End-states vs. Directions: Goals as Objectives vs. Compass Points

THESIS

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Abstract

Three studies investigated the influence of goals on affect and resilience to setbacks. We propose that goals sometimes indicate compass points—the directions that people want to be headed in their daily lives (e.g., stay healthy)—instead of objectives—the outcomes that people want to accomplish (e.g., lose five pounds). Results of three studies showed that when goals are viewed as compass points relative to objectives, people feel more positive affect (e.g., joy, self-assurance). These findings held both when participants rated pre-existing goals (Study 1a) and when they rated their reframed goals (Study 1b). In Study 2, seventy undergraduate students completed seven daily surveys over the course of a week. We replicated our findings in the previous two studies with a goal manipulation and suggested that people might interpret and respond differently to setbacks in goal pursuit when they perceived their goals as compass points relative to objectives.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Goal pursuit is one of the most studied topics in social psychological research (Fishbach & Ferguson, 2007). In our daily lives, goals influence people’s thoughts, emotions, and actions. For example, health goals may determine whether dieters choose to eat fruits or cakes for dessert. Academic goals may help students decide whether they want to stay at home to study or to go out and have fun with friends. Goals can also influence bigger and more important decisions, such as where to go for graduate school, which career to pursue, or whom to marry.

Previous literature suggests that goal pursuit is related to affect in various ways. For example, affect can influence the types of goals people choose to pursue (Carver & Scheier, 1998; Higgins, 1997). For instance, positive mood increases people’s tendency to adopt approach-oriented goals, whereas negative mood tends to promote a general tendency to adopt avoidance-oriented goals. Yet, some findings also suggest that the relation between affect and the types of goals people pursue might be bi-directional. Much research in the self-regulation domain has demonstrated that goals can differ on multiple dimensions, and these differences can have a major impact on affect, behavior, and cognition (Fujita & MacGregor, 2012). The different types of goals (e.g., approach vs. avoidance, learning vs. performance) that people choose to pursue can have an influence on the type of affect—either positive or negative—that they experience during
goal pursuit. For example, learning goals help people maintain positive affect when they anticipate challenges during goal pursuit, whereas performance goals tend to exacerbate negative affect when they experience setbacks (Dweck and Leggett, 1988).

In the present studies, we propose that the goals people pursue not only influence the type of affect they experience but also create the framework within which they interpret and respond to success and failure in goal pursuit. Specifically, we examined two different types of goals: objectives (in which people are concerned with getting things accomplished and being done with their goals) and compass points (in which people are concerned with being headed in the right direction). We then tested and supported the hypothesis that having goals as compass points predicts more positive affect, and that people are generally more resilient to setbacks (i.e., experience less negative affect in the face of failure) when their goals are perceived as compass points.

Goals and Affect

Many findings suggest that mood—positive or negative—influences how people pursue goals (e.g., Carver & Scheier, 1998; Ferguson & Bargh, 2004; Higgins, 1997). For instance, positive mood tends to promote approaching goal end-states and pursuit of goal-congruent actions, whereas negative mood usually promotes avoidance-oriented actions (e.g., Cacioppo, Gardner, & Berntson, 1999; Higgins, 1997). Research on mood as information has also proposed a similar process. The experience of positive affect indicates that the environment is safe and signals people to approach a stimulus, whereas the experience of negative affect indicates that there is potential immediate danger and signals them to avoid a stimulus (N. Schwarz & Clore, 1983, 2003). People who experience positive affect perceive goals as opportunities, and thus are more likely to
adopt and pursue their goals. In contrast, people who experience negative affect perceive goals as risks, and are more likely to avoid pursuing their goals. People become approach-oriented when they anticipate positive affect from goal attainment or negative affect from not attaining it; and they become avoidance-oriented when the opposite patterns occur. It is important to acknowledge, however, that the link between affect and the approach/avoidance systems is usually more complicated than this. In certain situations, some types of negative affect (e.g., anger) may activate approach responses instead of avoidance responses, and some types of positive affect may activate avoidance responses instead of approach responses (e.g., calm) (Carver, 2004; Harmon-Jones, 2003).

While research on goal pursuit has mainly focused on the influence of affect on goal pursuit, some researchers in many different domains (e.g., academic, interpersonal relationships) have suggested that goals can also influence the type of affect people experience. For instance, research on appraisal has found that people experience different types of emotions when they perceive an event as goal- and motivation-congruent than when they perceive an event as inconsistent (Smith & Kirby, 2009). The type of emotions that they experience also depends on people’ appraisal of the event and the perception of their ability to engage in emotion-focused coping strategies.

Similarly, in the motivation literature, although little is known about how different goal characteristics influence affect in particular, many scholars have found that certain characteristics of goals can have an impact on well-being. Self-determination theory proposes that pursuing activities that meet one’s own fundamental needs (i.e., autonomy, competence, relatedness) can promote well-being and many other positive
outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000). Based on this theoretical framework, intrinsic goals (e.g., build a good relationship) tend to be much more beneficial for well-being. On the contrary, pursuing extrinsic goals (e.g., self-image, material goods) can have a negative impact on one’s life satisfaction. Empirical research on motivation has demonstrated that relative to approach-oriented goals, avoidance-oriented goals are associated with greater negative affectivity (Elliot & Sheldon, 1997), poorer mental health, and lower subjective well-being (Elliot & Sheldon, 1998). In the academic domain, Dweck and Leggett (1988) distinguish two different classes of goals: performance goals (in which people are concerned with proving one’s own ability) and learning goals (in which people are concerned with gaining new skills and improving one’s own ability). On the basis of this research, children who adopt performance goals are more likely to show pronounced negative affect and maladaptive responses when they experience setbacks (Dykman, 1998). In contrast, those who adopt learning goals are more likely to maintain their positive affect toward goal pursuit when they are confronted with difficulties.

In similar fashion, Crocker et al. (2010) propose that different types of interpersonal goals can foster or undermine well-being. On the one hand, when people have a narrower, self-focused egosystem motivation, they tend to adopt self-image goals (i.e., want others to view them in a more positive light). On the other hand, when people have a broader ecosystem motivation, they tend to adopt compassionate goals (i.e., want to care for and support others. Compassionate goals have been shown to predict reduced distress and promote well-being. Additionally, these interpersonal goals are also associated with different types of affect (Canevello & Crocker, 2015). Whereas self-
image goals are associated with egosystem affect—feelings of unease (e.g., conflicted, confused)—when interacting with others, compassionate goals are associated with an increase in egosystem affect—feelings at ease (e.g., loving, peaceful).

