybe what I just need to do is to save money! Maybe I could somehow make my own job more interesting and more profitable.*

The second stage, GOAL, is also divided into three MANY-ONE-NEW steps:

4. What MANY possible GOALS can you pursue? The answer to this question is a list of possible goals, or scenarios, that relate to the one key area that you focused on in Step 2 and saw in a new light in Step 3. It's important to generate many possible goals, because the first one you think of is often not the best.

*Two basic goals: Either make an extra \$3,000 a year, or save \$3,000 a year. Also there's the combination of making \$1,500 and saving \$1,500. (Note that the goals only concern the area of highest priority. If other areas are to be addressed, the whole process must be repeated from Step 2 onward.)*

5. What ONE GOAL of these would be the best? To answer this question you must compare the goals you generated in Step 4. But before you compare them, they must be specific, realistic, in keeping with your values, and capable of completion in a reasonable time.

*After researching the job market, it's pretty doubtful that I can manage a new job with a salary increase of \$3,000. And knowing my boss, I don't think I could wangle \$3,000 a year, but I could manage half that amount. If I made a drastic change in our living*

*situation and in food, I could save \$3,000 (\$250 a month), but that would be too harsh for the children. So the goal of earning \$1,500 more and saving \$1,500 looks best.*

6. What NEW GOAL do you *feel* you want to do? This step is a matter of choosing a goal and committing yourself to accomplishing it. To commit to it, it helps to make a list of costs and a list of benefits (incentives) to show yourself that the benefits outweigh the costs. (Or else why do the goal?)

*I feel good about asking for \$1,500 more after I prove I'm worth it. I also feel good about cutting costs. I think we're ready for a new place to live. I think the kids are old enough to participate in economizing.*

The third stage, TO, is also divided into three MANY-ONE-NEW steps:

7. What MANY activities could you do to get TO your goal? The answer to this question is a list of activities or strategies. And to come up with the list you can do research (ask people, or look up), or you can brainstorm using your imagination.

*To earn more, I could:*

- \* *organize a cost-cutting committee.*
- \* *ask my boss for additional responsibilities.*
- \* *propose a new project that will bring in new accounts.*
- \* *ask for a different position within the company.*
- \* *network for a new job outside the company.*

*To save more, I could:*

- \* *shop at a discount store. (I'll have to plan a menu—this will take extra time!)*
- \* *find cheaper recipes.*
- \* *move back with my parents.*
- \* *sell my car? (Impossible! At least at this time—or is it? Maybe I could write stories on the bus, or take a class and study on the bus!)*
- \* *refinance the house.*
- \* *call the utility companies for savings ideas.*
- \* *take in a boarder.*
- \* *sell the house and move to a cheaper place.*
- \* *marry someone who has a house that's paid for.*
- \* *start our own garden.*

8. What ONE combination of activities will best get you TO your goal? The answer to this question is a step-by-step plan. As in Stage 2, you arrive at your plan by comparing the many options you generated. Which activities give you the most benefit, and cost you the least in time, money and energy? (Note that this ONE step means one *plan*, not one activity. You are likely to have more than one activity in each plan.)

*#1. Have a house meeting with the children to let them know their help is needed and to teach them how to do laundry. Make three meals each weekend and freeze them so I have time during the week to work on the following projects.*

*#2. Sell the car. (This saves \$50 a month in gas, \$30 a month in repairs and incidentals, and \$150 a month in insurance; but we need to pay \$75 a month in bus passes.) The lump sum of \$2,000 from the sale will go into savings, except \$750 for three bicycles.)*

*#3. Advertise for a boarder who's willing to sit kids. This could possibly bring in \$125 a month. (Not including food costs.)*

*#4. Change my shopping habits to save \$15 a week, that's \$60 a month.*

*#5. Work up a plan for a work project I can do on the bus. Talk to my boss about new project ideas.*

*#6. Call the utility companies for savings ideas.*

9. What NEW thing are you *doing* to get you TO your goal? The answer to this question is not words but action. As you do your plan, what incentives can you use to motivate you along the way? What obstacles do you see getting in your way? How can you remove or get around these obstacles?

*In the process of action the following were added to the plan: 1) A weekly house meeting to plan strategies and reward cost-saving behaviors with movies or sweets. 2) A written budget.*

*Obstacles:*

*1) There's a danger that the children will become somewhat socially ostracized. I can work out swaps with their friend's moms—watching their children when they come over to play, in exchange for a little transportation to events.*

*2) In the winter, it'll be harder to wait for a bus in the cold. To get around this, I will need to buy better quality clothes for myself and the children in the fall.*

The rhyme to remember this whole method is:

NOW GOAL TO  
MANY ONE NEW  
THINK FEEL DO.

The first line contains the three stages. The second line gives you the three steps for each stage. And the third line gives you a hint for remembering the NEW steps: In the first stage you're looking for a NEW *thought* about the situation NOW. In the second stage, you're looking for a NEW *feeling* about the GOAL, a feeling of excitement and commitment. And in the third stage, you're looking for something NEW to *do*.

	MANY	ONE	NEW
NOW	1. What many things are going on right now?	2. What one thing is most key or urgent?	3. What do you <u>think</u> would be a (new) perspective on this?
GOAL	4. What many possible scenarios (goals) can you envision?	5. After comparing them, what one goal seems best?	6. What new goal do you <u>feel</u> you want to do?
TO	7. What many activities can you do to get to your goal?	8. What one combination of activities will best get you to your goal?	9. What new things are you <u>doing</u> to reach your goal?