

# do<sup>ing</sup> it scared

*a members only community*

## HOW TO BREAK DOWN YOUR GOALS

INTO A PLAN THAT WORKS  
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ISSUE NO.1 | MARCH 2019  
THE GOAL SETTING ISSUE

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*hello there!*

ISSUE NO.1 | MARCH 2019 | THE GOAL SETTING ISSUE

It's pretty exciting to be sitting here writing this letter to you for our inaugural issue of the Doing It Scared magazine.

For some time now, I've dreamt of creating a community where like-minded go-getters could gather. A place for people who are tired of sitting on the sidelines of their own life, who are ready to jump in and finally take action towards accomplishing their biggest goals and dreams, and who would like a little support, encouragement, and accountability along the way.

And now that community is finally here.

I can't even tell you how excited I am to get started!

In this month's issue, we're talking about goal setting, and how to be not just better goal setters, but goal achievers. Because I'm pretty sure that we have all experienced, at some point, the feeling of setting a goal and then falling short.

Maybe you started strong, with lots of energy and enthusiasm, but then got bogged down in all the responsibilities of your day-to-day life. You just couldn't find the time to make yourself or your

goal a priority, and eventually you just let it go.

Or maybe you were surprised by how much harder it was than you thought it was going to be, and how much longer it seemed to take. Maybe you got frustrated by your lack of progress, or started comparing yourself to those around you. Maybe the messy middle just felt way too messy.

Believe me friends, I've been there too. More times than I can count.

But I've also seen and felt the other side—the joy and pride that comes from setting clear, focused goals and then actually following through on them.

And that's exactly what I want for you.

This community is here to help hold you accountable, to keep you motivated and encouraged, and to help you stay on track, whatever those goals may be.

And I can't wait to cheer you on along the way!

*xoxo Ruth*



# HOW TO BE A BETTER GOAL SETTER

(AND GOAL ACHIEVER)

RUTH SOUKUP



I don't know about you, but I just love new beginnings. Whether it's the start of the new year or a brand-new school year or, in this case, spring cleaning time, it's that moment when anything—and everything—feels possible. No matter what mistakes you've made in the past, the future is completely bright.

And to me, that means that no matter how you failed, how you screwed up, the things you didn't manage to do, the fights you had or the disappointments—it's all in the past. That was then. And whatever bad stuff happened yesterday, that doesn't mean you have to carry it into today. You can choose to start completely fresh.

And I just love that.

It feels like the most amazing opportunity, a gift, really. A brand new start to make it whatever we want it to be.

What could be more exciting than that?

But while I've always loved this idea of a fresh start, I have to admit that I have not always had the best track record when it comes to actually following through on the goals I set for myself.

In fact, for many years, my goals were just like everyone else's. Platinudes that made me feel good for a few days or weeks, but nothing that I could actually look back on a year later and feel like I actually made it happen.

And I wondered what I was doing wrong.

It was incredibly frustrating, because \*I\* desperately wanted to be rocking every goal I set for myself, and to be accomplishing big things in my life. But I could tell that I just wasn't getting clear enough on what I needed to accomplish, and I wasn't doing a good job of staying focused and keeping



my big goals top of mind.

The thing is, it wasn't that I wasn't accomplishing anything in my life, or that I wasn't making any progress—I was. But it certainly wasn't happening as quickly as I wanted it to, and the progress I was seeing certainly wasn't as dramatic as I wanted it to be. I was getting small wins, but not winning the big fight.

But in 2013 something changed for me. You see, in April of that year, my husband quit his job to become the stay-at-home parent, so that I could focus on growing my business full time.

And let me just tell you—suddenly having the pressure of being the primary breadwinner for our family lit a fire under me like never before. Because up until that moment, everything I was doing was just for fun, but now it was all on me. All of it. Not just going to work and collecting a paycheck, but actually figuring out how to build a sustainable business that could continue to support us for the long term.

I was terrified. In fact, I have never been more scared in my entire life.

I was afraid that any success I had experienced up to that point might just be a fluke, and I worried that it could all go away at any minute

But it was in that pressure cooker that I realized I needed to do something different with my goals. I needed to figure out a way to get super focused, and to STAY focused, so that I could actually accomplish big things and make more sustainable progress. I needed to start looking at the big picture a little bit more, and start doing those big things that were going to move the needle and help support my family, rather than just trying to keep up on all the day-to-day busywork.

And let me just tell you—the steps that I took that year to change the way I set and followed through on my goals changed everything, not just for my business but for my entire life. Within six months I had tripled my revenue, but more importantly, for the first time ever I felt like I was working towards something that was sustainable, and that could actually last.

So what was it, exactly that made all the difference? Well, to be honest, it was making a few incredibly simple changes to not the goals that I set, but how I defined and measured success,

and how I tracked my progress. But what I learned is that these are the simple steps that you need to take if you want to be a better goal setter—and goal achiever.

So let's talk about those steps, one at a time.

## STEP 1: NARROW YOUR FOCUS

The first step in improving the way you set and achieve goals is to narrow your focus. Pick just a few goals—no more than 3—that you really want to focus on this year.

Of course I know that this is sometimes easier said than done.