**Goal Distinction: Objectives vs. Compass Points**

Much research in the self-regulation domain has primarily focused on self-regulation toward desired end-states. The key defining feature of such self-regulation is the approach motivation to achieve end-states, at which point goal pursuit can stop (e.g., Carver & Scheier, 1981, 1998; Elliot, 1999). In some cases, the reference points are undesired end-states, which people are motivated to avoid. Nonetheless, the major assumption behind this conceptualization of self-regulation is that the focus of goal pursuit is achieving goals, getting things done, or crossing goals of a “checklist.” Most of the goals in daily life seem to fit this description. For instance, one might strive to achieve the desired state of having three publications or lose five pounds of weight.

However, not all goals fit this description. A goal could indicate an aim or a direction (e.g., be a successful scholar, be healthy) and goal pursuit may involve monitoring whether one is headed toward that direction. There are no “end-states” in this type of goal pursuit; people do not want to accomplish something so they can be done with it. Rather, they have mental representations of desired directions. When people are going in the right direction, they should experience positive affect from staying in the desired direction. In these cases, people strive to reduce the discrepancy between the current direction and a desired direction.

Our efforts to explain this phenomenon have led us to a more general conceptualization of goals. In this paper, we propose that goals sometimes indicate
compass points—the directions that people want to be headed (e.g., be a successful scholar)—instead of objectives—the outcomes that people want to accomplish (e.g., get a publication). Objectives are goals with clear endpoints, such as the items on a to-do list or a “bucket list.” Once objectives are completed, people tend to put them out of mind and move on to the next item on the list. Compass points, in contrast, are goals that specify the direction in which one wants to head, even though there is no clear endpoint. People generally do not think about “checking off” these goals or crossing them off their “bucket list.” For example, the goal to be compassionate toward others or to contribute to science may provide direction but never be fully attainable or “crossed off the list.” We propose that these types of goals (i.e., objectives and compass points) differ not only in terms of the goal content or meaning but also how people approach them (i.e., goal orientations). On the one hand, people might self-regulate by striving to achieve definable end-states and getting them accomplished when their goals are perceived as objectives. On the other hand, when goals are perceived as compass points, people might self-regulate by focusing on whether there is a mismatch between the direction that they are currently headed and their desired direction. In other words, the discrepancy in this type of goal pursuit corresponds to the “angle” between the current direction and the desired direction.

*How Objectives and Compass Points Might Influence Affect*

We propose that objectives and compass points differ in their affective consequences. More specifically, having goals as compass points might make people feel more positive affect. Objectives and compass points are associated with the different types of affect that people experience for a number of reasons. Compass points usually indicate the directions that people want to be headed in their lives, thus the content of the
goal might be more meaningful compared to goals as objectives. In addition, people may be more intrinsically motivated to pursue compass points. When goals indicate the direction in which one wants to head, they might promote positive outcomes by helping people meet their fundamental needs (e.g., autonomy). Compass points might be perceived as more autonomous and intrinsically motivating, whereas objectives might be more controlled and extrinsically motivating. According to self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), compass points would be associated with more positive affect and well-being.

The type of goals that people have may also influence how they perceive and respond to goal outcomes (i.e., goal progress and setbacks). Most research on the association between goals and affect has found that goal achievement is associated with positive affect, whereas goal failure is associated with negative affect (Carver & Scheier, 1990; Higgins, 1987). However, the type of goals that people pursue might enhance or attenuate the effects of goal outcomes on affect. We propose that objectives and compass points determine how people pursue goals (i.e., goal orientations), creating a framework within which they interpret and respond to success and failure in goal pursuit. As a result, people may experience differing levels of positive and negative affect, depending on the type of goal that they are currently pursuing.

In addition, compass points might enhance the influence of goal progress on positive affect, and attenuate the influence of goal setbacks on negative affect. In other words, people become more resilient to setbacks when they perceive goals as compass points. This could happen for a variety of reasons. On the one hand, compass points indicate desired directions rather than desired goal end-states. Thus, there might be more
flexibility in terms of how they interpret progress and setbacks. When goals are perceived as compass points, goal setbacks might be more “correctable” or “fixable.” For instance, one might have a compass point to learn about social psychology in a course. Not getting an A in the midterm might indicate goal setbacks, but the individual may still put more effort into studying in order to go back in the desired direction (i.e., learning). On the other hand, objectives generally indicate some desired end-points. Goal discrepancies indicate failure and might be perceived as much more difficult to be “corrected.” One might have an objective to get an A in the midterm exam, but not getting an A in the exam is considered a goal failure. With objectives, goal discrepancies indicate failures in pursuing goals, whereas with compass points, goal discrepancies indicate being “off track”—rather than goal failures—and these setbacks can be “corrected” when people adjust their directions.

Goal content might also contribute to the association of goals and goal outcomes. Compass points may be more abstract and distant (i.e., long-term), which might allow more flexibility in interpreting goal discrepancies. In addition, perceiving goals as compass points might give people more hope or make them feel more optimistic, thus attenuating the influence of goal setbacks on negative affect. The opposite influence of goals on affect is also conceivable. If compass points are generally more meaningful in people’s lives relative to objectives, goal setbacks in pursuing compass points might feel more devastating to people and lead to worse outcomes. Thus, compass points might actually lead people to feel more negative affect when they experience goal setbacks.

Overview
In a series of three studies, we examined the relation between affect and goal pursuit as a function of two different types of goals: objectives and compass points. Participants completed various goal measures for an in-lab questionnaire (Study 1a & 1b) and a longitudinal study (study 2). In Study 1a and 1b, we tested whether having goals as objectives and compass points—either pre-existing or reframed—would elicit different emotional responses to having the goals, even after controlling for other goal dimensions (e.g., abstract vs. concrete, long-term vs. short-term). We also tested the mechanism underlying the effect of goals on positive affect. In Study 2, we tested whether goals as compass points could have a long-term effect on people’s levels of stress, vitality, and well-being. More specifically, we attempted to manipulate how people perceived their daily goals and examined change in these outcomes. In addition, we tested our hypothesis that perceiving goals as compass points enhanced the effect of goal progress on positive affect and attenuated the negative impact of goal setbacks on affect. In other words, we hypothesized that people would be more resilient to setbacks when they perceived their goals as compass points.
Chapter 2: Study 1a

Overview

Study 1a was a cross-sectional survey study that assessed how people perceived goals in their daily lives. Participants listed their goals for different time frames, categorized them as objectives or compass points, and then rated them on a variety of goal dimensions. We examined how these goals were similar or different from other existing types of goals in the literature (e.g., abstract vs. concrete, intrinsic vs. extrinsic). Furthermore, we wanted to test the hypothesis that people felt more positive affect when they perceived their goal as more of a compass point and less of an objective.

