

This is the Do It Scared Podcast with Ruth Soukup, **EPISODE #1**. Today, on this very first episode, we are going to talk about the secret of staying motivated and the key to creating a life you **LOVE**.

Hey guys, and welcome to this brand new show! My name is **RUTH SOUKUP**, and I am the founder of Living Well Spending Less and the Living Well Planner, as well as the founder of Elite Blog Academy, and the New York Times bestselling author of five—soon to be six—books!

For those of you who already know me from either LWSL or EBA, or from my weekly newsletter, let me just say that I am so glad to have you joining me on this new medium!

And for those of you who are new and just finding me through this podcast—welcome! We are going to have a lot of fun together!

In today's episode, we are going to be talking about learning to think big and how to make stretch goals that really push you outside of your comfort zone and cause that little flutter in your stomach or tightening in your chest. We're also going to talk about why that flutter or tightening is actually a **GOOD** thing, and how those big stretch goals will actually help you start creating a life you love, even if it might be a little uncomfortable at first. It's a whole new way of thinking about goals, and I think it is the perfect place to start with this podcast, especially at the beginning of the year, when we are all thinking about goals anyway!

But before we jump in, because this is the very first episode, I want to take a minute to talk about the concept of Do It Scared, where it came from, and why it is a subject I am so passionate about.

Do It Scared is an idea I've been using in my own life for a long time now, because truth be told, sometimes I feel like I am scared all the time! But it is a motto that has helped me push past so many of my fears and to do things I never would have believed I was capable of.

Do it Scared is a concept that is so important to me that it actually became one of the core values of my company, and as I began sharing the idea, both at Living Well Spending Less and Elite Blog Academy, I realized that it was an idea that didn't just resonate with me or my team, but with people everywhere.

It is based on the idea that courage doesn't mean we are never afraid. Instead, courage is being scared but taking action anyway, despite our fear. It is putting one foot in front of the other, even when we're not quite sure where the path will lead us.

And that's what this podcast is all about—taking the steps that will help us move past our fear and create a life we love. Each week we'll dive into focused topics that will give you a road map for where to go, and we'll also talk to people who are conquering fear in their own lives to find out exactly how it is done. It's going to be motivating and inspiring and encouraging, and most importantly, it will hopefully spur you to take action in your own life.

Sounds pretty good, right?

Okay, so just a couple more quick things before we dive into today's episode— I've got a worksheet that you can download that will walk you through the steps we'll be discussing today. You can get it by texting **STRETCHGOALS** to **44222**, or by visiting doitscared.com/episode1. Once again, either text **STRETCHGOALS** to **44222**, or visit doitscared.com/episode1

Also, if you haven't already, be sure rate and review the show on iTunes because I will be choosing reviewers at random to receive Do It Scared mugs and t-shirts, and then make sure to also subscribe to be notified of new episodes!

And with that out of the way—let's dive in!

Today I wanted to kick-off by talking about one of my very, very very **FAVORITE** topics—goal setting. Because I **LOVE** setting goals! And I love achieving goals. And thinking about goals gets me pretty fired up.

And I don't know about you, but when I start thinking about setting new goals, especially if I'm doing it at the beginning of the year, I always start out with the BEST intentions of what my year will look like. It's a fresh start, a clean slate, and I love that! I get overeager and make all sorts of resolutions—a whole list of all those things I want to accomplish.

But then, what has happened to me in the past, is that somewhere in mid-February, all that renewed energy I felt at the beginning of the year started to fizzle out. Life got in the way. The reality of all those day-to-day responsibilities started to weigh me down, and I didn't feel quite as enthusiastic. I lost focus. I'd be working on one thing one day and another thing another day, and never really gain enough traction in any one area to feel like I've accomplished something.

Can anyone else relate to this?

I'm sure we probably all have been guilty losing traction on our goals at one point or another.

But over the years, the biggest, most important thing I've learned about goal setting—about really effective, life-changing goals—is that setting a bunch of smaller goals that seem like they should be attainable is actually counter-productive.

We need big goals to actually get big things done.

Have you ever heard of **SMART** goals? Most of us probably have, at least at some point, as it is the reigning conventional wisdom when it comes to goal setting.

It's basically the idea that your goals should be **SPECIFIC, MEASURABLE, ATTAINABLE, RELEVANT, AND TIME BOUND**. Meaning, you should know exactly what you are trying to do, your goal should be quantifiable in some way, it should be something you can actually accomplish, it should be meaningful to you in some way, and it needs to have a deadline.

And while this **SMART** goal framework seems very practical—and it is, I guess in some ways—in all its practicality, it leaves out the most important part of setting goals that will actually get and keep you motivated.

So what's that most important part?