You see, I was one of those people who tended to set really vague, generic-sounding goals that basically covered everything under the sun. And what's more, I would set a whole bunch of really vague, generic-sounding goals. But when forced to buckle down and really focus, I realized that I needed to hone in and get a lot more specific about what I wanted to accomplish. Not only that, I needed to limit myself to just a handful of very specific goals, instead of having a whole list of generic platitudes that actually meant nothing.



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I found that once I narrowed my focus, I suddenly became a lot more clear about some of the big things that I needed to do. Instead of spending every day in the weeds, I was setting time aside for bigger projects—things like writing a book proposal, networking with brands, and writing and self-publishing my own book. Before this, those things were all just ideas floating around in the back of my mind, not things I was actually serious about.

What I've learned in the years since then is that when it comes to your big goals for the year, narrowing your focus and honing in on your MOST important goals is super key. That first year I picked five things, but these days I force myself to pick just 3 major goals for the year—the goals I call my “big 3.”

And the reason for that is simple—when you only have 3 goals, it's a lot easier to remember them.

So, for instance, my own 3 big goals last year were to launch a podcast, to write an amazing book, and to lose 25 pounds. Those were the three things that I stayed focused on for the entire year. And you know what? If I had accomplished absolutely nothing else, the fact that I did just those 3 things is more than enough!

The thing is, our brains aren't naturally all that good at prioritizing. When we have lots of things going on, or lots of tasks on our to-do lists, or lots of goals spinning around in our heads, our brain can't decide which one is most important. When that happens, we tend to start spinning, unable to focus on any one thing. Because everything is important, nothing is.

Narrowing your focus allows your brain to understand what matters most.

And that's step one.

## STEP 2: PICK GOALS THAT YOU ACTUALLY CARE ABOUT

The next step is to pick goals that you actually care about, and that are meaningful to you.

I think the most important thing that I have learned about goals and about staying motivated enough to actually follow through on your goals is that your WHY needs to be bigger than your fear, and bigger than your resistance to it. You need to want it more than you are scared of it, and more than you don't feel like doing a certain thing.

And that can only happen when you pick goals that you really care about, and that mean something to you.

I think a lot of times we set the goals that we think we are supposed to care about—goals based on other people's desires or expectations for us, or the things that we feel obligated or pressured to do.

But the WHY behind the goal is as important as the goal itself.

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That was definitely true for me in 2013, after my husband had left his job and I became the sole breadwinner in our family. Suddenly my motivation to do really hard things—things I probably would have resisted earlier—was super high. My WHY was not wanting to see my family end up out on the street because I couldn't hack it as a business owner.

What I have learned in the years since is that the more connected I am to the WHY behind a goal, the more likely I am to follow through. When I try to set goals that I think I'm supposed to do, or goals that other people encourage me to do, I'm not really that motivated. It's not important to me, which means I will pretty much find any excuse not to do it.

But when I really care about a goal, and when I am crystal clear about WHY I care about that goal, following through is a whole lot easier.

So pick goals that you truly care about—that's step two.

### STEP 3: UNDERSTAND WHAT MOTIVATES YOU

The third step is closely related, and that is to understand what motivates YOU. Because sometimes it's not enough to just get in touch with your why—you've also got to get clear about the specific triggers that help keep you engaged, encouraged, and motivated to continue, even when the road feels long, or obstacles crop up (because they will!)

And sometimes this is a matter of understanding your own strengths and weaknesses, or your natural tendencies.

So, for example, if you are more of a people pleaser, you might realize that the thing that motivates you most is the fear of letting other people down. And if that's true, then you need to figure out a way to connect your goal to other people's expectations.



If you are a perfectionist/procrastinator, you might need to be motivated by a hard deadline that forces you to take action.

If you are a rule follower, you might need a step by step plan that has been outlined by someone in authority, like a coach or a mentor.

If you are a rebel or an outcast, you might be more motivated by the idea of proving people wrong.

Over the years I've come to realize just how motivated I am by competition and the drive to win. I've learned that if I can add a competitive element to any goal or task I'm working on, I'll be that much more motivated to get it done.



So, for instance, last year when I wanted to get motivated to get more daily exercise, I started competing with a few of my team members using the FitBit app. A year later, the weekly competitions are as fierce as ever!

As you are thinking about those goals that you most want to accomplish over the next year, also be thinking about what you know helps get you motivated. Is it money? Maybe that means you'll need to make a significant investment in your goal to keep you interested. Is it accountability? Maybe you need to find someone who will continually push you and check in to make sure you are on track.

So understand what motivates you, then put those safeguards in place to keep you motivated—that's step three.

#### **STEP 4: GET SPECIFIC ABOUT WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE TO YOU**

The fourth step, then, is to get specific about what success looks like to you. And for this, I recommend using our Goal Crushing™ worksheet, because it is the perfect tool to help you, first of all, get clear about what it is that you are really aiming for and what you want to accomplish, but then also what steps you'll have to take to get there, what potential obstacles you need to be prepared for, and what success actually looks like—and how you'll celebrate.

The worksheet is divided into 7 sections, which correspond with the acronym CRUSH IT.

The C stands for claim your target—that just means knowing what it is that you want to accomplish. What is the goal that you are aiming for?