Method

Participants

One hundred and fourteen undergraduate students (39 men, 74 women, 1 unidentified, $M = 19.3$ years, $SD = 0.47$, age range: 18-49 years) in their freshman year at The Ohio State University completed an in-lab questionnaire about goals in life in return for research experience credits. We conducted this study during the first few weeks of the fall semester. Seventy percent of participants reported their race as White, 21% were Asian, 6% were Black or African American, and the remaining participants were other races.

Materials and Procedure
The questionnaire used in this study took about thirty minutes to complete. Participants came into the lab, gave their informed consent, and completed the survey on one of the lab computers. This study used a within-subject design with four different time points.

**Goals at Four Time Points.** First, participants were asked to identify their most important goal for four different time frames: tomorrow, 4 weeks from now, 5 months from now, and their life.

**Ratings of Goals on Different Goal Dimensions.** After the goal listing task, participants were instructed to rate each of their goals on multiple dimensions (see Appendix A). Participants were told to rate all of the four goals they had just listed in the goal listing task. The order in which the goals were rated was counterbalanced and randomly determined by Qualtrics. We included some of the goal dimensions that have been studied extensively in the self-regulation domain, including abstract vs. concrete, long-term vs. short-term, self-focused vs. other-focused, ought vs. ideal, clear vs. unclear, ends vs. means, important vs. unimportant, and easy vs. difficult. Items were reverse coded when necessary such that high scores on each scale reflected higher levels of that variable.

**Ratings of Goals as Compass Points vs. Objectives.** Participants rated four items included to measure how much they perceived their goals as objectives vs. compass points. The items that indicated goals as objectives were: “This goal is something I will never be completely done with,” “I can cross this goal off my list when it’s accomplished;” the items that indicated goals as compass points were: “When I have accomplished this goal I won’t have to think about it again,” and “this goal will never be
checked off my list; it is like a compass that guides my life.” (See Appendix B). Scores for the two items that indicated goals as objectives were reverse coded and combined with the two items that indicated goals as compass points. We created a composite as the average score of these four items ($\alpha = .76$) and used this variable as the focal predictor in our study ($1 = \text{objective, } 5 = \text{compass point}$).

Goal-Related Affect. Next, participants were asked to indicate how having each of the goals they listed made them feel. For this task, we used our modified version of the PANAS-X Scale (Watson & Clark, 1994), which included thirty items measuring both positive and negative affect (see Appendix C). We included five separate categories of positive affect in the questionnaire: joviality (happy, joyful, enthusiastic), self-assurance (proud, strong, confident), attentiveness (alert, attentive, determined), worthiness, and positive ecosystem affect (loving, peaceful, clear, connected) (Canevello & Crocker, 2015). Similarly, six groups of negative affect were included in the questionnaire, including sadness (sad, blue, lonely), guilt (guilty, ashamed, blameworthy), fear (afraid, scared, frightened, nervous), hostility (angry, hostile, irritable), negative ecosystem affect (conflicted, confused), and unworthiness. These items had very high internal consistencies (positive affect $\alpha = .90$, negative affect $\alpha = .89$) and loaded on two separate factors, we decided to create a composite measure of each type of affect (i.e., composite measures of positive and negative affect). All items began with the phrase “having this goal makes me feel” when participants were asked to indicate how having their goal

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1 In addition to asking participants to indicate how having their goals made them feel, we also asked them to report how succeeding or failing at their goals made them feel. We decided not to include these affective measures in the analysis as the reliability of these items was very low. Moreover, we believed that it was not appropriate to ask participants to indicate how goal success and failure made them feel, as they might not able to report accurately how they would feel.
made them feel, and “succeeding/failing at this goal makes me feel” when they were asked to indicate how succeeding or failing at their goal made them feel. Participants responded to each item using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = not at all, 5 = extremely).

Finally, participants answered some questions about their demographics. After the study session, participants were debriefed and thanked.

Results and Discussion

All data analyses in our study were conducted using multi-level modeling, which was appropriate for our research designs as we included four different time frames in the study. Our data for participants varied at two different levels: within-subject level and between-subject level. Multi-level modeling accounts for the interdependence in reports provided by the same participant in significance tests. Tables 1 and 2 present the means and standard deviations for all focal variables in our analyses. We then calculated the zero-order correlations among all of these variables. We examined how objectives and compass points were correlated with other exiting goal dimensions (e.g., abstract, long-term, intrinsic). In addition, using regression analyses, we examined whether having goals as compass points—relative to objectives—would make people feel more positive affect.

Goal distinctions

As predicted, objectives and compass points were significantly correlated with all goal dimensions except how much participants felt they ought to achieve that goal, which

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2 We also included a few additional measures for exploratory purposes, including the Purpose in Life Scale, and Religious Orientation Scale. None of these measures were significantly associated with goal ratings or positive affect.
was marginally significant (see Table 1). Results suggested that the objective vs. compass point dimension is associated with, but not identical to other goal dimensions.

**Positive affect**

We predicted that having goals as compass points would predict more positive affect. Our data supported our hypothesis. Simply regression analyses using mixed models showed that goals as compass points predicted higher levels of positive affect (e.g., joy, self-assurance) \(B = .31, 95\% \text{ CI} = [.24, .38], p < .001\). Next, we simultaneously include all other goal dimensions that were correlated with the objective/compass point dimension in the same regression equation. After controlling for other goal dimensions (e.g., abstract, long-term), goals as compass points still predicted positive affect \(B = .24, 95\% \text{ CI} = [.16, .32], p < .001\).

In summary, Study 1a found that the extent to which people view their goals compass points versus objectives can be measured reliably. The more goals were rated as compass points, the more they were perceived as abstract, long-term, ends as opposed to means, committing, and other-focused; the less they were perceived as clear. Furthermore, when participants rated their goals more as compass points--relative to objectives—they also indicated that their goals made them feel more positive affect. This association between compass points and positive affect remained even after controlling for other goal dimensions. The associations between compass points and positive affect, therefore, cannot be explained by the other goal characteristics we assessed.

