

Setting sights on your goals

February 2016 Newsletter



Zig Ziglar was a well-known author and speaker. Among his many quotes was this: “If you aim at nothing, you’ll hit it every time.”¹

Not only is that worth a good chuckle; it also reinforces the importance of setting goals and making plans.

Benefits of planning

Planning is critical to success. A plan can help you:

- Organize and focus
- Make your action steps more concrete
- Commit to your project or goal

Elements of good planning

How can you make plans that will really work? Here are some ground rules to consider:

1. Before you even embark on a goal, answer this: Do you want to achieve it? Why? What will your life look like after you achieve it? How will it be better or different?

Answering these questions can help you “own” your goal. Once you feel it’s really yours, you become motivated. If others set a goal for you, you’re not likely to be as invested. In fact, you may even resist reaching it. Your goal needs to mean something to you; it has to be what you want to achieve.

2. Put it on paper. Believe it or not, the act of writing down your goal is very powerful. It makes the goal real when you can see it in your own words. As you write, use positive phrases like “I will” rather than “I would like to.” Be specific as in “On February 15, I will start exercising 3 days per week for 30 minutes at a time” rather than “I’ll start exercising more this month.”

3. Make copies of your goal. Post an eye-catching copy of your written goal in the kitchen, bathroom, and your workspace – anywhere you’re likely to see it. This can help remind you and reinforce your efforts.

4. Set up action steps. Identify what needs to happen for you to reach your goal. Break it down into small steps. Write down what you have to do to achieve each step. If you’re going to exercise, plan what time, where, what shoes, clothing and/or equipment you need and other such details. Otherwise, on day 1, you may suddenly realize you forgot to get the mat you need or your sneakers. Cross off each step as you accomplish it.

5. Persist, persist, persist. Be sensible about planning your action steps. You may find you’ve overestimated what and when you can do things. If so, don’t give up: revise and rewrite your goal. Consider partnering with a friend or family member. Using exercise as an example, working out or walking with a buddy helps you stay committed to your goal.

6. Celebrate. It can’t be all sweat and tears. There has to be joy and pleasure to make your goal workable and worthwhile. Plan small rewards along the way and, at the end, give yourself a major high five.

¹www.brainyquotes.com