



DEFINING GOALS

Knowing what your goal is – for a weekend, a season, or a lifetime – will not only help you measure your success. It will help you define exactly what ‘success’ is and keep you focused on it. It will also make your showhall experience much more enjoyable.

Goals are not always about winning rosettes/achieving wins. Indeed, you will be sadly disappointed if making finals is your ONLY goal. For many exhibitors making finals is ‘The Goal’ and they may begin to feel that if they do not make a final (and in some cases, make every final), then they have wasted an entire weekend. This type of thinking sets one up for disappointments. Disappointments lead to bitterness, and before long the cat fancy has either a bitter exhibitor.....or loses an exhibitor altogether.

What other goals, you ask, ARE there?

Cat-Related Goals (at shows)

- Learning more in depth about your chosen breed. Talking with long time breeders and exhibitors of your breed will add to your knowledge, and it is a never-ending field of knowledge.
- Competing successfully with outstanding examples of your breed. The judge can hang only 1 Best of Breed. If you are exhibiting in a very competitive class and the judge takes a good look at your cat (perhaps even hanging 2nd Best of Breed on it!) then consider that an accomplishment!
- Perfecting grooming techniques. Sometimes good grooming can be what makes or breaks a cat and it is another ongoing skill to perfect. Related to this is...
- Learning to successfully groom and condition a breed that is not your primary breed. Having skilled exhibitors of that breed compliment you on your cat’s grooming and condition is a hard-earned accomplishment and should not be taken lightly!
- Learning more about other breeds. You would be surprised at how much having a well-rounded ‘cat education’ will also enhance your knowledge and handling of your own breed!
- Teaching a tentative cat or kitten more confidence in the ring. A cat has to want to show, and some cats are more fearful than others. Instilling them with confidence on the show bench is an essential part of making them a show cat.

Non-Cat Related Goals (at shows)

- Meeting other exhibitors of your chosen breed.
- Learning more about how shows actually operate. Who knows, you may decide to eventually enter the Clerking Program, assist with putting on a show, take up entry clerking.....
- Striking up friendships with other exhibitors (in and outside of your breed). A new friend may be benched across the aisle from you!
- Discovering a person or persons with whom you can share rides (and expenses) with or post-show dinners with.

Cat-Related Goals (at home)

- Researching your chosen breed
- Pedigree research
- Practicing grooming techniques
- Getting your cat in condition (or in even better condition).
- Defining what look and style of cat you want your breeding program to produce.
- Learning basic veterinary care and birthing techniques.

Open your eyes and look around the showhall. The world of the cat fancy is bigger than a rosette, and its best rewards aren’t made of satin. No, no exhibitor enters a show to lose. But defining ‘winning’ as something other than making a final increases one’s enjoyment of this hobby and creates a deeper, richer experience.



DEFINING GOALS (CONT.)

Defining Success

What exactly IS success? Is it having Best (whatever cat) in your Region or Nationally? If that is to be the only measure of success, then hundreds of exhibitors are going to be despondent every season? Best of breed? Best anything? The same answer would hold true for all these 'goals' and disappointment assured. Now, there is nothing wrong with wanting to have a Best 'anything,' but let's do a reality check.

“Is this goal realistic?”

Is the cat truly capable of achieving the goal? Does it meet the standard closely enough? Does it have faults that would preclude this goal. Be objective and realistic – and often that is the hardest part!

“Is this goal achievable?”

Do you have the time that it would take to achieve this goal? Some goals might require minimal time. Some goals are only for a weekend. Others may involve 2-3 or more weekends a month. And just as important – does the cat like to show? Showing is a partnership and if your cat is not a willing participant, then you should stop right there.