

A S S E M B L Y

GOAL SETTING
& PLANNING

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How often have you had the thought that THIS is the time we are going to get organised. THIS is the month we are going get into a really healthy routine. THIS is the month that we are going to change up how we work and be more productive. THIS is the month.

How often have you gone round those thoughts and started off well? Then a couple of months later you've felt right out of routine again? How many times have you felt disappointed about your lack of willpower or self-discipline?

What if willpower and self-discipline was nonsense and we flipped that notion on it's head?

I want you to think - have you been asking yourself to achieve goals out of magical willpower? What are your current beliefs around willpower and self-discipline? This is something that has shifted for me in the last year or so as I've been training in coaching and personal development and I want to share some liberating truths around the idea of goal setting and planning with you this month that have really helped me to move in a way that feels good, rather than relying on some magical, non-existent sense of discipline or willpower that we are expected to conjure out of thin air. We need more self-supportive systems in place to achieve our goals rather than thinking we can muster willpower out of thin air, right?

I hope you find the system I'm going to share with you liberating too and it motivates you to find ways to goal set and plan that are self-supportive and work for you.

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WHAT KIND OF GOALS ARE YOU SETTING?

The foundation of building a new way of thinking outside of the idea of willpower or self-discipline is actually digging deep and looking at your goals to see if they come from a place of desire or from a place of 'should'.

Often when we set goals based around what we 'should' be doing, that's when everything feels hard, self-discipline becomes an impossible task and we barrage ourselves with negative self-talk about our lack of willpower. The reality is - we set the wrong goals in the first place and we were never going to make them happen because they were always going to feel uneasy on us.

How we can define between a goal that feels like a gift and one that feels like a 'should' goal is sometimes tricky and takes some pulling apart but often it can be looked at through this lens:

Is this an Inner Critic fuelled goal, a should goal - or - is this something that really is a gift to ourselves? Is this goal fuelled by my ego or the voices of others or is it really something that makes me excited, nervous in a good way and happy?

'Should' goals tend to feel more like burdens. They are restrictive and often carry a sense of obligation. 'Gift' goals are more expansive, more exciting and exhilarating to explore. Sometimes it takes some refining and reframing until it feels like a gift goal for you.

Have a think about the goals you have for yourself in the next month, season or year etc. Pull them apart a little bit and evaluate: are these goals that feel true, exciting and expansive to me? Or do they feel like obligations, restrictive and like I 'should' be doing them?

LIST THE GOALS YOU HAVE HERE & EVALUATE:

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There are FIVE things that are significant to have in a properly self-supportive goal setting and planning architecture that I want to share with you – **these have come from the Playing Big training I have completed with Tara Mohr** and I want to pass them on because they are SO much more self-supportive and attainable than waiting for the myth of willpower or self-discipline. I'm so grateful to have found this method and I hope you find it to be just as helpful:

1) Building a plan based on your strengths: strengths-based planning.

When you look at your goal, ask yourself, “What are the assets and strengths already present in my life that could help me achieve this goal?” You might think of certain connections or relationships you have. Are there existing connections and relationships that can help you? Is there time that you have available? Are there past experiences you’re drawing on? Are there groups you might be able to be a part of? Anything that you have as a resource, a literal or more metaphoric resource, that you can recall is important. Start with what you already have.

Often we ignore these obvious things because we are given formulas all the time for success and tend to gravitate to these rather than tuning into what resources we already have available within us and around us. It is simple and powerful and I would really encourage you to WRITE it down rather than assume you know it all in your head.

What are the strengths and resources I can bring to this project or goal? List all of the assets already available to you:

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2) Making it the default.

This step encourages you to think about the behaviours you need to practice regularly to get this thing done. So if it's writing a book, it's going to be regular writing every week or day or whatever. If it's growing your e-mail list, maybe there's regular content you're creating. If it's creating a workshop, it's regularly sharing your expertise on the topic to warm up your audience.

The question is how you make it the default to do that thing in your life, rather than something that you have to make a decision to do each time or put a lot of effort into. Anything that's calendared so it's a regular thing is great. Anything that's a standing accountability make sense in getting the default settings retuned.

The thing that I need to make the default in order to move forward with my goal is:

How I am going to make it the default is:

3) Adjustments to your life context.

How can you make adjustments to your life context to look at the wider implications of you pursuing this goal? Examples might be: "If I'm going to take on this additional project, that means I need more childcare," or, "If I am going to pursue more time for learning on this course, that means I need to talk to the other people in my household about doing more of the cooking or laundry or whatever it is that takes up my spare time." "If I'm going to launch this course or product, I am going to need to be clear with my partner that I may have to work on a weekend during the month the course is running"

It's looking wider than the project itself for what else needs to change in your life to make room for this. Do I need to let go of certain commitments? Do I need to ask for certain kinds of help?

What adjustments might you need to make to your life context to make that work?

What is going to make this easier for you to do – what help do you need to ask for?

What kind of self-supportive conversation do you need to have or decisions do you need to make? Journal some ideas on the next page:

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Continue journalling:

4) Identifying cheerleaders and sources of accountability.

This is so powerful for so many of us. It can vary a little bit, depending on your personality type and how you like to be accountable but accountability could be, “Someone’s expecting my writing once a week,” or, “I have a coach who I’m reporting progress to every month” or any form of accountability where someone else is involved and you’re aware of what progress you’re making and you know you are reporting to somebody.

A cheerleader is a little bit different. It’s not someone you are accountable to but people in your life who are cheering you on and supporting you with this thing and are on the journey, watching from the sidelines, championing where you’re going with it. Involving other people and sharing your gift goals with them can be intimidating so I’d encourage you to use this space for that – connect with someone here to be your accountability or cheerleader.

Have a think: Who would I love to have be an accountability source? How do I want to check in with them? What do I want to tell them to do when I fall off the wagon or am not moving forward?:

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5) Using curiosity when we get stuck.

Of course it is inevitable that we will at times feel totally paralysed in our work. We will feel stuck or deflated or stagnant. We are human and we have to make space for our humanity always.

Bringing in curiosity when we get stuck means that when we have some thing we're working and we're not taking action the way we wanted to our we've fallen out of the new habit we become our own investigators.

The answer is always in curiosity and exploration, in a beautiful neutral sense, not in a way that shames us. So when we get stuck that's the energy we want to bring to our goal. And it's not the energy we normally go to which is more shame based and negative.

Questions you can ask yourself: "What is it about this next step that I'm holding back on?" "What is the real reason that I'm hesitating on this next bit" "Who can I talk to that would understand this and help me remember my motivation for this goal?":

Try it out. Look at your goals, identify one that feels really true and good to you. Use this framework - even just 3 or 4 of them to help you build self-supportive structures into your movements towards these goals. It makes all the difference when we work from a place of self-support rather than shame or duty or obligation.

You've got this.