The R stands for refine your objective. And this means to get clear and specific about your measures of success—dates, metrics, etc. It's turning your vague goal into something that you can objectively measure.

The U stands for understand your motivation. And this is something we've already talked about, but is good to reiterate—understanding your why, and what about this goal really matters to you.

The S stands for step it out. And this is where you identify all the things that need to happen in order for this goal to be successful. From there, the H stands for Handle Obstacles. This means identifying the potential roadblocks that might trip you up and creating



**"WHEN I REALLY CARE ABOUT A GOAL, & WHEN I AM CRYSTAL CLEAR ABOUT WHY I CARE ABOUT THAT GOAL, FOLLOWING THROUGH IS A WHOLE LOT EASIER."**

a plan to deal with them before they actually happen.

The I stands for Implement your plan. This means taking action, but also understanding the danger that you face if you don't follow through.

And then finally the T stands for treat yourself. And this is where you identify how you'll celebrate your win, which will help keep you motivated for the next goal!

This goal crushing worksheet is actually found in each monthly section of the Living Well Planner®, which I love, because I always use it for my top goal each month. However, if you don't use the planner, or you just want the ability to print that sheet out, you will find the PDF version in the practical application section, on page 22 of this magazine.

It might seem weird that a one page worksheet can do so much, but it really can. It's sort of amazing that way. It's just this really easy way of getting complete clarity about what you are aiming for and what you need to do to get there.

So get specific and define what success looks like for you—that's the fourth step you'll need to take.

## STEP 5: KEEP YOUR GOALS TOP OF MIND

The fifth and final step you'll need to make is to keep your goals top of mind.

And this means figuring out what it is going to take to keep them right in front of you throughout the year, so you don't forget about them.

There are LOTS of ways you can do this. For me, I love having them in the front of my planner, because I always have them right there in front of me, and then each time I plan my goals for the month I am careful to make sure that I am working on at least a piece of that big goal for the year.

You can learn more about this Think Big, Plan Small process of time management inside the Doing it Scared membership portal. It is a simple concept to master, and I guarantee that you will be amazed at what a difference it can make, especially when it comes to actually following through on those big goals and making time to work on them each day.

Other ways I like to keep my goals top of mind for the year is to create a desktop background that has them on there, and to also make it the screen saver for my phone.

I know people who write them on their bathroom mirror, or who have a big board above their desk, or who put a chalkboard up in the living room that lets them see their big goals every single day.

Maybe it will be sharing your goals with an accountability partner or life coach and meeting regularly with that person to report your progress.

Whatever it is that is going to remind you, each and every day, of what you are aiming for—do that. Do everything you can to keep that goal fresh in your mind, the reminder of what you are aiming for.



Because make no mistake—you WILL need the reminder. Again and again and again. As humans we are constantly distracted, which is why it is so important to not only get clear about where you want to go, but to put safeguards in place and keep your goal at the forefront each and every day.

And that, in a nutshell is all it takes to go from goal setter to goal achiever. First, Narrow your focus. Don't set a whole bunch of very broad or vague goals. Instead, narrow your list down to the 3-5 things you really, really want to accomplish this year. Next, pick goals that you actually care about, and also understand what motivates you. These are YOUR goals—you need to be clear about what YOU want, and WHY you want it. From there, get very specific & define what success looks like to you. For this, I recommend using our Goal Crushing framework. And then finally, keep those goals top of mind. Put them where you will see them. Keep reminding yourself of what you are aiming for.

Here's to you and all those big goals you plan to crush in the days and months ahead!



IF YOU WANT TO MAKE  
GOOD USE  
OF YOUR *time*  
YOU'VE GOT TO KNOW WHAT'S  
*most important*  
& THEN GIVE IT  
ALL YOU'VE GOT

—LEE IACocca—

# BOOK OF THE MONTH



# *The ONE Thing* by Gary Keller

## Executive Summary

JESSICA BOWMAN



### Available in:

Hardcover | Audiobook | Kindle

What is the ONE thing that you can do, that by doing it, everything else will become easier or unnecessary?

In Gary Keller's book, *The ONE Thing*, that's the main focus and the core concept around which the entire book is built. Keller is a big fan of the Pareto Principle or the 80/20 rule, where 20% of all work done yields 80% of the results.

In this book, you'll learn that not everything matters equally, and multitasking is actually a lie. Instead, it's only when you tackle those most important tasks first and focus solely on one task at a time, that you'll be able to truly accomplish what needs to be done.

### What you will learn from *The ONE Thing*:

- If everything is treated as important, then nothing is important
- If you try to do two things at once, you won't be able to do either of them well
- How to create the Domino Effect in your life to achieve extraordinary results
- How sequence builds success over time, not multitasking
- How to do fewer things with more effect instead of more things with no effects
- How you can train yourself to create better habits and routines
- Why a balanced life is a lie.
- How happiness happens on the way to fulfillment
- Why purpose without priority is powerless
- The importance of time blocking
- Why resting is as important as working
- Why it's important to say no

If you want fewer distractions and less on your plate, but you also want more—more productivity, more satisfaction, more income, more time for yourself, this book teaches you how to have both. *The ONE Thing* delivers extraordinary results in every area of your life—work, personal, family, and spiritual. What's your ONE thing?