In this study, participants were asked to rate pre-existing goals (i.e., goals that they already had in their lives). Next, we examined whether changing how people perceive their pre-existing goals would also have an impact on how much positive affect they felt.
In other words, we examined whether thinking about a compass point that was associated with a pre-existing objective would produce more positive affect. Accordingly, Study 1b examined whether compass points would still have the same influence on positive affect after goals were reframed. One important thing to note in Study 1a was that the types of goals participants listed for the two middle time points (i.e., 4 months from now and 5 years from now) were very similar. Having only three time points presumably would make the task less tedious for participants. Thus, in Study 1b, we only included three time points as opposed to the four time points used in Study 1a.
Chapter 3: Study 1b

Overview

Study 1b was also a cross-sectional survey with an experimental manipulation built into the survey by varying the questions participants were asked. Participants were instructed or induced to perceive their goals as either compass points or objectives. The goal of Study 1b was to replicate the affect findings from Study 1a, with a goal manipulation to prompt participants to reframe their goals (i.e., perceive a goal as an objective or a compass point). We predicted that when participants reframed their goals as compass points, having these goals would be associated with more positive affect.

Method

Participants

One hundred and five undergraduate students at The Ohio State University participated in the study for research credits. We started collecting data for this study immediately after Study 1a was completed. In this study, 79 percent of participants reported their race as White, 16% were Asian, 4% were Black or African American, and the remaining participants reported their race as others. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 32 years (M = 18.7 years, SD = 1.63).

Materials and Procedures
Study 1b included three time points as opposed to the four time points in Study 1a. Similar to Study 1a, participants first were asked to identify their most important goal for three different time frames: tomorrow, 5 months from now, and their life. After giving their informed consent and listing their goals, participants were assigned to one of the two conditions: an objective condition or a compass point condition. Participants were given a definition of either an objective or a compass point, depending on which condition they were in.

In the objective condition, they were given the following prompt:

“We are particularly interested in the goals in your life that serve as objectives that, when you reach them, you can cross them off your list. For example, “send a thank you note to Aunt Mary,” "lose five pounds of fat," and “get an A on the first Psych midterm” are objectives, in that once you have accomplished them, you can remove them from your list and don’t have to think about them the following day.”

In the compass point condition, they were given the following prompt:

“We are particularly interested in the ongoing goals in your life; those goals that serve as compass points for you, in that they guide your actions in an ongoing manner, and are never completely crossed off of your list. For example, “be a good daughter” and “life a healthy life” are goals that are compass points, in that however much you succeed or fail at them one day, they are still goals for the following day.”

Next, they were presented with the goals they just listed in the goal listing task, and were asked to reframe their goal to reflect either an objective or a compass point. Participants were presented with the same questions for the goal reframing task. First, participants were reminded of their goals with the phrase “you said your most important
goal for tomorrow is.” Then, they were asked: “How would you express this goal as an objective/compass point?” If participants’ goals were already objectives in the objective condition or compass points in the compass point condition, they were told to simply restate their goals. If participants were unable to revise their goal, we instructed them to write: "There is no objective/compass point associated with this goal."

After the goal listing and goal reframing tasks, participants were instructed to rate their reframed goals—instead of their initial goals—on the same dimensions assessed in Study 1a (see Appendix 1). If the goal was not reframed, participants rated the initial goal that they listed in the first task. Similarly, if participants were unable to revise their goal, they rated the initial goal that they listed in the first task. Exactly as in Study 1a, participants were then asked to indicate how having each of the goal they had made them feel.

*Ratings of Goals as Compass Points vs. Objectives.* Participants rated four items included in the objective/compass point scale used in Study 1a to measure how much they perceived their goals as objectives vs. compass points. A composite of these four items was created (α = .86) and used as the focal predictor in this study (1 = objective, 5 = compass point).

*Goal-Related Affect.* Composite measures of each type of affect (i.e., positive and negative affect) were created. Similar to Study 1a, these items had very high internal consistencies (positive affect α = .89, negative affect α = .80) and loaded on two separate factors in factor analysis.

Results and Discussion

*Manipulation Check*
Forty-six participants were assigned to the compass point condition, and 54 participants were assigned to the objective condition. We compared participants’ scores on the objective/compass point scale (1 = objective, 5 = compass point) between the two conditions for all three time points. For the first time point (i.e., tomorrow), participants rated their goals as more like compass points in the compass point condition ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 1.11$) compared to the objective condition ($M = 2.06$, $SD = 0.9$) ($t = 5.62$, $p < .001$). Similarly, goals were rated more as compass points in the compass point condition ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 0.92$) compared to the objective condition ($M = 2.79$, $SD = 0.96$) for the second time point ($t = 3.81$, $p < .001$), and higher in the compass point condition ($M = 4.37$, $SD = 0.67$) compared to the objective condition ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 1.01$) for the third time point ($t = 2.86$, $p < .01$).

Goals and Positive Affect

We predicted that after the goal reframing task, having goals as compass points would still predict more positive affect. Our data supported this hypothesis. First, using regression analyses, we looked at whether our findings in Study 1a could be replicated. We collapsed both conditions and examined whether goal ratings after the reframing (i.e., objectives vs. compass points) would predict affect. A composite measure of all positive affect items was created from all subscales of positive affect (e.g., joy, self-assurance). Regression analyses using mixed models showed that reframed goals as compass points predicted higher levels of positive affect ($B = .31$, 95% CI = [0.23, 0.39], $p < .001$). After controlling for other goal dimensions simultaneously (i.e., abstraction, clarity, long-term vs. short-term, ends vs. means, and other-focused vs. self-focused) goals as compass points still predicted positive affect ($B = .15$, 95% CI = [0.06, 0.24], $p < .001$).
Next, we examined whether there was a significant difference in positive affect between the two reframing conditions in positive affect. We predicted that participants in the compass point condition would feel more positive affect. Table 3 shows the means, standard deviations, and p-values for positive affect in both conditions for the three time points. There was a marginally significant difference between the two conditions in positive affect for the first time point ($t = 1.73, p = .086$). However, the difference between the two conditions was not significant for the other two time points. This suggested that although our goal manipulation was successful, as indicated by the manipulation check, and despite the fact that reframed goals as compass points predicted more positive affect, being in the compass point condition did not increase positive affect.

Next, we calculated the zero-order correlations between goal ratings and positive affect for each of the three time points. There was a significant correlation between goal ratings as compass points and positive affect for the goal for tomorrow ($r = .36, p < .001$), but this correlation was not significant for the other two time points. One possible explanation for the lack of significance for the second ($M = 3.1, SD = 1.01$) and the third ($M = 4.05, SD = .89$) time points is a lack of variance in goal ratings compared to the first time point ($M = 2.6, SD = 1.15$), and a potential ceiling effect for the last time point. Most life goals were generally perceived as compass points, and it may have been difficult for participants to reframe these goals as objectives in the objective condition.

