

Warren Buffett's 2-List Strategy to Prioritize and Focus

One of the most widely shared productivity lessons associated with Warren Buffett is the "25:5 Strategy." Whether or not Buffett personally coined the method, the principle behind it is powerful: success often comes from focusing on a few high-priority goals rather than trying to pursue everything at once.

How many goals do you have right now? If you're honest, you probably don't have any. On the other hand, having 10 goals isn't an optimal strategy either. This is where Buffett's idea fits in.

Follow this process to use Buffett's 2-List Strategy to prioritize your goals and focus your energy:

1. **List the top 25 goals you'd like to accomplish in your lifetime.** Take all the time you need to compile a long list of goals. Many of them you'll know right off the top of your head, but many will require more thought.
 - It might take a few days to a week to complete this step. Once you get started, you'll find that additional ideas pop into your head at random moments. Be sure to capture these.
 - Feel free to make the initial list much longer than 25, but ultimately limit yourself to 25.
2. **Choose the five most important.** This is a little tougher. Choose the five most important goals from your list of 25 goals. Again, you might need some time to complete this step.
 - **Imagine that you only had the opportunity to accomplish five goals.** Which would you choose?
3. **Create two lists.** Put the five most important goals in one list, and the remaining 20 in another list. Keep both of them handy. Both are useful, just not for the same reasons.

The list of your top five goals now becomes your focus.

The list of 20 items might seem important to you, but they are to be avoided at all costs. They are now just a list of appealing distractions that will keep you from accomplishing the most important five. Keep this list available. Remind yourself regularly of these items. View them as poison to your success.

Most of us wouldn't have the time to complete all 25 items, unless the goals are quite small. **Spreading yourself too thin is a recipe for disaster.** When your attention is scattered, you'll accomplish little.

Prioritizing, and then limiting yourself to just five, ensures that you're magnifying the effectiveness of your time and energy.

Can you ever do any of those 20 items? Yes, but only after the first five have been accomplished.

After you complete your top five, complete the process again. After completing five important goals, you won't be the same person anymore. Your priorities and interests will likely be different. Start all over again with a new list of 25 goals.

It's important to avoid those other 20 items until you've achieved success with the primary five. They can be very appealing ways of wasting your time and energy. The most successful people are focused on a small number of goals. Prioritization and focus are necessary for success.

The principle behind this strategy is worth considering. Get clear on your goals, focus on what matters most, and take consistent action. Make a list of your 25 most important goals and prioritize them today. Then, get started making your top five goals your reality!