*Darlene Mast*

# do<sup>ing</sup> it scared

## story of the month

Darlene is a business owner who purchased her Living Well Planner® in mid-January of 2017. She was so excited to begin, that she didn't even wait for the new month to begin before laying out her plans to crush her goals.

She has wanted to own her own bakery since she worked in one as a sixteen year old. After using her Living Well Planner® to define her goals, the Crushing It program gave her the courage to pursue those goals! She will be opening her own French style bakery called Share 'N Dipity with her daughter within the year.

She currently has another business in a completely different field that usually has her stomach in knots. But since setting this goal for herself, she has felt much better about her other business knowing that she is putting in the work and the taking the steps needed to reach her dream goal.

We have been following along with Darlene's progress, and she is an inspiration to our entire team, as well as to many women in the Crushing It Community, an online support

network for our Living Well Planner® users.

We have loved seeing her updates over the past year as she has started renovations on her bakery and continued to attend training at the San Diego Baking Institute.

She says:

"I came to California unable to make baguettes, the one bread that I couldn't make. Today I passed my baguette test! My instructor goddess said they are perfect enough to sell in my bakery!"

Darlene explains that prior to joining our community, she did not set specific goals, she would move from fire to fire with no plan or strategy. Now she has set very clear goals for herself AND for her bakery. She has 5 year goals, yearly goals, and monthly goals. She has her plan and can see the road to her dream.

Darlene chose to Do It Scared™ and make her dreams a reality!

ARTICLE WRITTEN BY MAGGIE MURPHY



# HOW TO BREAK DOWN YOUR GOALS

INTO A PLAN THAT WORKS!

RUTH SOUKUP

**N**othing fires me up more than stories of people achieving their goals and dreams! It's just so incredibly powerful and inspiring!

The thing is, we all have big goals and dreams—but, we tend to convince ourselves that there is no TIME to accomplish them. After all, juggling deadlines, work, health, and family, most of us have no clue where our time goes.

But when push comes to shove, there's an easy-to-follow secret to finally reaching our big goals.

It's called planning!

My husband Chuck will tell you that I am a natural planner. It is one of my top strengths and is completely opposite to his love of spontaneity. I always want to have a plan, and Chuck never does. Part of staying married has been learning how to balance my need to plan everything with his need to, well, not.

All this to say that I get that planning is not for everyone. And that's okay. But I also know that without a solid action plan in place, most people will spin in circles.

You might prefer to be adaptable and you might even excel at it. But, if you want to achieve your big goals and dreams, you're going to need a solid plan and the right kind of tools.

So how does it work, exactly, planning for your big goals? After all, it is one thing to dream about crazy ideas, but it is a whole other thing to follow through on them. Where do you even begin?

Here are 3 super practical tips for breaking down those big goals into an action plan that really gets you to where you want to be. I promise it's easier than you think!



## BREAK BIG INTO BITE SIZE

First, break down your big goals in to bite size pieces. Start by breaking down your someday goals into something you can do **THIS YEAR**. Then break your **THIS YEAR** goal into something you can do **THIS MONTH**, and then from **THIS MONTH** to **THIS WEEK**. The biggest goals never happen in one fell swoop. It is always a matter of continual momentum in the right direction.

Our natural inclination is to put off our big goals in favor of what feels more important at the moment.

But, that is exactly why it's crucial to break down those big goals into smaller milestones. Then those milestones into even smaller, more manageable bites. In the end, you'll have a set of tasks that each feel doable. Completing these small tasks will give you a sense of accomplishment and the satisfaction of being one step closer to your big goal.

## TIME BLOCKING

This is where the rubber meets the road. Once you've broken down those big goals into smaller, easy to tackle chunks, start by planning out your week. Prioritize your time into must do, should do, and would like to do items.

I start each week off by using my Weekly Wizard™ sticky notes. This simple page helps me identify **ONE** big thing that is most important this week. I like to call it the big focus. You want to make sure your big focus is something that you need to do to get closer to your big goal. Then I identify my top three tasks, starting with the “A” tasks, or the ones that absolutely must get done this week to help me crush my **ONE** big goal for the week.

Once you've filled out your Weekly Wizard™, block out time on your schedule to make it happen. This is a process of making an appointment or meeting with yourself. Take this time as seriously as you would any other appointment. It is your focus time to complete your “big goal” task for that day.

If your plan is to spend the first 30 minutes of every day working towards your goal, then actually spend the first 30 minutes of every day **DOING THE THINGS** that will get you closer to your goal. Keep moving forward. Take action.


Here are a couple more tips to keep in mind as you are time blocking:

First, always block out more time for an important task than you think you will need. Things almost always take longer than we think they will!

Second, if you can, try to block your time into 1-2 hour chunks. Research shows that this is the optimum amount of time to work in one stretch—long enough that you can really dig in, but not so long that your brain turns off.

Third, be sure to schedule in buffer blocks each day—chunks of unstructured time that you can use to catch up if you get behind or to handle any urgent matters that come up that day.

The key to success is practice. And, like anything else in life, the more you practice it, the easier time blocking will become.



