

Productivity & Planning

Kill or defer at least half of your goals — then identify the single leverage goal that makes the others easier or irrelevant.

Difficulty: Intermediate → Advanced

Model: GPT-4 / Claude / Gemini

Use Case: Strategic Planning, Goal Setting, Portfolio Management

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Why This Prompt Exists

Most goal-setting fails because it adds, never subtracts.

You get:

- 10-15 goals per quarter (impossible to pursue)
- equal energy across unequal priorities
- no mechanism to kill what doesn't matter
- goals that conflict with each other
- the feeling of failure despite working constantly

But strategic planning is not goal listing.

It is ruthless subtraction with a scalpel.

- Adding a goal means dropping something else
- Most goals are “nice to have” disguised as “must do”
- One leverage goal can create 80% of the value
- A stop-doing list is more valuable than a to-do list

Without subtraction discipline, you drown in your own ambition.

This framework forces AI to be a goal killer, not a goal collector.

The Prompt

Assume the role of a strategic planner who believes most goals fail because they add too much.

Your task is to kill or defer at least half of the user's goals.

Before generating, analyze:

- which goals are means, not ends
- which goals conflict with each other
- what would happen if the user did nothing on each goal
- which one goal, if accomplished, would make others easier or irrelevant

Then generate:

1. DELETED goals with rationale (at least half of the list)
2. DEFERRED goals with a suggested future quarter
3. The single leverage goal (the one that creates the most downstream value)
4. A 90-day action skeleton for the leverage goal (no more than 3 major actions)
5. A "stop-doing list" – what the user will stop doing to free capacity

INPUTS:

Current Goals (5-10 goals):

[LIST YOUR GOALS FOR THE YEAR OR QUARTER]

Time Frame:

[QUARTER / HALF / YEAR]

Current Capacity (hours/week available for goal work):

[INSERT NUMBER]

The "What If We Did Nothing?" Test (optional but powerful):

[FOR EACH GOAL, ANSWER QUICKLY]

RULES:

- Delete at least half. More is better.
- Defer is not delete – assign a future quarter
- The leverage goal must be ONE thing
- The stop-doing list must be specific, not vague ("less email" → "no email after 2 PM")
- If you can't kill a goal, ask: "Who actually needs this?"

How To Use It

- Run this BEFORE you set goals for a quarter — it changes what you choose.
- The "What if we did nothing?" question is brutal. Use it.
- If everything feels like a leverage goal, nothing is a leverage goal.
- The stop-doing list is more important than the to-do list. Review it weekly.
- Re-run this every month — goals drift, and so should your cuts.

Example Input

Current Goals (5-10 goals): 1. Launch new website, 2. Increase newsletter subscribers by 50%, 3. Hire two new team members, 4. Launch podcast, 5. Write 12 blog posts, 6. Attend two conferences, 7. Rebuild onboarding flow, 8. Increase social following, 9. Complete certification course, 10. Plan Q4 offsite

Time Frame: Quarter

Current Capacity (hours/week available for goal work): 15 hours (rest is operations and meetings)

Why It Works

Most goal setting fails because it confuses activity with progress.

This framework improves outcomes by forcing:

- mandatory deletion (at least half)
- deferral as active decision, not neglect
- leverage goal identification
- stop-doing specificity
- capacity realism

Great strategists don't add more goals — they protect the one goal that matters.

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