Nearly half choose self-improvement goals based on results they can show

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Personal progress can carry different weight depending on whether others can recognize or verify it. New ClarityCheck research finds that the visibility of an achievement can influence both the goals people pursue and the credibility they assign to someone else's success.

Online profiles allow personal achievements to reach people who have no firsthand knowledge of how they were earned. A professional qualification can be supported by a searchable record, while improvements in emotional well-being rarely leave comparable evidence. As personal accomplishments become part of how people establish credibility in digital interactions, the ability to demonstrate progress may also influence which achievements they consider worth pursuing.

A **ClarityCheck** survey of **11,830 adults across the United States, United Kingdom, European Union and Latin America** who had actively pursued at least one self-improvement goal during the previous year found that **73%** believed the main purpose of improving oneself should be to make one's own life better rather than change how other people see them. Yet the findings also revealed how much weight respondents placed on outcomes that others could recognize.

When asked which self-improvement outcomes would feel most valuable to achieve, **56%** selected a promotion or new job title, **51%** chose a qualification or professional certification, **47%** selected a visible fitness or appearance change, and **39%** chose a measurable financial milestone such as paying down debt or building savings. Respondents could select more than one option.

The appeal of recognizable achievements extended beyond how people valued potential outcomes. **48%** said they had selected or prioritized a self-improvement goal partly because success would leave a clear result they could later point to. For these respondents, the prospect of demonstrating progress was already a consideration when deciding where to invest their effort.

The effect on motivation was particularly revealing. **44%** said they had lost motivation for a change they still considered personally worthwhile because other people were unlikely to notice it. The responses suggest that improvements with limited outward visibility can face an additional obstacle even when their personal benefits remain meaningful. The difficulty lies in sustaining effort toward a goal that offers little opportunity for external recognition.

The preference for recognizable results also appeared in how respondents evaluated other people's claims. **46%** said they had searched online for information supporting a major achievement someone had told them about before fully accepting it. Among respondents who believed self-improvement should primarily be personal, **43%** still rated an identical achievement as more credible when accompanied by a supporting online record.

These findings reveal different roles for visibility and verification. A recognizable result can influence someone's willingness to pursue a goal, while supporting evidence can affect how readily another person believes an achievement has occurred. The latter behavior is particularly relevant to ClarityCheck's focus on digital identity verification, where publicly available information helps people assess unfamiliar contacts and online profiles. The survey's findings concern confidence in achievement claims rather than the capabilities of any particular verification tool.

The distinction also exposes a potential disadvantage for less visible forms of progress. Someone may become more patient or experience better sleep without producing a record that others can readily assess. Such improvements can carry substantial personal value, yet the survey suggests they may struggle to generate the same motivational reinforcement as achievements that are easier to demonstrate.

The findings point to a broader consequence for personal ambition: the ability to make progress recognizable can influence which goals attract sustained effort. In an environment where achievements are frequently encountered through digital records, people may give additional weight to results that others can understand or substantiate. The risk is that useful improvements with fewer outward signs receive less attention, even from people who believe self-improvement should ultimately serve their own lives.

About ClarityCheck

ClarityCheck is an all-in-one background verification tool for phone numbers, emails, and images. Designed for everyday digital safety, ClarityCheck helps users instantly identify unknown contacts, trace suspicious profiles, and check for potential fraud across phone, email, and photo input. By combining reverse lookup and OSINT technologies, it offers a streamlined way to verify identities and protect yourself online.

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