It's thinking **BIG** and creating a stretch goal—one that pushes us past our comfort zone or one that we might not fully even believe is attainable, at least not for us.

It's daring to believe that we are capable of more, and daring to push ourselves past our current limits to create something amazing.

It's daring to set goals so big that they scare us. Goals that make our chest tighten or our stomach flutter.

Those are the goals that will motivate us.

You see, when we set goals that feel safe and achievable, we are caving in to our own pre-conceived notions of what we are capable of. We're not pushing past our comfort zone, we're just settling for the status quo. And there is nothing inherently motivating about that. It's comfortable. It's what we know. It doesn't require us to stretch or change or work any harder than we already are. And so we don't. In fact, sometimes—often—we work less hard. We do the bare minimum. We get bored and we lose focus.

But when we set—and commit—to a big goal, one so big that it freaks us out a little, we are forcing ourselves out of that comfort zone into the unknown. Is it scary? **YES!** But it is also totally invigorating and completely motivating. There's nothing that will make us work harder or keep us going longer.

The truth is that the flutter in our stomach and tightening in our chest that we feel is

fear, but it's the good kind of fear, the self-preservation kind of fear that kicks in when we need to do things we don't think we can do.

And if you don't feel that way towards your goals this year? Well, then I would dare say that your goals aren't big enough! You need to think bigger and push yourself just a little bit harder.

So let's talk about the steps for making these type of stretch goals a reality in your life.

STEP ONE IS TO VISUALIZE. And by that I mean you need to give yourself permission to dream big, without self-editing or self-judgment.

And to be perfectly honest, for most people, this is the hardest part.

We're often SO critical of ourselves, and so afraid to take the time to actually dream about the possibilities. We tell ourselves our dreams our stupid....before we've even had a chance to dream them.

Or it could be that we are just totally bogged down in the realities of life, where we are right at this very moment with all the responsibilities and limitations and frustrations and obstacles that we can't allow ourselves to imagine, even for just a few minutes, that things could possibly be different than our current reality. In our mind, our current reality is our only reality.

I can't tell you how often I receive emails and letters from moms who tell me that they want to create big goals, but that they've been so busy living life and raising kids and taking care of everyone else have no idea what their big goals should be. They want to dream big, but they don't know how.

And they're worried that it is too late.

But I can guarantee you that wherever you are right in this moment, you are **NOT** too late.

Don't believe me?

There are countless stories of really successful people who didn't get started until much later in life.

Martha Stewart, for example, started out on Wall Street before realizing her true passion for catering and party planning. Even then, she didn't publish her first book until age 41, and she didn't launch what would become a billion dollar empire—Martha Stewart Living—until she was 47.

Joy Behar was a high school English teacher who didn't break into show business until she was in her 40's.

Likewise, Vera Wang didn't discover her true calling as a wedding dress designer until she was planning her own wedding at age 40.

Ray Kroc—the founder of the McDonald's empire—didn't open his first McDonald's franchise until age 51.

Duncan Hines published his first cookbook at age 55, and didn't license his name to cake mixes until he was 73!

Julia Child didn't find fame as the first celebrity chef until she was in her 50's.

Laura Ingalls Wilder didn't publish her first book until age 65.

I could go on and on, but the truth is that the only limit on what you are capable of, no matter where you are at in life right now, is your willingness to dream bigger.

So give yourself permission to dream **BIG** without judgment or self-editing.

ASK YOURSELF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- What is it that you've always wanted to do?
- What is something that you are interested in or passionate about that you've never dared pursue?
- What would you do if nothing stood in your way?
- What excites you or motivates you or gets you excited to jump out of bed in the morning?
- What did you dream about doing before life got in the way?
- Where would you like to see yourself in five years or ten years from now?
- What would be the ultimate dream life for you? What does that look like?

To do this exercise, set the timer for 30 minutes, and for that half an hour, turn off all those voices in your head that instantly tell you that's not possible or that's stupid or who are you to even think about something like that. Just turn them off and dream. Don't hold back. Don't worry about what's possible or impossible. Don't worry about how you'll get there. Don't self-edit. Give yourself 30 minutes to imagine the wildest possibilities, even if they are completely crazy and unrealistic. Give yourself permission to think big.

And that's step one when it comes to setting stretch goals - **VISUALIZE**.

STEP TWO, THEN, ONCE YOU'VE DARED TO START DREAMING ABOUT ALL THE POSSIBILITIES, IS TO FOCUS. You want to narrow down your options to the ONE thing you want to make a reality.

Now in step one, you had to turn off your self-editing and self-judgment, but this is the step where you can start to bring all those big pie-in-the-sky ideas back down to earth. At least, sort-of.

Because I still don't want you to rule something out just because it seems impossible or unrealistic, or because you have no idea how you'll get there. Don't even worry about that part yet.