In summary, Study 1b replicated our the main findings of Study 1a. When participants’ pre-existing goals were reframed as compass points, having these goals predicted more positive affect. However, a limitation of this study was that despite our
successful goal manipulation, reframing goals to reflect compass points did not lead to more positive affect. Nonetheless, based on the results of the first two studies, we speculated that goals as compass points not only predicted a short-term influence on affect in the lab setting but also might have a long-term impact on affect and well-being in daily life. Thus, in Study 2, we conducted a longitudinal study to examine the effects of goals on change in well-being.
Chapter 4: Study 2

Overview

Whereas Studies 1a and 1b examined how having compass points predicted positive affect in the short-term, Study 2 tested whether goals as compass points had a long-term effect on change in people’s levels of stress, vitality, and well-being. This study used a longitudinal design in which participants completed daily surveys for seven days. We asked participants to report not only their affect and well-being but also whether they succeeded or failed at their goals and how goal progress and setbacks made them feel. We tested our hypothesis that perceiving goals as compass points could enhance the effect of goal progress on positive affect and attenuate the negative impact of goal setbacks on affect.

Method

Participants

Seventy college students (31 men and 39 women, with a mean age of 19.71 years) in their freshman year in college participated in this study. We conducted the study in the spring semester. Of the original sample of 70 participants, 36 completed all seven questionnaires (18 men and 18 women, with a mean age of 19.72 years). Seven participants dropped after the pretest survey, and other 29 participants dropped after the five daily surveys. Of the 34 participants who did not complete all seven questionnaires,
20 were in the objective condition, and 14 were in the compass point condition. We included all 70 participants in our analyses. Any missing values were recognized by the computer software and not analyzed.

Materials and Procedure

Participants first gave their informed consent, and then completed the pretest questionnaire in the lab, after which they were given instructions for completing the rest of the study during this session. The remaining five daily surveys and the posttest survey were completed online on a computer in a location that was convenient for them. We collected their contact information (e.g., phone number, email address) in order to send them the remaining surveys and goal reminders. A link to the online surveys were sent to participants by email in the late afternoon and closed at midnight the same day. Goal reminders were sent through text messages three times a day: in the morning, in the early afternoon, and in the late afternoon before the daily survey was sent. For the goal reminders, we used a standard text format for all of the text messages (e.g., “Reminder: Your goal for today is…”).

We assigned participants to one of two conditions: an objective condition and a compass point condition. In both conditions, participants were asked to rate their daily stress, life satisfaction, and vitality levels at the beginning of the study for each of the seven days. Next, from day one to day six, depending on which condition they were in, participants were given our revised definitions of objectives or compass points (see Appendix D), and then were asked to list an objective (i.e., what is your most important objective for tomorrow?) or a compass point (i.e., what is the compass point that you want to guide you tomorrow?) for the following day. After the goal listing task,
participants were instructed to rate their goals on the same dimensions used in Studies 1a and 1b (see Appendix A).

*Ratings of Goals as Compass Points vs. Objectives.* For the objective/compass point dimension, we revised the four items used in Study 1a and added two additional items in the scale (see Appendix E). The new items that indicated goals as objectives were: “I look forward to completing this goal so it’s done,” “I can put this goal on a "checklist" and cross it off the list when I'm done,” “I want to achieve this goal so I won’t have to think about it again;” the new items that indicated goals as compass points were: “This goal guides me toward a direction I want to be headed,” “this goal is like a compass that guides me,” and “when I pursue this goal, I don't really think about "completing" it or when it will end.” These items were revised to better measure the constructs that we intended to measure. Participants rated these six items to measure how much they perceived their goals as objectives vs. compass points. Similar to Studies 1a and 1b, scores for the three items that indicated goals as objectives were reverse coded and combined with the three items that indicated goals as compass points. A composite of these six items was created ($\alpha = .75$) and used as the focal predictor in this study ($1 = objective, 5 = compass point$).

*Goal-Related Affect.* Participants were asked to indicate how having their goals made them feel using the modified PANAS-X Scale used in Studies 1a and 1b (Watson & Clark, 1994). Composite measures of positive and negative affect were created. Similar to the previous two studies, these items had very high internal consistencies (positive affect $\alpha = .91$, negative affect $\alpha = .88$).
From day two to day seven, after reporting their stress, vitality and satisfaction levels, participants were asked to report how much progress they made toward the goal they had listed for that day, as well as how much they faced setbacks while pursuing their goals. Next, participants reported how progress (α = .91) and setbacks (α = .69) toward achieving their goals had made them feel with the modified PANAS-X scale. For goal progress, we asked participants to indicate how progress influenced each type of positive affect they felt (α = .97). For goal setbacks, we asked them to indicate how setbacks influenced each type of negative affect they felt (α = .90). Next, participants completed the goal listing task. In this task, depending on which condition they were in, participants were given our revised definitions of objectives or compass points (see Appendix D), and then were asked to list an objective or a compass point for the following day.

*Additional Measures*  

_Vitality and Life Satisfaction Measures._ For all seven days, we measured participants’ well-being using the Subjective Vitality Scale and Satisfaction with Life Scale. Participants were asked to respond to each statement in the scale by indicating the degree to which the statement is true for them that day. There were 11 items in the scale, each used a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Six items measured vitality, including “I left alive and vital today,” “I look forward to tomorrow,” etc. The remaining five items measured life satisfaction, including items such as “I was satisfied with my life today” and “if I could live today over, I would change almost nothing.” These items had very high internal consistencies (vitality α = .90, life satisfaction α = .93). We also included several additional measures for exploratory purposes, including Goal Commitment Scale, Emotion Regulation Scale, Brief Self-Control Scale, etc. None of these measures were significantly associated with goal ratings or positive affect.
satisfaction $\alpha = .92$) and loaded on one single factor, thus we decided to create a composite measure of both vitality and life satisfaction (i.e., a measure of well-being) ($\alpha = .94$).

*Perceived Stress Scale.* For all seven days, participants completed a ten-item perceived stress scale. All items began with the phrase “today, how often have you” in order to measure their same-day stress level. Participants responded to each item using a 5-point Likert-type scale ($1 = \text{strongly disagree}, 5 = \text{strongly agree}$). Four items were reverse scored and combined with the remaining six items to form a composite of perceived stress score ($\alpha = .89$).