**“ALWAYS BLOCK OUT MORE  
TIME FOR AN IMPORTANT  
TASK THAN YOU THINK YOU  
WILL NEED. THINGS ALMOST  
ALWAYS TAKE LONGER THAN  
WE THINK THEY WILL!”**

## MAKE A DAILY DECISION TO STICK WITH IT

After learning the entire process of turning your big dreams into baby steps and the secret to blocking out your time, the hard work is over, right? Not so much. You need to make the daily decision to follow through with your plan and actually do the work.

Each morning we start our day filled with a certain amount of self-discipline, and as we go about our day, that resolve tends to drain out. So, if you start your day by tackling your hardest, but most important tasks, you'll have already done a lot!

We must accept the truth that if we don't take the time to put our long-term goals first, there will never be enough time or energy for our dreams. The obligations of every day will always take over.

You see, no matter how carefully you plan, and no matter how clear you are about what you want to do and the steps you will need to take to get there, it is inevitable that at some point—and probably sooner, rather than later—there will be roadblocks that stand in your way. Obstacles that threaten to derail your progress, distractions that get you off track, setbacks that make you feel like throwing in the towel.



And you need to be prepared for how you will handle them!

Don't blindly assume everything will be okay. Instead, recognize ahead of time that there will be obstacles along the way and resolve to NOT let those roadblocks prevent you from getting to where you want to go.

Because here's the thing—setbacks are a lot easier to bounce back from and overcome, if you've already mentally prepared yourself for them. And while I don't think it is a good idea to get hung up on every possible what-if scenario, I do think it is important to create a plan for what you'll do when things stand in your way.

This is another part of goal setting—and goal achieving—that most people forget about, and then, as soon as the going gets rough, they don't know how to handle it.

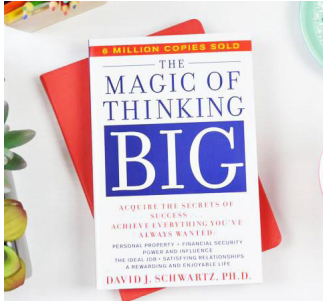
So handle your obstacles BEFORE they derail your progress!

When you're goal setting it's important to handle and sketch out your plan so you know exactly what you need to do.

The reality of life is that there will always be more to do than we have time for and there will always be curve balls thrown our way, but that doesn't mean that we can't still make our big goals and dreams a priority. We absolutely CAN.

**REMEMBER, SMALL STEPS, TAKEN OVER TIME, CAN LEAD TO BIG THINGS.**

# RECOMMENDED RESOURCES



## **THE MAGIC OF THINKING BIG:**

**PURCHASE** AT [LIVINGWELLSPENDINGLESS.COM](http://LIVINGWELLSPENDINGLESS.COM)

The Magic of Thinking Big gives you useful methods, not empty promises. Dr. Schwartz presents a carefully designed program for getting the most out of your job, your marriage and family life, and your community. He proves that you don't need to be an intellectual or have innate talent to attain great success and satisfaction—but you do need to learn and understand the habit of thinking and behaving in ways that will get you there. This book gives you those secrets!

## **FREEDOM APP:**

**INSTALL** THE APP IS AVAILABLE FOR BOTH APPLE AND ANDROID USERS

Put a stop to distractions so that you can take back control of your time and focus on what matters. Freedom is the leading website blocking app that effectively hides social media, games, and blocks distracting websites, so that you can stay focused, present, and productive.



## **EPISODE 15 IN THE DO IT SCARED™ PODCAST:**

**LISTEN** TO THE PODCAST AT [DOITSCARED.COM](http://DOITSCARED.COM)

Using some super practical tips for how to break down your biggest goals into a working action plan that actually helps you to get things done and gets you to where you want to go. It's so easy to get caught up in being so busy in life's hustle and bustle that we convince ourselves that there's no time for our big goals and dreams. Other times, we're afraid to set big goals because we have no idea of how we can make them a reality.

## **SUCCESS COACH - GOAL TRACKER:**

**INSTALL** THE APP IS AVAILABLE FOR BOTH APPLE AND ANDROID USERS

Success Wizard is a powerful life management system that will help you plan, focus and achieve real and lasting results. It includes a unique set of effective tools that will boost your productivity and help you accomplish your most meaningful goals and dreams. The elegant design and user-friendly interface makes it easy and simple to be effective, make progress and get results.



# SETTING GOALS

## THAT GIVE YOU CHILLS

RUTH SOUKUP

**H**ave you ever set a goal that was so big, so crazy, that it literally sent shivers down your spine? At the beginning of 2017, I made a big, huge, completely crazy goal to take 150 days off. In order for it to count, it had to be 24 hours free of any work-related activities. It was a crazy goal because the year prior, in 2016, per that same 24-hour criteria, I probably took a total of 10 days off all year (if that).

Those of you who own your own business or work from home or who work for an entrepreneurial company (or who are married to someone who does) can probably relate to this!

You see, I truly LOVE what I do. Most of the time, it doesn't feel like work to me! I get super excited when I see that the solutions we are providing at Ruth Soukup Omnimedia are actually helping women live more productive lives, to make your daily tasks a little easier, or inspiring you to do things you didn't know you were capable of. I am PUMPED every time I hear that one of our bloggers in Elite Blog Academy® has achieved a new success. And I love the people I get to work with every day too! The team at RSO is beyond amazing—some of the hardest working and most inspiring people you will ever meet.