But do look at all the things you've written down.

START ASKING YOURSELF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- Why does this idea excite me, or why is this goal important to me?
- What is it in particular about this idea that excites me?
- Do I feel a flutter in my belly or a tightening in my chest when I think about this goal or idea? Does it scare me? Why or why not?
- On a scale of 1-10, with one being not that excited and ten being so excited I can hardly breathe, how excited am I about this goal or idea?

Keep in mind that it is important not to rush this process. Give yourself time to really think about each one of the big dreams or goals you've visualized, and to understand your motivation behind each one, and to figure out which one is most important and most exciting to you.

Because chances are, as you do this exercise and think through these big goals and ideas that you've dared yourself to dream about, the one thing you are most excited and passionate about will become more clear.

When you've asked yourself those questions for every item on your list, it's time to start narrowing down your options. Automatically rule out anything that is not at least an 8 on your excitement scale. Don't even consider anything that's not sparking an extreme amount of passion inside you.

And then, from the items that are left, pay attention to which goal or idea seems to spark the most passion and excitement—and the most fear—inside you. What's the one that feels distinctly uncomfortable and yet strangely exhilarating, all at the same time?

That's your **ONE** goal.

And by the way if none of them make you feel that way, then you're still not thinking big enough! In that case, look at all the things you've written down so far and try 10xing them until they do cause that little flutter in your belly or tightening in your chest, and they do start sparking a passion that scares you a little bit. Sometimes you just have to push.

Okay, so that's **STEP 2—FOCUS** your big goal down to one.

STEP THREE: COMMIT - Write it Down, Say it Out Loud & Make it Real

But there's another important step you are going to have to take, and this one is

where the rubber meets the road. Because Step 3 is to **COMMIT** to this big goal. You need to write it down and say it out loud and actually make it REAL.

And you guys....this is the scary part!

This is where your fear—along with your motivation—will kick into overdrive, because you have actually committed to making this big crazy goal a reality.

It's not enough to dream big—there are lots of dreamers in the world. It's not even enough to pick one goal—there are lots of dreamers with just one dream. The key is in the commitment. You've got to fully commit—both to yourself, internally and to others, externally—to making this big crazy goal of yours a reality.

It needs to be the first thing you think about when you wake up, and the last thing you think about before you go to bed. It needs to be top of mind all the time. It needs to be real.

Because it is only when you fully commit that you will be motivated to work a little harder, to get up a little earlier or stay up a little later, or step outside your comfort zone, or go that extra mile to do what needs to be done.

What will it take you to commit to your goal? Do you need to tell someone? Multiple someones? Do you need to post it on Facebook or write it on your bathroom mirror? Do you need to make an investment of time or money? What will make it real for **YOU?**

The first time I really, truly experienced this was seven years ago, when I first started my blog, Living Well Spending Less. Now, when I started blogging, I had absolutely NO idea what I was doing. I had never even really read blogs before that point, much less thought about starting one. But my husband and I were fighting a LOT about money, and more specifically about how much I was spending. Because I was a stay at home mom of a one year old and a 3 year old, and the only thing I could think to do to get out of the house was to go to Target. And so we went to Target. A LOT. And I spent a LOT.

And so I needed something to do that wasn't going to Target, and I thought "why don't I start a blog about trying to live well and spend less?" My original thought was that it could give me something to do, and help keep me accountable.

But then, all of the sudden, after I had been blogging for a few weeks, I realized that there was this whole other world out there that I had never known about, of blogs and blogging and bloggers. And I discovered that there were actually people making MONEY doing this blogging thing, and I decided that I wanted to do that too.

And that is when I made this big, scary, totally **CRAZY** goal—that I was going to make enough money blogging that my husband could quit his job.

You guys—I can't even tell you what an impossible goal this seemed like at that point. First of all, my husband was an aerospace engineer, so he was making pretty good money. It wasn't like he was working part time at the Home Depot or something—this was a serious income I would need to replace. Second of all, at the time I set that goal, my blog was making exactly \$0, and I had about 4 readers, one of whom was me.

This wasn't just a big goal, this was an insane goal. A “the lady has lost her mind” kind of goal.

And that is exactly what my husband said when I told him my plan.

In fact, I think his exact words were “that is the stupidest thing you have ever said. You can't make money on a BLOG”

But you know what?

I DIDN'T CARE.

I've set other goals in my life, and I've even had some big goals, but this I think was the first time I ever had a goal so big that I had NO IDEA how I would actually accomplish it. I had no idea HOW I was going to make it a reality, but I was committed to somehow figuring it out.

And it didn't matter to me that my husband thought I was crazy. It didn't matter to me that my friends didn't get it, or that they made fun of me behind my back. It didn't matter to me that I had to work harder than I've ever worked.

