

Member's Quarterly

Spring 2024 Edition

Perspective

Plan for Success

It's all about the process



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Setting individual goals and priorities will not only help us achieve certain things, but can also allow us to monitor and measure our progress. I find that having something to work towards gives me impetus to get moving and as soon as I operationalize my plan, I am already on my way to some degree of success. I read an article a while ago in Forbes Magazine by Jeff Boss, a former U.S. Navy seal who has experience in both the military and business worlds and teaches about planning and goal setting.

Boss talks about why goal setting can and will improve your focus and lead you to success. First of all, having goals helps us change our behaviour. It does that by shifting our thinking from a dream to a reality. It triggers our brain to think that something is possible and we move towards it.

Boss also talks about how goals help us sustain momentum. Unlike New Year's resolutions which are easily broken, the dopamine that is released in your brain when you get excited about a goal becomes addictive. You will also want to keep at it this way. If you do it right, goal setting will give your brain feedback which allows you to alter course or change your actions in order to meet your goal.

Lastly, Jeff Boss teaches us that goals and goal setting are not so much about the achievement but about the process. He believes that people who set goals are actually building character. They help you identify not just what is important to you, but who you are. That person is someone who knows what they want and knows how to get it.

Are you ready to start setting some personal goals? Here are a few tips to get your mojo going.

Pick the right goals for you

Choose goals that are S.M.A.R.T. Specific as possible, measurable so you can mark progress, achievable because you want to be successful, relevant to you and where you want to go and timely enough so that you can see real progress. It's okay to reach a bit when setting your goals, but not so far as to discourage you when you can't get there. An important question to ask is why is this goal important to you? If you can answer that question, you may have your motivation.

Put it in writing

There's something about writing things down that make them more real, almost official. Write down your goals along with when you hope to achieve them. Share them with people you trust. This starts to build in accountability. Ask others what they think of your goals and to informally monitor your progress. People love giving others advice and you have just found your coaches. Also, write down what you think it will feel like when you achieve your goals. It's okay to dream now.

Make a plan

Without a plan, goals are really just a pipe dream and will likely never happen. So, start plotting it out. One way is to take the goal and break it down into steps that can be taken over time. Let's say the goal is to lose 20 pounds. You can make a plan to diet and exercise and try and lose a pound a week. Specific,

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realistic, achievable, measurable and in 5 months, you can meet that goal. If you don't meet your target this week, you have to speed it up and lose two pounds next week. Try and figure out what supports you may need to make the plan work and build them in at the front end. We all need help to achieve our goals.

Be prepared to shift

Stay focused on your goal, but sometimes the achievable in goal setting becomes the adaptable. You can get slowed down by the unexpected when working on your goals. Try and treat these events as temporary setbacks rather than roadblocks. If you had planned on taking every Friday off in order to improve your work-life balance and your boss shows up with an urgent program on Thursday, you may have to shift. But maybe you can negotiate Monday off in exchange for giving up your Friday. Don't fall into the procrastination trap. Be flexible and keep moving towards your goals.

Measure your success

It is vital to measure our success along the way. Things like losing weight are easy to measure. The scales don't lie. But other less tangible goals like improving work-life balance also need measurement tools and markers. Are you taking time off like planned? How many hours of overtime are you still working? Did you get to your daily exercise class as you planned? Build in ways to monitor your progress and write them down as well. Also, make sure that you build in a reward and a celebration when you finally achieve your goals.

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