

Goal Setting, Motivation, Planning

A Guide to Achieving Positive, Sustainable Outcomes

Introduction

Making a lifestyle change requires **determination** and **persistence**. In determining whether someone will be successful in behaviour modification, there are three critical components to consider. They are:

1. Motivation
2. Proper Goal Setting
3. Planning

Motivation

To understand what motivates us to do things, we need to make a basic assumption. Motivation is something you have or don't have. We can motivate ourselves, but we cannot truly make or motivate someone else to do something. There are external factors like friends, family and society that inspire us to change, but we need internal motivation to begin and maintain change.

In goal setting it is critical to clearly understand your motivation. Try to get to the "emotional" core of why this change is so important to you. How does not being where you want to be make you feel? Write this down and carry it with you. What are the implications of not achieving this goal?

Samples: I feel humiliated when I put on my bathing suit.
I feel too exhausted to play with my kids.

Secondly, think about how it will feel when you have made the change. On that same sheet of paper, write this down as well. Carry this with you at all times to have as a reminder as to why you are making this change.

Samples: I feel PROUD when I put on my bathing suit
I feel ENERGIZED when I play with my kids

Goal Setting

Achieving a realistic goal has a considerable impact on self esteem. Remembering this will help you along the way to your goal. The success associated with achieving your goal has long-lasting and far reaching effects.

With success comes a better attitude. When we feel good about ourselves, we make good judgments and take appropriate action. For example, if you succeed in your goal to

lose body fat through exercise, you are less likely to make poor food choices that negatively affect your hard earned success. Also, when we feel good about ourselves, we have more to offer others, most importantly our children.

Use the SMART system to set your goals. An appropriate goal is specific, measurable, action oriented, realistic and time bound.

Specific: Take the time to clearly define all aspects of your goal. This will give you a better idea of when and how you want to achieve your goal.

Measurable: Set goals that can be measured. For example, I want to lose 3 inches off my waist.

Action oriented: It is important to outline specific steps that will enable you to work toward achieving your goal.

Realistic: The right goal helps you achieve success.

Time bound: set deadlines for your goals to keep you on track and motivated.

The goal I set for myself in regard to my figure physique competition was as follows:

I want to compete in the IFDA fitness and figure show on July 12, 2008. I will train 6 days per week 2 times per day for 12 weeks to achieve this. I will follow the nutrition program given to me by my nutritionist for 12 weeks prior to my show. I will feel proud to be on stage. I will look like I belong on stage.

Planning

Finally and of the utmost importance it to know the primary difference between people who succeed in achieving goals and changing behaviour and those who don't: IT IS **PLANNING**.

When you fail to plan, you plan to fail.

After you set your goals, you need a plan to implement them. If you are planning on changing the way you eat, you need to determine how you are going to do this. For example, I typically cook on Sundays for the entire week. I always have chicken breasts and brown rice in the fridge. It is important to ask your self these questions:

1. What resources are you going to use?
2. Do you have the appropriate cook books?

3. How are you going to incorporate your families needs into your program?
4. What will socializing look like?

Another critical factor is determining who your support system is going to be. Do not kid yourself, behavioural change is hard work. We are all initially excited to embark on new diets or exercise regimens. So why to most of us fail??? It is simple, lack of planning and lack of support. It is not a matter of if you will face a hurdle or an obstacle it is a matter of when. Prepare for this through proper planning and by building a network that will support you in your efforts.

I am certain you have heard this before, but you must refrain from thinking of a diet as a short term solution. Any change you make must be sustainable. If you go on a short term restrictive diet you may lose weight and feel great but you will soon return to your old habits and your old weight. In fact research shows people usually gain a few more pounds.

Commitment

Why is it that when we make appointments with others we are more apt to keep them than when we make them with ourselves? When we cancel appointments we make with ourselves, we are telling ourselves that we are not as important as others. This links back to why the achievement of a goal is so good for self esteem. Although we may think we are putting others first by canceling the appointments we have with ourselves, what we are really doing is not allowing them to see our highest potential, our best self. Through giving your “best” self to your friends, family and co-workers, you inspire that behaviour in others. It is INFECTIOUS.

Be gentle with yourself and remember that sometimes no regression in and of itself is actually progression.

Goal Planner

Dertermining Motivation

The reason achieving this goal is so important to me is because:

If I do not achieve this goal I will feel.....

When I achieve this goal I will feel.....

Setting The Goal

My goal is (state in SMART language)

The steps to achieving my goal are as follows (these are a series of SHORT TERM GOALS, the number of steps WILL vary and each step should also be written in SMART language as it is a short term goal)

Planning

Who will support me in my efforts?

What resources will I need?

What supportive behavioural changes will I need to make to attain this goal?

What will I do when I encounter a hurdle?

What will I do to reward myself when I overcome a hurdle or reach a short term goal?

How will I sustain this goal?