

This is the **DO IT SCARED PODCAST** with Ruth Soukup, **EPISODE #37**. In today's episode, we are going to talk about daring to make time for self-care in our life....even when we're not quite sure we deserve it.

Hey there, and welcome back to the Do It Scared podcast, and not just that, but to one of the last episodes of 2018! As always, 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!

And whether you are new and just finding me through this podcast for the first time, or whether you've known me for a while from Living Well Spending Less or Elite Blog Academy—welcome! My hope is that this is a place where you will find new inspiration and motivation to move past the things that are holding you back so you can create a life you love.

In today's episode, we are going to chat about one of my very favorite topics—goal setting. And not just any goals, but setting goals for the year, which most people refer to as New Year's Resolutions. And I know that there are a lot of mixed thoughts about new year's resolutions—some people love them, some people hate them, some people think they are completely arbitrary and stupid and refuse to participate, some people totally stress out about them or go a little crazy with all the best of intentions....but when push comes to shove, a lot of people set new year's resolutions, but not all that many people actually follow through on them.

But regardless of where you stand on this debate, whether you think New Year's Resolutions are awesome or arbitrary, I think this episode will still be helpful, because we are going to talk about how to set goals—or resolutions or whatever you want to call them—that you will actually keep and follow through on.

And you might not know this about me, but I'm going to let my nerd flag fly for a minute, and tell you that I am a complete and total new year's junkie. I love it so much. I think it's my favorite holiday. There is just something I love so much about the idea of a completely fresh start. It is the one time every year that you just get to wipe the slate clean and start over. The old is gone, the new has come. And I find that so motivating! In fact, come December 26th, the day after Christmas, I am so ready for all things new. I call that week between Christmas and New Year the Best Week ever, and we even celebrate it in our Living Well Shop with a huge sale called—what else—the Best Week Ever sale! It is my favorite!!

But even if you don't get quite as excited as I do about all things New Year, I hope this episode will be super motivating for you, and also inspire you to maybe consider making some resolutions this year that you will actually follow through on.

Because ultimately, that's what this podcast is all about. It's daring to try new things and to be intentional with our time, even when we've fallen short in the past, in order to can create a life we love.

But 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.

Okay, so one more quick thing before we dive into all the practical application today's episode—As always, I've got a great little download that you can grab that will walk you through some of the practical strategies we'll be discussing today. You can get it, along with our shownotes, by visiting DoltScared.com/episode37. Once again, to get the shownotes and the corresponding download for this episode, simply visit DoltScared.com/episode37.

And while I'm handing out instructions, the other thing I want to make sure I do is invite you to follow me on Instagram. It's the place I share daily thoughts and inspiration, and the one social media account that I manage personally, which means it is also the best place to message me directly with your feedback, comments and questions! You can find me at [@RUTHSOUKUP](https://www.instagram.com/RUTHSOUKUP)—that's r-u-t-h-s-o-u-k-u-p.

Alright, with that out of the way, let's dive in!

So like I said, I am a kind-of a New Year's junkie. I just love love love this time of year so much. And the reason I love it so much, I think, is because in my heart of hearts, I am an optimist, and I always believe in the potential of the future. Or maybe it is because I have made so many mistakes in my life, and even in my business, that the idea of being able to start completely fresh, to be able to wipe the slate clean and just hit the reset button is so appealing.

That means that no matter what bad stuff happened in 2018, 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 last year. And whatever bad stuff happened last year, that doesn't mean you have to carry it into this next year. 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 year to make it whatever we want it to be.

What could be more exciting than that?

And while I've always loved this idea of a fresh start come new year time, I have to admit that I have not always had the best track record when it comes to actually following through on my New Year's resolutions.

Oh don't get me wrong—I would definitely set them! In fact, I'd set lots of them. I was so excited about this fresh start that I wanted to do All. The. Things. Get in shape and start drinking more water and start eating right and start budgeting and start going to bed on time and start journaling and whatever else I decided I needed to do, and then I would start out really strong right out the gate. For the first few weeks, I'd be on fire. But then I'd start to lose focus and start to slip, and usually by February all my amazing intentions had gone out the window. The excitement was over. The feeling of the fresh start had passed, and I was no longer enthusiastic.

And so, for many years, my new years resolutions were just like everyone else's. Platitudes 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, YES, I totally rocked that goal so hard and actually got it done this year!

And that was frustrating to me. Because I wanted to be rocking those goals. And I wanted 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.

And 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.