For me, going to work is not the problem.

Doing anything BUT work is the challenge!

And so it probably sounds weird, but setting the goal to take 150 days off was truly terrifying to me. In fact, the first time I said it to myself out loud, I got chills.

My husband, of course, rolled his eyes. “Why do you always have to be so dramatic,” he asked, “why can't you just set a reasonable goal, like 50 days off? Why does it always have to be this huge impossible thing with you?”

“Because,” I explained, “50 days off isn't enough for me to make a real change. If I make a goal of 50, I won't take it seriously and I'll probably end up with 10 again. The only way I am going to accomplish 150 days off is if I change everything I do. Maybe I still won't make it, but at least I'll have the motivation to get close.”

For the record, I didn't meet my goal. I didn't actually make it to 150 days off. In fact, I wasn't even that close, although I did get close to 100.

But it didn't matter.

Because, you see, that big crazy goal DID in fact force me to make big changes in the way that I work. I started taking Fridays off, which forced me to be much more productive the rest of the week. I became more intentional about time blocking and eliminating distractions, and about saying no (which is sometimes hard!).

It also forced me to rely on others a lot more, and to delegate responsibility. I can be a little bit of a control freak sometimes, but in that year of taking a lot more time off, I learned to let go of a whole lot more, to empower others and develop other leaders on my team, and to be more clear about my vision, but then allow others to create the plan to get us there.

It was a huge shift for me, and for my company.

I realized that what had previously felt impossible to me—trusting other people enough to let go—was not only possible, but infinitely better. Because letting go of the things I wasn't that good at actually meant that they would be done better, and also meant that I could focus more on the things I was best at.

And ever since that first big scary goal was set, we have continued to reap the rewards of those changes that were put into place. My team blows me away almost every day, and while I no longer take Fridays off, I have learned how to completely unplug in the evenings and on the weekends—all changes that would not have happened without first setting a goal that seemed almost impossible.

Someone once wisely advised to “set a goal so big that you can't achieve it until you grow into the person who can.” Along those same lines, Bob Proctor said, “if you don't get chills when you set a goal, you're not setting big enough goals.”

In other words, there is something almost magical about a really big goal that forces us to change and take action.

You may already know that I am a huge believer in stretch goals. In fact, when it comes to creating a life that you love, I don't think there is anything more powerful. And my challenge for you, if this isn't something you've thought about lately, is to spend some time thinking about ways that you can stretch yourself. How can you push past your comfort zone to set one goal big enough to send chills down your spine?



# PRACTICAL APPLICATION

## STEP 1: LIST YOUR PRIORITIES

**You can't prioritize your time if you aren't clear—even if just to yourself—about what's most important to you.** Is it your family? Your spouse? Serving your church or community? Getting your blood pressure under control or losing 50 pounds? Is it finishing your college degree? Getting your house in order or remodeled or ready to sell? Getting in shape or training to run a marathon? Getting a promotion or establishing your own business? Getting your budget under control, paying off your debt, or establishing an emergency fund?

**List as many things as you can that are most important to you** (i.e. kids, spouse, God, etc), as well as all the ways in which you currently spend your time (i.e. work, crafting, computer, etc.):

Next, with a red marker, circle five things that currently take up the most of your time. With a green marker, circle the things that are most important to you. **How many of your green and red circles overlap?**

List the **five things that are most important to you** in order of priority:

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_

**These are your priorities.** This is where you should be focusing most of your time and energy. Refer to this list often, or post it in a spot where you can see it every single day—on your phone, next to your bed, in your Bible or in your planner. The more clear you are about your priorities, the easier it is to make wise choices about your time.

## STEP 2: SET SPECIFIC GOALS

**Close your eyes and imagine your life in detail five years from now.** Where do you live? Where do you work? What is your job title? What do you look like? What does your house look like? How much money do you have in the bank? Where did it come from? What is your relationship with your kids and spouse? How do you spend time together? What do you do in your free time? What are your hobbies? Where do you volunteer?

Spend a few minutes day-dreaming about what your ideal life would look like five years from now, then **write it down:**

With this vision of the distant future fresh in your mind, it is time to set your long term goals. **List five major things you would like to accomplish by this time next year.** Be as specific as possible. Use dates and locations and quantifiable goals.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

**Now that your long term goals are in place, give some thought to your short term goals.** What is it that you want to get done in the next month? Is there any small chunk of your long term goals that you could do right away?

Set five manageable goals for the things you would like to accomplish in the next month, **then repeat this process every 30 days.**

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

## STEP 3: EAT THAT FROG

I read a book a few years ago that totally changed the way I approached my daily task list. It was called, “Eat That Frog: 21 Great Ways to Stop Procrastinating and Get Things Done” by Brian Tracy. It got its name from a quote by Mark Twain, who famously once said something to the effect of “**if you eat a live frog for breakfast, chances are that will be the worst thing you have to do all day.**” The point of the quote—and the book—was that if you start your day by tackling your hardest but most important tasks, even if you don’t do that much for the rest of the day, you will still have accomplished a lot.

**Life moves fast** and it is far too easy to get sucked into mundane—albeit essential—tasks of the everyday. We spend our time putting out fires or escaping into the time-wasting vortex of social media and email. It all seems so important, so urgent, but before we know it, we’ve spent the whole day reacting to other people rather than proactively reaching our own goals.