Once I was committed, I was ready and willing to do whatever it took.

Yes, I was scared. **YES, I HAD NO IDEA WHAT I WAS DOING.** But I knew if I could just keep trying, I would figure it out eventually. I knew there had to be a way, even if at the time, I didn't know exactly what that way looked like.

And that is exactly what **STEP 3 LOOKS LIKE—YOU NEED TO COMMIT** to your big goal, to write it down and say it out loud and make it REAL.

Because once it is real, you can't ignore it, and THAT is where the magic happens.

But there is one more step you'll want to take, and that is **STEP 4—TO EXECUTE.**

You'll need to rearrange your schedule and put your big goal **FIRST** every single day, and to start doing whatever it takes to make your big goal a reality.

It might mean getting up a half-hour earlier every day, or an hour or two hours earlier, if that's what it takes.

It might mean saying no to other, lesser opportunities and distractions that will get in the way of achieving your big goal. It might sometimes mean saying no to things you really want to do.

It could mean taking a class or going back to school or looking for another job or taking some other kind of risk.

It might mean making a financial investment into supplies or training or travel.

It should definitely mean blocking out time each week—and maybe even every day—to get yourself one step closer to the finish line.

And it will certainly mean digging deep to keep going when the road gets rough, or when obstacles stand in your way, and to develop grit and a thick skin for when people don't understand.

But once you are fully committed to making your big goal a reality, those things won't feel like a burden or an imposition. You'll do them willingly, knowing that the road won't always be easy, but it will be worth it.

For me, it meant getting up at 3 in the morning every single day, even on the weekends, so that I could find time to blog and still be a mom. It meant learning everything I possible could about the business of blogging, and constantly trying new things to see what would work, often failing 9 times out of 10. It meant stepping **WAY** outside my comfort zone to attend conferences and make You Tube videos and seek out new opportunities. It meant sacrificing a lot of free time and fun time and friend time.

But to me, it was always worth it, and in the end, all those sacrifices paid off. In 2013, 2 and a half years after I started blogging, my husband was able to quit his job, and that crazy impossible goal became a reality.

But even if it hadn't happened that way, I would not have been sorry for all the sacrifices I made, or the ones I continue to make even to this day. I would have been really proud of trying.

Because those big goals—even when we don't fully achieve them—are what make life worth living! **THOSE** are the things that spark our passion, and get us excited to jump out of bed in the morning! **THOSE** are the things that keep us going, even in the dull moments or the hard moments or the painful moments.

THOSE big goals—those ones we have to stretch and push and fight for—are what allow us to create a life we **LOVE**, not just one we tolerate.

And in the end, isn't that what we really want?

Believe it or not, stretch goals are the secret to setting goals that keep you motivated

for the long-haul. And in order to create those big goals, there are four simple steps you can take.

First, **VISUALIZE**. Allow yourself to dream big, without self-editing or self-judgment. Spend time imagining the wildest possibilities. Second, **FOCUS**. Narrow down your options to the ONE that sparks the most passion and excitement, and stokes that fire in your belly. Pick the one so big it scares you, at least a little, and if it doesn't scare you, make it bigger until it does. Third, you've got to **COMMIT**. Write it down, say it out loud, and do whatever it takes to make it real. And then finally, **EXECUTE**. Put your big goal first every single day, and make it a priority. That's the only way to get it done.

Okay, so don't forget that if you would like the worksheet that goes along with this podcast—that will walk you through the steps we just talked about—you can download it at doitsscared.com/episode1 or by texting **STRETCHGOALS** to **44222** right now. Once again, that's doitsscared.com/episode1 or by texting **STRETCHGOALS** to **44222** on your phone right now

Before we go, I just want to say that I would **LOVE** to hear from you! If you have any questions about what we talked about today, or any other topics that you would like to see addressed on the Do It Scared podcast, please feel free to reach out via email at ruth@livingwellspendingless.com, or by filling out our form at ruthsoukup.com.

And that about does it for this very first episode of the Do It Scared with Ruth Soukup podcast! Thank you so much for joining me today! If you liked what you heard, be sure to leave a review on iTunes—I'll be picking reviewers at random to win Do It Scared t-shirts and mugs, which can also be found in the Living Well Shop at www.livingwellshop.co.

Also, be sure to subscribe via **ITUNES** to be notified of new episodes!

And speaking of upcoming episodes, be sure to join me next week as we dive much deeper into the subject of how to the obstacles that seem unsurmountable. We'll be chatting with the amazing Susie Moore, author of the book "What If It Does Work Out," about overcoming some pretty unimaginable adversity to establish a successful, high-powered Fortune 500 career...and then ultimately walking away to create something all on her own. It is an incredible story from a truly inspiring woman, and I promise that you will **NOT** want to miss it!