**Results and Discussion**

*Manipulation Check*

*Goal Ratings.* Across all time points, participants rated 234 goals in the objective condition and 186 goals in the compass point condition. We used mixed models to compare participants’ average scores on the objective/compass point scale ($1 = \text{objective}, 5 = \text{compass point}$) between the two conditions. Our data showed that participants rated their goals as higher on the scale in the compass point condition ($B = 1.1, 95\% \text{ CI} = [.84, 1.35], p < .001$).

*Goals and Positive Affect*

First, we examined whether having goals as compass points--relative to objectives--would make people feel more positive affect. Similar to Studies 1a and 1b, our data supported this hypothesis. We person-centered our predictors and used mixed model regression analyses to test whether goals as compass points predicted higher levels of positive affect on average; they did ($B = .32, 95\% \text{ CI} = [.07, .59], p = .013$). In
addition, comparing the two conditions, participants reported feeling significantly more positive affect in the compass point condition across all seven days ($B = .76$, 95% CI = [.36, 1.17], $p < .001$). There was no significant difference in negative affect between the two conditions ($B = .07$, 95% CI = [-.20, .34], $p = .60$).

**Goals and Well-Being**

We person-centered our predictors (i.e., stress and well-being) and used mixed models in regression analyses to examined differences between the two conditions. Two goal conditions, on average, did not differ in overall levels of perceived stress ($B = -.28$, 95% CI = [-.68, .13], $p = .18$) or subjective well-being ($B = .11$, 95% CI = [-.31, .53], $p = .59$). We examined how goal ratings (i.e., objective vs. compass point) predicted levels of perceived stress, subjective vitality and satisfaction the following day, or at posttest. We controlled for people’ well-being the day before in all of our lagged-day analyses. Goal ratings one day did not predict change in stress the following day, or at posttest ($B = .05$, 95% CI = [-.09, .19], $p = .52$). Goal ratings also did not predict subsequent levels of well-being ($B = .01$, 95% CI = [-.14, .15], $p = .94$).

**Goals and Progress/Setbacks**

We tested the hypothesis that perceiving goals as compass points could enhance the effect of goal progress on positive affect and attenuate the negative impact of goal setbacks on affect using same-day analyses. First, using mixed models in regression analyses, we examined whether goal conditions predicted goal progress or setbacks the same day. Goal conditions did not predict how much progress people made toward their goals ($B = -.16$, 95% CI = [-.36, .04], $p = .13$) or how much they experienced setbacks when they pursued their goals ($B = -.18$, 95% CI = [-.58, .22], $p = .32$). Goals conditions
also did not predict how much positive affect participants experienced when progress was made ($B = .40$, 95% CI = [-.20, 1], $p = .19$), or how much negative affect they experienced when they experienced setbacks ($B = .12$, 95% CI = [-.19, .44], $p = .43$).

Next, we person-centered goal outcomes (i.e., progress and setbacks) and examined whether goal progress and setbacks predicted affect. The purpose of this analysis was to examine how levels of a person’s progress or setbacks relative to their own mean level predicted affect the same day. Progress predicted how much positive affect people experienced compared to their usual level ($B = .56$, 95% CI = [.31, .8], $p < .001$), and setbacks predicted how much negative affect they experienced ($B = .23$, 95% CI = [.08, .38], $p < .01$).

Next, using same-day analyses, we tested our prediction in a moderation model, which included goal progress and setbacks as the predictors, goal conditions as the moderator, and positive and negative affect as the dependent variables. Descriptive statistics as well as correlation coefficients between affect and goal outcomes are presented in Table 4. Only one of our hypotheses was supported. Specifically, when the two predictor variables were not person-centered, the effect of progress on positive affect was moderated by goal conditions ($B = 0.2$, $t(171) = 2.07$, $p < .05$) (see Figure 1). The effect of setbacks on negative affect was also moderated by conditions. However, the direction of the effect was the opposite of what we predicted ($B = .24$, $t(231) = .27$, $p < .01$) (see Figure 2). When we person-centered the two predictors, the interaction between goal conditions and progress was non-significant ($B = 0.1$, $t(96) = .342$, $p = .73$), nonetheless the effect was still in the expected direction. The interaction between goal conditions and setbacks became marginally significant ($B = .3$, $t(87) = 2$, $p = .051$) when
the predictors were person-centered. These results suggested that when comparing a
person’s levels of progress or setbacks relative to their own mean level, nonetheless,
these interactive effects became non-significant or marginally significant. Taken together,
our results suggested that progress had a larger effect on positive affect when goals were
perceived as compass points. However, setbacks had a larger effect on negative affect
when goals were perceived as compass points. This suggested that goal setbacks in
pursuing compass points might feel more devastating to people as compass points were
generally more meaningful in people’s lives relative to objectives.
Figure 1. Moderation model. The interaction between goal conditions (i.e., objective vs. compass point) and goal progress for the effect on positive affect.

Figure 2. Moderation model. The interaction between goal conditions (i.e., objective vs. compass point) and goal setbacks for the effect on negative affect.
Chapter 5: General Discussion

The present studies make a significant contribution to the growing body of research on goal-affect associations (e.g., Cacioppo, Gardner, & Berntson, 1999; Carver & Scheier, 1998; Ferguson & Bargh, 2004; Higgins, 1997). Some findings have suggested that goal pursuit might be related to affect in different ways. Specifically, different types of goals can influence the type of affect that people experience during goal pursuit. We identify two types of goals: objectives—goals that people can cross off their “checklist” when they are completed—and compass points—goals that indicate the directions that people want to be headed. We propose that having goals as compass points—relative to objectives—are associated with more positive affect, and that compass points can moderate the influence of goal progress and setbacks on affect.

Consistent with proposed hypotheses, the present studies found that goals as compass points were associated with a number of positive outcomes. Specifically, in all three studies, having goals as compass points—either pre-existing or reframed—were associated with more positive affect, compared to having goals as objectives. In addition, the influence of goal outcomes (i.e., goal progress and setbacks) on affect was dependent on the type of goal that people listed in their daily report in Study 2, although this effect became non-significant or marginally significant when we compared a person’s levels of progress and setbacks with their own mean level. Consistent with previous research, goal
progress was positively associated with positive affect, and goals setbacks were positively associated with negative affect. Our findings also suggested that the effect of goal setbacks on negative affect was marginally stronger when goals were perceived as compass points. In other words, failure at pursuing compass points was perceived to be potentially more distressing and associated with more negative affect. The effect of goal progress on positive affect was stronger when goals were perceived as compass points, but this effect became non-significant when we person-centered goal progress. This finding suggested that individual differences, rather than within-person changes in goal progress, influenced how much people experienced positive affect when their goals were perceived as compass points.