My own life changed dramatically when I changed the order in which I completed my task list. Most importantly, I stopped checking email first thing in the morning, and instead focused those first few hours of my day on long-term projects and goals. As a result, my productivity skyrocketed and **I was finally able to start accomplishing the things I really wanted to.**

If you want to jump-start your productivity, take a moment to decide which important tasks you will do **first thing** every day, and which less important tasks you will put off until later. Make it a goal to set aside a certain amount of time, whether it be 30 minutes or two hours, to focus each day on your long term goals.

Beginning *tomorrow*, I will set aside \_\_\_\_\_ minutes *first thing* every  
single day to work on my *long term* goals and *most important* tasks.

Until I have “eaten my frog,” **I will not do any of the following less essential tasks:**

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## STEP 4: RESET YOUR HABITS

I read another book recently called, “The Power of Habit: by Charles Duhigg Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business” that has also greatly impacted how I structure my day. One of the many interesting points the book made is that **our brains are wired to form habits**. These habits can become good or bad, but once something has become a true habit, a different part of our brain takes over and we begin to perform that particular habit on autopilot. This means we no longer have to use mental energy to perform the task, which leaves our brain free to focus on getting other things done.

I used to get frustrated with myself because it seemed like I would start out my day so well, **but at the end I would just fizzle out**, with no energy left to put towards any sort of productive endeavor. After reading this book, I realized that because my willpower in a given day is limited, the more good habits I create for myself, the more willpower and energy I will have leftover to use towards other things.

**I decided to make a list of the things I wanted to do automatically every morning.** My list included drinking a glass of water, planning my day over a cup of coffee, having personal devotion & prayer time, then writing for at least 90 minutes. **After several weeks of doing this every day, I finally stopped thinking about it.** I would find myself in the kitchen drinking my water before I was even fully awake. It takes almost no effort to get my day started off right, and at the end of my writing session, when I take a morning break, I still feel refreshed and **ready to conquer** the rest of my day.

List the **5 morning habits** you would like to develop:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

List the **5 evening habits** you would like to develop:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## STEP 5: ELIMINATE THE UNESSENTIAL

I think for me **getting rid** of the things I don't really need to be doing is probably the **hardest part**.

**Everyone has a few time fillers they could probably eliminate from their day**, whether it be baking something from scratch when it could be store-bought, spending an hour watching TV or drooling over Pinterest, or even taking on a few too many commitments.

**This is where the priority list and goal setting becomes so important!** If when you look at your day, you find that much of your time is filled with things that don't match up to your priorities or your most important goals, then something has to give. Start small—eliminate 3-5 things in your life that are taking up time but not adding much value. **Just stop doing them.** Yes, I know it is easier said than done, but making a conscious decision paves the way for change.

**Go back to step one** and examine all the things you listed that are currently occupying your time. Circle in yellow the ones that are unessential—the ones that either don't fall in line with your goals or fit with your priorities. Of those circled in yellow, **which five things could you eliminate from your life completely?**

5 things you can **eliminate from your life completely**:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

*time to crush your goals!*

# GOAL CRUSHING®

BREAKING BIG INTO BITE SIZED



**CLAIM** YOUR TARGET  
what do you want to accomplish?



**REFINE** YOUR OBJECTIVE  
Get specific about your measures of success (numbers, dates, etc.)



**UNDERSTAND** YOUR MOTIVATION  
why is this goal important?



**STEP** IT OUT  
what has to happen for this goal to be successful?

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**HANDLE** OBSTACLES  
what are the potential roadblocks & what will you do when things get in your way?



**IMPLEMENT** YOUR PLAN  
what is the danger you face if you don't follow through?



**TREAT** YOURSELF  
how will you celebrate your win?

# TIPS & TRICKS TO GOAL SETTING

## HOW THE RUTH SOUKUP TEAM CONQUERS THEIR GOALS!

We asked each of our team members the question “*How do you or your family tackle goal setting?*” We were curious if they had any tips or tricks to share with the community. Being such a diverse company in many different stages of life it was interesting to see what insight they had to offer and what has worked for them and/or their family.



**LAURA MILLER** | CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

“Our family loves to set goals in 3 month chunks. This keeps our goals from getting stale and makes it more attainable. We create goals in these 4 categories: physical, educational, spiritual and experience-driven. It’s so fun and satisfying to create a poster board and watch those items get crossed off every quarter and it has definitely brought our family closer together.”



**MAGGIE MURPHY** | ELITE BLOG ACADEMY® ASSISTANT

“For the first time in my adult life I hit every goal that I set at the beginning of the year by Christmas. The biggest difference this past year was that I understood the discipline and intentionality that achieving those goals requires. My goals needed to be a stretch so that I was sufficiently challenged, but not so wild that I could not even begin to imagine how I would get there. I had two main goals that I wanted to accomplish this year: start training for and running half-marathons and lose 45 pounds. I give time and attention to these goals each and every single day no matter what and make them a part of my schedule as I would dropping the kids off at school or cooking dinner. In fact I even combine them, for example, I block an hour of time to walk my daughter to and from school every single morning which already guarantees me 1.5 hour of active time while crossing two items off of my list and achieving milestones on my goals. It is not enough to just know you have to prioritize yourself and your goals, you have to make yourself a priority even if that means changing your current lifestyle. A temporary inconvenience leads to a transformation life change.”



