



Marina Milyavskaya

# Goal Pursuit Model

## An Integrative Model of Goal Pursuit



### Principle

Goal Pursuit can be explained in one unified model.

### Quote

“The integrative model of goal pursuit addresses all aspects of the goal pursuit process, including goal setting, goal striving, and goal adjustment.”

### So What - Application

If we have a model for goal pursuit, then we have a way of looking at goals that can support our own goal pursuits.

When I pursue goals with this model in mind, emotions become an alarm trying to tell me that I’m not making enough progress, there’s an obstacle, or there’s a temptation. The emotion isn’t just unpleasant, it now invokes curiosity.

Researchers can begin to use the same language so research supports or refutes each other clearer.

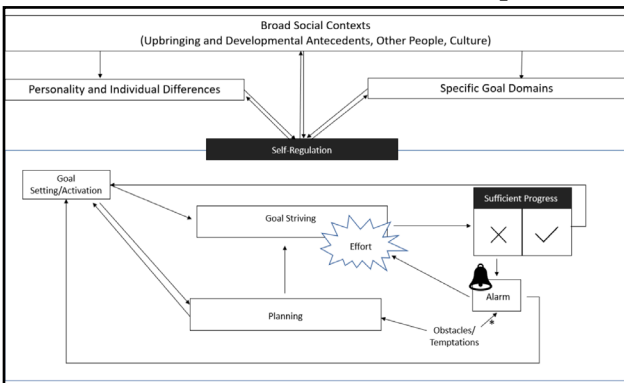
### The Research Story

Two researchers from Carleton University and University of Toronto created an integrated model of goal pursuit with the following components:

1. Self-Regulation (Our ability to get ourselves to go after goals)
2. Goal Setting/Activation (Starting again)
3. Goal Striving (Effort toward a goal)
4. Progress (Checkpoint where we notice whether or not our progress is enough)
5. Alarm (emotions that arise when we feel behind, tempted, or thwarted)
6. Planning (Breaking goals down and finding means)
7. Obstacles (Interfering forces that stop you from reaching your goal)
8. Temptations (Momentary desires that get in the way of your goal)
9. Broad Social Contexts (How you were raised, developmental history, other people, cultures) These influence personality, which goal domains you choose, and how you regulate yourself in goal pursuit.
10. Personality (Individual differences that affect goal pursuit)
11. Specific Goal Domains (The kinds of goals we choose)

Goal pursuit is basically a feedback loop of choosing a goal, putting effort into the goal, and checking progress. Throughout goal pursuit we may encounter obstacles, temptations, or falling behind, which all trigger emotions that signal something’s wrong. When we notice the emotions we either adjust, redouble, or quit our efforts. We may also get feedback by checking in with ourselves and our goals or getting spontaneous comments from other who notice our goal pursuits. Some goals are big or complex and require a planning step. This model assumes that goal pursuit gets stalled and reactivated as a normal part of goal pursuit.

Interestingly, they include social contexts that influence which goals we choose and how we pursue them. The people we hang out with, the way we were raised, and the cultures we live in or identify with all influence our goals. These social experiences also influence our goals more subtly by first influencing our personality as we grow up and the kinds of goals that we are exposed to.



The implications of the model on goal pursuit are more complex than a one-page summary can summarize. It is a useful way of thinking about goal choice, pursuit, and completion.

The researchers also explained how each of the 8 most common goal pursuit models relates to their integrated model.

Milyavskaya, M., & Werner, K. M. (In Press). An integrative model of goal pursuit. PsyArXiv.



Kaitlyn Werner