Implications

Our studies provide a new perspective for understanding how different types of goals can lead to different affective outcomes. Previous research has suggested that both goal content and qualities may determine affect and well-being during goal pursuit (Emmons & Kaiser, 1996; Higgins et al., 1997). We propose a new goal distinction—objectives vs. compass points—and demonstrate that this dimension is associated with, but not identical to other goal dimensions. In addition, we show that this goal dimension is uniquely associated with the type of affect that people experience during goal pursuit. Compass points predict more positive affect in part because they indicate the directions people want to be headed in life, and are generally more meaningful, and in part because they tend to be more intrinsically motivating for people to pursue. According to self-determination theory, these qualities may predict more positive affect and well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000). However, our findings also suggest that compass points might have
a negative impact on people’s resilience to setbacks. We show that when goals are seen as compass points, facing goal setbacks has a stronger effect on negative affect. We propose that one potential reason for this phenomenon is that compass points and objectives differ in terms of their goal content. As compass points tend to be more meaningful in people’s lives, setbacks at pursuing these goals might be perceived as more devastating and worsen the negative effects of goal setbacks.

**Limitations**

It is important to note that there might be some potential methodological issues with the current studies. Study 1b and Study 2 used a goal manipulation that could potentially induce demand characteristics. Participants were asked to read a definition of either an objective or a compass point prior to the goal listing task. Then, they were asked to indicate how much they perceived their goals as objectives or compass points. Our manipulation check showed that participants who were in the compass point condition rated their goal as more of a compass point and less of an objective, but they might simply have changed their goal ratings to fit with their interpretation of the experimenter’s purpose in the studies. This could explain why our results did not show a significant difference in positive affect between the two conditions in Study 1b. In addressing these null findings, it is important to consider a different goal manipulation that does not induce any demand characteristics.

In Study 2, we did not find any significant long-term effect of goal conditions or goal ratings on well-being (i.e., stress, vitality, and life satisfaction). There are several potential explanations for why the expected results were not obtained. First, it was possible that the goal manipulation used in this study was not strong enough. Participants
received three reminders of their goals daily. Given the association between compass points and positive affect, we predicted that reminding people of their compass points everyday would lead to an increase in the level of positive affect that they experienced, which would boost their well-being over time. However, as we only asked participants to list one goal and reminded them of that goal each day, the effect of goal reminders might not be strong enough to induce the desired effect. Prior research has suggested that people often hold multiple goals at any given time (Fishbach & Ferguson, 2007). Thus, reminding them of only one goal each day might not be sufficient to have a significant impact on their well-being. Second, the duration of the daily goal study was relatively short (i.e., seven days), which might not be adequate to produce a substantial, long-term effect on well-being.

One question that is evident in discussing the distinction between objectives and compass points is whether they reflect binary categories or a continuum. For instance, can a goal be somewhat of an objective and somewhat of a compass point but not entirely? Or can the same goal be an objective in a particular context and yet be a compass point in a different context? In terms of other goal dimensions, researchers have suggested that some goal dimensions should be considered as continuous rather than categorical. For example, abstract and concrete goals are conceptualized as goals that fall on a continuum (Fujita & MacGregor, 2012), whereas intrinsic and extrinsic goals have been operationalized as both binary and continuous constructs (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000). In the current studies, we treat objectives and compass points as continuous variables, but other researchers might disagree. Understanding whether these goals reflect binary categories or a continuum might be important for future research.
Another conceptual issue that needs to be addressed is whether objectives and compass points indicate mutually exclusive goals. Some researchers studying goal distinctions have suggested that some types of goals are not mutually exclusive. For example, Crocker and Canavello (2008) conceptualize self-image and compassionate goals as two different types of goals, and suggest that a behavior can be simultaneously motivated by both types of goals. Thus, one question that needs answers is whether objectives and compass points are two opposite ends of a continuum or two distinct types of goals? Is it plausible that objectives and compass points are independent, and some goal can be rated highly on both measures? In the current studies, we treated these goals as two opposite ends of a continuum as they were shown to be negatively correlated. However, it is possible that objectives and compass points are two different types of goals, and that they can impact people in various ways. Further conceptual and empirical work is clearly needed in order to address these issues.

*Future directions*

The current findings have generated many new questions to explore in future research. First, future work should address the limitations of the current studies, particularly the goal manipulations. In addition, the current studies have only explored the relation between goals and affect. As mentioned previously, the different types of goals that people have can lead to different affective consequences in goal pursuit. Future research should examine whether objectives and compass points can differ in other aspects, such as motivational and cognitive consequences. For example, goal researchers have suggested that goal activation follows a number of principles (Forster, Liberman, & Friedman, 2007). These principles can be applied to objectives, which generally have
clear goal end-points. Previous work has shown that goals involve post-attainment decrements in motivation, which suggests that after goal fulfillment, goal accessibility is inhibited. However, when goals do not indicate clear end-points, and instead indicate the directions people want to be headed, would change in motivation follow the same pattern? Thus, we suggest that future studies should investigate test whether these principles also apply to compass points.

Although the current findings seem to suggest that compass points are associated with a number of positive outcomes, we want to acknowledge the importance of having both objectives and compass points in goal pursuit. Having compass points—relative to objectives--may be associated with more positive affect. However, facing setbacks when pursuing compass points might be more overwhelming and lead to more negative affect. Thus, having goals as objectives might attenuate the effect of goal setbacks on negative affect. In addition, having objectives is also crucial in helping people monitor their progress in goal pursuit. Having compass points without having objectives might make it challenging for people to make progress as it could be hard for people to be motivated to move forward. Being able to reach goal end-points and get them done might help people figure out how well they are doing in terms of pursuing their compass points. Prior research suggests that implementing multiple steps to achieve goals increases the likelihood that people will actually achieve their goals (Gollwitzer & Brandstätter, 1997; Gollwitzer, 1999; Locke & Latham, 1990). In other words, objectives are more accomplishable, relative to compass points. Additionally, completing objectives may make them feel more accomplished and boost their performance. On the contrary, having objectives without recognizing the compass points associated with their objectives might
also be detrimental to goal pursuit. By focusing on completing objectives and disregard
the important directions in which they want to be headed, people might sometimes end up
spending time and effort pursuing things that are not in line with their desired directions.
Thus, we further argue that having both objectives and compass points are necessary for
optimal goal pursuit. Having both types of goals allow people to not only accomplish
things in their lives but also ascertain that the objectives they achieve help them move in
the right direction.