And then, in 2013, I decided to completely change my strategy towards setting goals. You see, I had actually set some goals for myself at the beginning of the year, but by the time April rolled around, most of them had fallen by the wayside. But that month was a big month for our family, because it was the month when 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, and not just being the breadwinner, but supporting our family through a blog, this thing that I had started from scratch, and this business that I was just making up as I went along—well, that pressure lit a fire under my butt like never before. Literally, it was a pressure like I have never felt before.

Because up until that moment, everything I was doing was just for fun. If I failed, well, so what? My husband had a great job and we would be fine.

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 make this blogging thing a sustainable business that could continue to support us for the long term.

I'm going to be completely honest with you—I was terrified. I had no reason to believe that anything that I was doing, that any of the money I was making, was anything other than a fluke. I was so worried that it could all go away at any minute. I thought that I was working hard before, and I was, but this was a whole new level, because I thought that if it was all going to go away at anytime, then I better make as much money as I could as fast as I could so that we didn't go broke in the process.

But it was in that pressure cooker that I realized I needed to do something different with my goals. That 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.

So you know what I did?

I created a planner for myself. And I am not a graphic designer, so it was pretty basic and pretty ugly, but it was a planner that had a page, first of all, for my long term goals, and then monthly sections that included monthly goals, as well as a month at a glance page and weekly planning pages, and some other pages to that more related to blogging stuff. And then I had the whole thing printed out at staples, and I had the back and front covers laminated, and then had it coil bound, and I promise you that that one simple thing was probably the biggest game changer in my entire business, and maybe even in my entire life.

In fact, within two months of starting this, I literally tripled my revenue, and six months later, after starting to use this homemade planner, I had not only accomplished all of the big goals that I set out to do, but for the first time ever, I felt like I was working towards something that was sustainable, and that could actually last. I remember going to a conference in October of that year and sharing the progress I had made with some friends, and they were just stunned. And when they asked me what had made the difference, all I could say was that I had changed the way I was setting goals.

So what was it, exactly that made all the difference? Well, to be honest, it was making a few incredibly simple but key changes to not the goals that I set, but how I defined and measured success, and how I tracked my progress. So let's talk about those changes one at a time.

The first change was to **NARROW MY FOCUS**

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 of really vague, generic-sounding goals.

These were literally just a few of my actual new year's resolutions in 2013:

ORGANIZATIONAL:

Keep a schedule, plan ahead & be proactive. Be intentional with time and things. If it doesn't add redeeming value to our lives, let it go. Take 30 minutes each evening to prepare for the following day.

PARENTAL:

Parent for the long term, not the short term--do what is right, not what is easy. Be more intentional, more present, and more patient.

PROFESSIONAL:

WRITE! Write with passion and abandon; eliminate comparison, insecurity, the need to please others, and the feeling that it's not enough. Just be real and let the chips fall where they may.

SPOUSAL:

Be more loving, more patient, more grateful, and more empathetic. Look for the positive instead of pointing out the negative.

PERSONAL:

Break the computer habit; set time limits for screen time and stick to them.

And like I said, that was just a few...the list went on and on and on and on, but it didn't actually say much of anything. It was just a bunch of fancy-sounding platitudes, but there was nothing specific to grab onto, and there was certainly no focus.

It might as well have said blah. Blah blah blah blah blah blah blah.

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.

And so, that's what I did. I sat down and identified the five major goals I needed to accomplish by the end of the year in order take my business to the next level. For me, in 2013, those included these **5 THINGS:**

- 1.** Secure a book deal with a traditional publisher
- 2.** Write and self-publish a book of my own
- 3.** Write a 31 day series on my blog
- 4.** Speak at a conference
- 5.** Begin working with brands in a meaningful way

And guess what? 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 3 big goals for 2018 were to launch a podcast, to write an amazing book, and to lose 25 pounds. As you can probably guess, the podcast definitely happened. My Do It Scared book is written and—if I do say so myself—I think it is pretty amazing, and as I record this, I am SO close to reaching my goal weight and I feel better than I have in my entire adult life.

And you know what? If I had accomplished nothing else this year, the fact that I did just those 3 things is more than enough!

So that's the **FIRST CHANGE** to make if you want to start setting goals and resolutions that you will actually keep—narrow your focus. Don't set a whole bunch of ambiguous goals; instead, **PICK JUST A FEW SPECIFIC THINGS THAT YOU REALLY WANT TO DO.**

And that actually leads us right into the **SECOND CHANGE** you'll need to make, which is to **PICK GOALS THAT YOU ACTUALLY CARE ABOUT**, and **UNDERSTAND WHAT MOTIVATES YOU.**

And it took me a really long time to connect the dots on this, so bear with me for a minute. But the 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.

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 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. Now maybe that's just my outcast/rebel nature, but I think that no matter what your personality type, it's important to understand what motivates you, and what is important to you, and to connect that goal to what is most important to you.

