

GOAL SETTING

Set the goal and establish your plan using the following 9-step process

1. Establish the destination
2. Know your why
3. Set your time frame
4. Create the space
5. Establish the how
6. Establish the when
7. Establish the where
8. Set up your support group
9. Make the final adjustments

1. Establish the destination

You are now at the stage where you should set the goal. This means that you are deciding on a clear destination; something specific that you are aiming for. Where do you want to be? What do you want to achieve? How do you know when you have achieved it? How will you be able to monitor and measure your progress? For example your goal might be: by this time next year *I will be sufficiently fit and healthy to be able to run the London Marathon*. To say simply "I will be fit and healthy" is not sufficient as there is nothing to measure. The addition of "...to be able to run the London Marathon" adds tangibility; your aim becomes the ability to run a distance of 26 miles in 12 months.

2. Know your why

Your ultimate reason for setting your goal is your *WHY*. It is precisely your WHY that you will come back to if things get challenging along the way, therefore it is imperative that your reason for setting the goal in the first place is solid.

Your WHY becomes one of your biggest motivators. Some examples of a WHY might be the prospect of a beautiful body, confidence, health and longevity, better quality of life, better organisational skills, the absence of guilt, fewer illnesses etc. By writing these down and keeping them in a prominent place in the home and at the workplace you will constantly be reminded of *why* you are pursuing your goal(s).

It may also be useful to create a board of clippings, pictures and quotes pertaining to your goal(s) (known as a smorgasbord), which then becomes a powerful visual aid that constantly re-kindles your motivation. The reason for this is that we tend to absorb information more readily if it is in pictures as well as words, as we are accessing different parts of our brain. In addition, the use of pictures reinforces the message in our minds.

3. Set your time frame

It is essential that you set a broad time frame or an overall target date in which to work, such as over the next 6 weeks, 6 months, 12 months etc. This forms part of an important and valuable frame work in which to operate. It is this time frame that distinguishes a dream or a fantasy from a goal. To simply say "*I want to be a doctor*" may be too vague; to say "*by my 40th birthday I will have become a fully qualified doctor*" gives you a specific time frame in which to achieve your aim and invites you to take up the challenge in a positive, motivational way.

4. Create the space

Once you have set your time frame, you need to step back and look at what you have on your plate already. What are your current commitments? How will you create the time to carry out your activities? What do you need to put on hold? What do you need to give up?

If you work full time for instance, remember that up to a third of your week, month, year will be spent at work (up to a further third will be spent asleep!) From this you should work out how you currently fill the remaining third of your life. In order to fit in the necessary time to carry out the activities pertaining to your goal, you need to create space. This may mean putting other things on hold, re-arranging your day, dropping other things etc.

In addition, at each stage make sure the knock-on effect of your goals is taken into consideration, ie ensure you know how the pursuit of your goal(s) will affect your family and friends.

Remember that if the pursuit of your goal is not sufficiently important to you, you will not make the space for it either mentally or physically.

5. Establish the 'how'

This is about setting the direction: ie establishing the actual steps you are going to take to get to your goal. This is the beginning - and first part - of the planning section of the goal setting process.

These are the steps that will take you systematically to your goal, so take the time to work these out. Sit down and look at the destination you have just established, and compare it to where you are now. Identify the gap between the two. What do you need to do to fill it? Who do you need to become? Do you need training? Do you have all the mental and physical resources you need to reach your destination? If not identify what you need and work out how you can get it/them. What steps do you need to take? How many?

Look over each step in turn. How do you feel about it – honestly? Do *you* believe that you *will* and *can* take that step? If not why, and what do you need to do to make it more achievable, practical, exciting, challenging and appealing for you?

What rewards can you work in to give yourself when you have successfully taken that step? Can you break that step down even further to make it more manageable for yourself? The aim is to have small enough steps so you feel confident you can tackle them. Perhaps you *know* deep down that you can do it, it is just a case of developing the belief.

The STIMULUS *Combating Self-Limiting Beliefs* workshop may help you to overcome this self doubt. If attending such a workshop is something you realise (as a result of reviewing this part of the goal setting process), that you need, this *must* then be added in as one of the stepping stones you will take on the way to the fulfilment of your goal(s).

This is another very important part of the goal setting process and should not be underestimated. Only you can work out what these steps are. You *do* have all the answers, and your guide to this part of the process is your gut instinct. You will know deep down whether each step sits well with you and is achievable. Once you have listed all the steps you need to take, sleep on it and come back to it afresh. This will give you a more objective perspective which will enable you to make any necessary adjustments.

Only when you are happy with all the steps you have put in place will you then be ready to move on to the next stage: establishing your *when* (your time table).