Conclusions

Past research suggests that goal content and properties may determine the type of
affect that people experience during goal pursuit. Consistent with other goal frameworks,
we propose that goals can be perceived as objectives—the goal outcomes that people
want to accomplish and cross them off their “checklist” when they are completed—or
compass points—the directions that people want to be headed in their lives. The present
studies show that having goals as compass points is associated with more positive affect.
However, they also suggest that goals as compass points can make people feel more
devastated when facing goal setbacks by worsening the impact of goal setbacks on
negative affect. Future work should explore whether these types of goals might differ in
other aspects and whether having both objectives and compass points is essential for
optimal goal pursuit.
References


Appendix A: Measures of Pre-Existing Goal Dimensions

Please indicate your agreement with each of the following statements about your goal:

1. This goal is important to me (Importance)
2. This goal is easy for me to accomplish (Difficulty).
3. This goal is a means to an end; it serves to achieve some other goal (Ends vs. means).
4. This goal is something I think I should or ought to do (Ought vs. ideal).
5. This goal is difficult for me to accomplish (Difficulty).
6. I have this goal mainly because it will benefit me (Self- vs. other-focused).
7. Succeeding at this goal requires a lot of effort (Difficulty).
8. This goal is something I want to do (Ought vs. ideal).
9. I have this goal mainly because it will benefit others (Self- vs. other-focused).
10. This goal is very clear (Clarity).
11. This goal is very abstract or general (Abstraction).
12. This goal is an end in itself; it is not a means to achieve some other goal (Ends vs. means).
13. This goal is very specific and concrete (Abstraction).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>I will achieve this goal very soon (Long-term vs. short-term).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>I am confident I will achieve this goal (Confidence).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>This goal is somewhat unclear or confusing to me (Clarity).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>I will achieve this goal in the distant future (Long-term vs. short-term).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>I am very committed to this goal (Commitment).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>I could easily replace this goal with another (Commitment).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 = Strongly Disagree

5 = Strongly Agree
Appendix B: Objective and Compass Point Scale

Please indicate your agreement with each of the following statements about your goal:

1. This goal is something I will never be completely done with.
2. I can cross this goal off my list when it’s accomplished (Reversed).
3. When I have accomplished this goal I won’t have to think about it again (Reversed).
4. This goal will never be checked off my list; it is like a compass that guides my life.
Appendix C: Modified PANAS-X Scale

Having/succeeding/failing at this goal for \{time point X\} makes me feel:

1. Afraid
2. Angry
3. Guilty
4. Sad
5. Happy
6. Proud
7. Alert
8. Clear
9. Scared
10. Hostile
11. Ashamed
12. Blue
13. Joyful
14. Strong
15. Attentive
16. Connected
17. Frightened
18. Irritable
19. Blameworthy
20. Confident
21. Peaceful
22. Nervous
23. Determined
24. Loving
25. Lonely
26. Conflicted
27. Enthusiastic
28. Confused
29. Worthy
30. Worthless
Appendix D: Revised Goal Definitions

*Objective condition*

We are particularly interested in different types of goals that people have in their lives. Researchers have identified two different types of goals; one type of goal is called “objectives.” Objectives are goals that you can put on a "checklist" and cross them off your list when you are done, and you don’t have to think about them again. For example, “get an A on the first midterm exam,” “lose 5 pounds,” “call my friend today” are objectives because once accomplished, they can be checked off a list and don’t have to be done again.

*Compass point condition*

We are particularly interested in different types of goals that people have in their lives. Researchers have identified two different types of goals; one type of goal is called “compass points.” Compass points are goals that guide you toward a direction you want to be headed. For example, “take care of my mom,” “do well in school,” and “be healthy” are compass point goals. Compass points are not something you can put on a "checklist" and cross them off your list when you are done. When you pursue this goal, you don't really think about "completing" it or when it will end.
Appendix E: Revised Objective and Compass Point Scale

Please indicate your agreement with each of the following statements about your goal:

1. I look forward to completing this goal so it’s done (Reversed).
2. I can put this goal on a "checklist" and cross it off the list when I’m done (Reversed).
3. I want to achieve this goal so I won’t have to think about it again (Reversed).
4. This goal guides me toward a direction I want to be headed.
5. This goal is like a compass that guides me.
6. When I pursue this goal, I don't really think about "completing" it or when it will end.
Appendix F: Tables
Table 1. Means (M), Standard Deviations (SD) and Zero-order Correlations (r), Significance Levels (p), for Associations between Compass Points and Other Goal Constructs in Study 1a.

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<thead>
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<th>Goal Construct</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>p</th>
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<th>SD</th>
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<td>Compass Points</td>
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<td>1.08</td>
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<td>Abstraction</td>
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<td>Clarity</td>
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<td>3.99</td>
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<td>Ought (should do)</td>
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<td>.056</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>0.78</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ideal (want to do)</td>
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<td>.000</td>
<td>4.47</td>
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Table 2. Means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) for Different Types of Affect; Zero-order Correlations (r) and Significance Levels (p) for Associations between Compass Points and Affect in Study 1b.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affect</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>p</th>
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<td>Compass Points</td>
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<td>1.08</td>
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<td>Positive Affect</td>
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<td>Joy</td>
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<td>.000</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>1.30</td>
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<td>3.34</td>
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<td>Positive ecosystem affect</td>
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<td>1.14</td>
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<td>.24</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Affect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.205</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>1.18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guilt</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.636</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>0.76</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hostile</td>
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<td>.048</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadness</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.379</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative ecosystem affect</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.434</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>1.08</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unworthiness</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.489</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>0.70</td>
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Table 3. Means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) for Goal Ratings; and ts of Differences in Goal Ratings between the Two Conditions in Study 1b.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time frames</th>
<th>Compass point Condition</th>
<th>Objective Condition</th>
<th>T-tests and p-values</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomorrow</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>2.60</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 years from now</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>3.48</td>
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<tr>
<td>Life</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>3.80</td>
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Table 4. Means (M), Standard Deviations (SD), and Range for Affect and Goal Outcomes; Zero-order Correlations (r) for Associations between Goal Outcomes and Affect in Study 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Descriptive Statistics and Pearson’s Correlations</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Progress</td>
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<td>Positive Affect</td>
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<td>Negative Affect</td>
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</table>

** p < 0.01

n = 72