WORKSHEET + WORKED EXAMPLE

Make a Goal a Routine

A small recurring routine with a cue, support, and a useful review.

20 minutes | Systems and goals · Repeatable work

Use it in three moves

1. Choose one result and the smallest recurring action likely to support it.
2. Design the cue, time, access, and fallback around real working conditions.
3. Review the benefit and burden; revise or retire the routine when it stops helping.

Choose the result that matters

Describe the benefit, not just a target number. Keep a way to notice if the target stops serving the need.

Name the repeatable action and cue

What happens, when, and who owns it? Make the smallest workable version explicit.

Make the routine possible

Include access, time, backup, inputs, and a place to keep the work.

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YOUR WORKING NOTES / CONTINUED

Decide what happens on a difficult day

What is the fallback? Avoid a routine that works only when nothing goes wrong.

Watch the result and the cost

Use a small check on whether the routine helps. Completion of the ritual is not the whole outcome.

Choose a review and a stop rule

Who can change the routine? When will you remove steps that are no longer useful?

A question for me

Who currently remembers or rescues this process for everyone else?

See one way through

FICTIONAL WORKED EXAMPLE / NOT THE ANSWER TO YOUR SITUATION

Choose the result that matters

New requests receive a useful first response by the next working day, without constant interruptions for the whole team.

Name the repeatable action and cue

At 10 a.m. each working day, the rotating triage owner checks new requests and sends either a next step or a question.

Make the routine possible

Reserve 20 minutes, give the owner queue access, and name a backup. Requesters see a short example of the information needed.

Decide what happens on a difficult day

If the owner is away, the backup takes the slot. If volume exceeds the slot, flag the queue to the lead rather than silently working late.

Watch the result and the cost

Sample five replies for usefulness and timeliness. Ask the owner whether 20 minutes is realistic. Check repeat queries.

Choose a review and a stop rule

Review after two weeks with requesters and triage owners. Adjust the slot or intake; stop duplicate email reporting if the queue supplies what is needed.

The thinking behind it

A reliable routine should not depend on someone quietly absorbing every exception. Make the backup and capacity decision part of the design.

James Clear's writing distinguishes goals, which identify a desired result, from systems, which organize the ongoing actions around it. This original workplace planner adds shared ownership, capacity, and a way to retire an unhelpful routine. Repetition does not make success inevitable.

James Clear · Goals and systems

Read You Have a Culture Problem by Nic Payne