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.

But pick goals that mean something to you, and that you actually care about them. They are your goals—they have to be something you actually want to accomplish, or else what's the point?

This past year, in particular, I've been so reminded of this as I've worked my butt off to lose those 25 pounds. In fact, it's something I talked about in depth in **EPISODE 11**, when I talked about my own body image and self-confidence.

Because the thing is—losing weight is hard. Maybe for some people it's not hard, but those people aren't usually the ones who need to lose weight! But it means making changes that aren't always comfortable. It means saying no to things that I really like, things like Doritos and beer and a warm crusty loaf of sourdough bread smothered in butter. Mmmmmm.....bread.....

See what I mean? It's hard! Because I love doritos and beer and bread!

Which was exactly the problem. And for years, I watched my weight keep creeping up, higher and higher, because when push came to shove, I didn't want to give up all those things that I loved.

But this year was different. And for me, the biggest reason why it was different was because for that particular goal, I got in touch with my why. I realized that I was feeling so self-conscious and insecure about the amount of weight that I had gained that it was adversely affecting my business. I was hiding, not wanting to be on video or in photographs, not wanting to do television interviews. I didn't want people to see me, which is kind of a big deal when you are the face of your business.

But as I sat with my team a year ago last November and we mapped out where we really want to go as a company, it was clear to me that I needed to not only get a handle on my weight, but get my self-confidence back so that I could feel good about putting myself out there again.

And that has been my biggest motivation this year! I don't want to let my team down! And I don't want to let my business fail because I am too afraid to buckle down and make the necessary changes.

It's that why that keeps me going back to the gym 3 days a week, even though I hate

it. It's that why that keeps me running 2 days a week, even though I hate it. It's that why that keeps me from binging on all those foods I love.

I'll actually be talking more about my weight loss journey—and specifically my journey in the last 5 months with Keto—in a couple of weeks, in **EPISODE 39**.

But in the meantime, this is the **SECOND CHANGE** you'll need to make to improve your resolutions this year—**PICK GOALS YOU CARE ABOUT**, and **UNDERSTAND WHAT MOTIVATES YOU**.

The **THIRD CHANGE** you'll want to make to **GET SPECIFIC AND DEFINE WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE FOR YOU**.

And for this, I like to use my Goal Crushing™ worksheet, because it really helps me to first of all, get clear about what it is that I am really aiming for and what I want to accomplish, but then also what steps I'll have to take to get there, what potential obstacles I need to be prepared for, and what success actually looks like—and how I'll celebrate.

The worksheet is divided into 7 sections, which correspond with the acronym **CRUSH IT**. That's **C-R-U-S-H-I-T**.

The **C** stands for **CLAIM YOUR TARGET**—that just means knowing what it is that you want to accomplish.

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 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 more of them, we also have a PDF version that you can get in our shop at livingwell.shop, and I will make sure to link to it in our show notes!

And the thing is, 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 third change you'll need to make to improve your resolutions this year.

The **FOURTH 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.

I talked a lot about this process of breaking down your big goals into an action plan that works in **EPISODE 15**, so if you haven't listened to that one yet, definitely go back and do that.

But 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

New Year's resolutions have become almost a cliché these days. We talk about them. We might even set a few, just because we feel like that is what we are supposed to do. But does anyone ever actually accomplish those resolutions?

The answer is yes, and this year, you can too.

All it takes is a few adjustments to the way you set your goals. 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. The second adjustment you'll need to make is to **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. The third change is to 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.

Okay, so don't forget that if you would like the worksheet that goes along with this podcast—that will walk you through the four guidelines we just talked about and help you set resolutions that you will actually stick to this year—you can download it, along with our show notes, at doitscared.com/episode37. Once again, that's doitscared.com/episode37.

Before we go, I just want to say, as always, that I LOVE hearing 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, either via email or just by messaging me on Instagram.

And that about does it for this episode of the Do It Scared with Ruth Soukup podcast! Thank you so much for joining me today! If you liked what you heard, you can leave a review on iTunes, or, better yet, share this episode on your Insta story and tag me to let me know! If I repost your story, we'll send you a do it scared t-shirt just for fun!

Also, be sure to subscribe, either on **ITUNES** or **STITCHER** or wherever you like to listen, to be notified of new episodes!

And speaking of upcoming episodes, be sure to join me next week as we dive even deeper into all things New Year related and chat with New York Times bestselling author Gretchin Rubin about habits and goal setting, and how to leverage your natural tendencies in order to accomplish your goals. She's got some INCREDIBLE insights, and I know it is an episode that is going to blow you away, so don't miss it!

I'll catch you then!