**KELLY COX** | CUSTOMER SERVICE CONNOISSEUR

“Our family puts all of our goals in writing! By doing that we are able to put a realistic plan in place that is well thought out. Also, we meet monthly on the details to track our progress and adjust anything if necessary whether it be financial, spiritual, or project related. We love checking off our list and working toward our goals as a family!”



**AMANDA KADZIOLKA** | ELITE BLOG ACADEMY® MANAGER

“If I didn’t take the time to strategically map out exactly how I was going to accomplish my goals every month, I would be hopeless! It’s not enough to simply write out your goals. You must dissect exactly HOW you’re going to achieve them and then you must make achieving your top goals your priority. Make time (and hold yourself accountable to those appointments for yourself!) for these goals before anything else. If you don’t, everything else in your life will take over and there will be no more time left for achieving your goals.”



**EMMA BECKETT** | GRAPHIC DESIGNER

“As one of the graphic designers here at Ruth Soukup Omnimedia I have found that actually sitting down and writing my list of things I’d like to accomplish sets me up for more success vs. me making a note of it electronically. I LOVE the feeling you get when an item is finally able to get crossed off my list. Another tip I have found is thinking of the big picture of where you’d like to be then setting smaller goals that lead up to my big goal. Taking it one step at a time is far less scary than trying to tackle a goal entirely in one sitting.”



**HEATHER MORITZ** | DIRECTOR OF IMPLEMENTATION

“Each person has their own way of tackling the new year—from the super easy (making some mental notes of things they would like to do in the upcoming year) to the detailed (carving out some time to brainstorm and write goals down). Our family likes to create family goals. We use a Family Goal Poster. We set aside 1 hour of family time. Give everyone a piece of paper and ask them to brainstorm as many family goals they would like to do in the upcoming year. When everyone is done, they read their goals and then we discuss—Are there any overlapping goals? Are some of them unreasonable? We go through everyone’s list and compile a reasonable goal list to add to Family Goal Setting Poster that we then hang in our mudroom to see every day.”



**MELISSA POE** | GRAPHIC DESIGNER

“A big goal I set for myself this year was to complete the Whole30. In order to complete that goal, I knew I had to get serious and really plan ahead! I started by slowly changing my routine to ease myself into eating Whole30 approved meals, because I knew if I tried to flip a switch and do it overnight I would never stick with it! After about a month of weaning myself off of unapproved foods, I officially started the Whole30. I made sure to congratulate myself at every step of the process with ‘non-scale victories’! Any time I felt the urge to cheat or wanted to quit, I just thought about my end goals and how bad I would feel if I let myself down by needing to start over from the beginning!”



**LATRISHA SUNDQUIST** | EXECUTIVE PERSONAL ASSISTANT

“I have never been a fan of New Years resolutions. But, I do like to set new goals for myself in February on my birthday! It makes me feel better about being a year older when I can look back on how I have grown and look forward to what I will do next. I love making new goals for myself, but I tend to lose momentum after a little while. For me, having an accountability partner is crucial! And most of the time I even need a different partner for each of my goals. I have a friend who is going through Dave Ramsey’s baby steps and she gives me SO much motivation with my money goals. And I have other friends who keep me pumped with my other goals as well! For me, it is all about surrounding myself with people that will motivate me as I motivate them.”



**ASHELY DILLON** | DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIST

“This might be a funny way to approach goal setting, but in my family, we can’t think clearly until we clean out the clutter. So we start goal setting by a quick sweep of the house. Getting rid of the excess by donating what we don’t need. One trick I’ve learned is to pin-point one item, like scissors, and find all the scissors in the house. It’s crazy because we’ve had over 20 of some items, when we really only need one. Once we do a quick purge, we almost feel lighter and can think clearer. That’s when we take 20 minutes to sit and brainstorm our goals. We come up with a list of 3-5 that we want to start tackling and then break those goals down into measurable chunks from there.”



**JESSICA BOWMAN** | DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL GROWTH

“In my family, there’s never a shortage of tasks and goals we want to do and accomplish! Sometimes we get overwhelmed with everything that needs to be done. So the trick that has helped us most to achieve our goals is to sit down, set a timer, and create a brain dump of all the things, no matter how big or small, we want to accomplish. Once we have everything all out on paper, we can begin to organize them by which items are the most important and need to be done in which order. If it’s a larger project, we can break it down into weekly and daily chunks using our Daily Do It and Weekly Wizard sheets. Being able to think big while planning small has made all the difference. Now we can see the results of items getting crossed off our list instead of just wishing we had more time to get them done!”



**NATALIE OROBELLO** | LIVING WELL SPENDING LESS CONTENT MANAGER

“My biggest tip to goal setting and keeping up with the goals I set is to use my monthly goal setting page in my Living Well Planner®. It helps me break down the goals I want to make into manageable categories and allows me to reference them through out the month. My husband and I also share our goals with each other each month so we have someone to hold us accountable and to check in and provide encouragement when needed”