

# The Importance of Goals

BY DEB BROWN, NSCA CPT, CWC, CNS

When we have a new client start up, a key piece of information that we like to get from them is their goals. Often, clients write down vague or unrealistic goals. We help them to refine their goals into statements that are specific, measurable and realistic. As a trainer for over 18 years who has the privilege of helping people make life changes, I can tell you that goal-setting works. But, like most things, there's a right way and wrong way to set goals. Here, we will focus on how to create excellent goals that will help you to move forward and make progress!

First, don't hold back, think big. Jim Collins, the author of *Good To Great*, calls them Big Hairy Audacious Goals (BHAG). This keeps you from thinking too small. It's when we really reach beyond our comfort level that greatness happens. What is your BHAG? Do you want to lose 25 pounds, run your first marathon, or finally work out consistently?

Second, your goals should be specific and measurable. Saying that you are going to "lose weight" is nebulous. Instead, if you express your goal in concrete terms, you can measure your progress along the way. "I will lose 25 pounds by November 1st, 2024" is very specific and something you can measure. You can also break this down into smaller mini-goals, which is a key tenet in any lasting behavior change.



*“Don't look back; change is about looking forward and what's possible.”*

Also, take some time to write down WHY you want to do this and what might stand in your way. Make sure this is YOUR goal and not one created for you! To succeed at anything, the drive to succeed has to come from deep inside. Write down the obstacles that will keep you from reaching your goal. One of the most important is fears that lead to negative thoughts. Write down your fears or negative thoughts and how you can overcome them. Involve supportive family/friends in this endeavor.

Lastly, define your action plan: what are the specific steps that you need to take to get you from where you are

now to where you want to be? Break your goals down into the smallest component parts that you can. For example, if you want to lose 25 pounds by November 1st, you will need to lose about x pounds per week. Create a realistic and measurable mini-goal. Create action items and assign dates to them. Make yourself accountable to completing these actions. Reward yourself when you do!

Throughout your journey, it's important to keep a journal. Write about your successes and setbacks. When you journal about setbacks, you can get perspective and make a plan to avoid the setback in the future. When there are setbacks, learn from them and move on. Don't look back; change is about looking forward and what's possible. Good luck!

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