

A Life By Design

Goal Setting Project

Goal setting requires us to choose delayed gratification over instant gratification. We trade the temporary discomfort of working on your goal, for the long term discomfort of not achieving the goal.

This allows us to find pleasure in the process of working towards a goal vs the quick hit of dopamine that comes from instant gratification. The practice of delayed gratification leads to greater self-control, which means that this choice becomes more automatic over time.



“A goal without a plan is just a wish.”

Exercise for Goal Setting

- Start by writing down 25 things that you want. How do you want to feel?
- Once you have the list, pick one as a goal.
- Create a goal for what you would like to accomplish in the next 30 days. Put the goal into a measurable sentence: By (date) , I will have completed and created _____ . I will know that I’m done because of _____ .
- Why do you want to achieve this goal? Why will you do it no matter what? Who will you be accountable to?
- How do you feel when you think about doing the work to achieve your goal? What is your current thinking that is causing this feeling?
- What is the emotion that you will need in order for you to get this work done? What is the thought that you believe that creates this emotion?

As you go through the next 30 days, refer back to your responses to the above questions daily.

- Now brainstorm a list of everything that you need to do to accomplish this goal. Break the list down into each step.

- List all of the obstacles to achieving this goal. What is between you and your goal? What is hard about it? What will you need help with? The more that you can anticipate the better, i.e. I want to quit sugar and there is a birthday party coming up.
- Turn each of the obstacles into a strategy or skill you need to develop. All to your list of to do's, i.e. I will not eat anything that isn't preplanned. I will manage urges by keeping an urge list and I will eat lunch before the birthday party.
- Sort everything into the order of execution. Make them as clear and specific as possible.
- Determine how much time each thing will take.
- Add each item to your calendar with the time frames you've decided upon.
- Establish accountability to yourself by writing down your progress daily.
- And finally, practice self-identifying as the person you want to become, i.e. for someone working on getting into shape, practice self-identifying as an athlete.

Visualization / Mental Rehearsal

The key is to use visualization when your brain is alert and energetic. Then, in the moment, there is no decision to be made because it has already been made ahead of time. This means you don't need will-power in the moment when your brain is already fatigued. Through repetition, it become automatic and no longer requires effort. Most people quit when it requires the most effort to change; however, that is also the time when you are closest to rewiring the brain.

Our brains become good at what we practice. The more commitment we have to changing something, then the more we repeat it, then the easier it will be to change.

1. Think about the changes you want to make and visualize yourself having already made them. What's different about you?
2. How do you handle problems differently?
3. How do you feel differently?
4. How do you act differently?
5. How do you show up differently?
6. When you imagine yourself "practicing" for this part in your new life, what are you doing well, and what do you need to keep practicing?
7. How will you know when it has clicked for you?

Problem Reveal

When you think about your goals, what are the feelings that are preventing you from making progress?

1. Identify the problem. Why is it a problem?
2. Differentiate between the circumstance and the thought. What can you control?
3. How does the thought make you feel?
4. How does that feeling make you act?

5. How do those actions create the result?
6. How does the result reinforce the thought?

Think about a goal that you have:

- Result – what is the goal?
- Action – what are the actions and behaviours required in order for you to achieve that goal?
- Emotion – what emotion leads to those actions?
- Thought – what is the thought that creates that emotion?

There are typically 3 reasons why we don't make progress towards our goals:

- I don't have any goals. Why?
 - Because I am too busy to make the time to set goals, it is not a priority (I am not seeing the value in goal-setting), or
 - Because I believe that it is selfish to focus on my goals, I don't deserve to pursue my goals, or it might take time away from my loved ones (I am not seeing the value in spending time on myself).
- I have too many goals. Why?
 - Because everything is a priority and I don't want to give anything up to avoid the pain of sacrifice, and I blindly want the feeling associated with the accomplishment (not saying no to myself), or
 - I don't want to let anyone down (not saying no to others).
- I have the right number of goals, but I'm still not making progress. Why?
 - Because I am not intentional and I don't have a plan,
 - Because I waste too much time on other things (shifting focus, distractions),
 - Because I spend too much time ensuring that everything is done to my high standards,
 - Because I am not able to follow-through on my plan,
 - Because the more I accomplish, the more I am asked to do,
 - Because I procrastinate.

Which of these thoughts resonate with you?