3 Simple Ways to Finally Crush Your Goals

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For years, I whispered this secret only to my closest friends — "I've always wanted to write a book."

Each time, they faithfully affirmed my presupposed yet unproven literary genius. And I responded with the same wide smile and naive confirmation. "Someday, I'm going to do it!"

You probably already see the problem with this. Someday never comes without intention. But the bigger problem? Rather than actually doing any regular brain-bending, butt-in-my-chair writing, I, instead, waited on some sort of fantastical muse to inspire my creative work.

While wooing said muse, I drew closer to my dream by chasing grandiose visions of month-long writing getaways. And I, of course, bought all the recommended writing books and fancy journals and popular loose-leaf teas. Because great writers love a good tea, right?

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I also organized all my closets, created lots of playlists, and discovered how much I enjoy the tricky work of crafting. Far too long, my dream of book-writing remained relegated to "someday."

Until that one day when I found myself tucked comfortably in a

hotel room with a tranquil view of the Great Smoky Mountains. The elusive muse finally appeared. There was no fairy dust. No fanfare. Rather, my inspiration came in the form of simple, sage advice leaking right out of my husband's mouth.

Most likely wondering if I would ever take action, he gently reminded me yet another year was passing. Did I, indeed, want a completed book in hand, or would I still be talking about my idea next year? He was right. Writing my book had simply been an idea, not a true ambition. I talked about it. A lot. But never assigned any real degree of importance to it.

You may have zero desire to write a book. Maybe your goal is to grow your influence or scale your business, or build better relationships or even nurture your own soul. Desire is a great starting point but in order to succeed, these desires must become intentional targets.

Because I battle ADHD, I'm no good without a plan. I impulsively jump smack in the middle of something and work out from all directions. I am doggedly determined though, so understanding my limitations, I found a way that forces me to focus.

I set attainable goals. Not easy ones, and rarely safe ones, but specific goals I know I can reach with some stretching. Then, like growing a garden, I grow those goals. After gingerly planting them, I carefully tend them. Sometimes I have to weed out the stuff that doesn't belong or no longer works, but if I want to change the landscape, I have to keep digging.

A few days after my husband's prompting, I stopped waiting for any creative sparks and simply started writing. In the process, I uncovered three principles I believe every goal-grower can use to achieve their desires.

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1. We can take on anything if we’re clear on what we want to tackle

Though positive emotions can be beneficial components in the pursuit of goals, don’t depend on them for a consistently clear picture. Sometimes they lie. For this journey, it’s clarity that will protect your determination.

Think your goals through. Take the time and uncover your full range of expectations.

What exactly do you want to do? State it clearly. Is it realistic and attainable with some stretching? What are the obstacles? How would those obstacles block you from your goal and what will you need to do to overcome that? What support will you need?

Why will accomplishing this goal matter? What is your motivation? Why do you want to do it? What impact will it have on your life? What will happen if you don’t do it? What does success look like? Failure?

A vivid understanding of your goal will help foster a calm certainty to both get you started and keep you going.

2. The gold is in the details

The logistics of goal-setting have been discussed for years. We all know the basics: Write down the goals, pick an exact date for completion and post them everywhere. But lurking fears or even distractions tend to bully these efforts, sometimes knocking us off track.

To avoid setbacks, focus more on useful, detailed specifics. Make a workable plan. Be willing to be held accountable for that plan.

Start with the end in mind and work backward. Determine what

tasks you can specifically focus on that make the most sense. Know what you need to be doing and when you should be doing it.

Use systems to stay on track. Create smaller goals on the pathway. Set clear-cut, regular benchmarks and then stop along the way and look at what you've accomplished. Celebrate those wins!

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3. Don't give up when you mess up

It's hard work to keep our minds in a growth zone when we mess up and insecurities and doubts start to fly. But the goals we eventually realize often come through both hard work and failure.

Grow through those failures. Acknowledge what happened and dissect anything that can be gleaned from it. What went well? What didn't? What needs to be done differently?

That year, I finally wrote my book. I also secured a publisher and the book released to many positive reviews. It even won an award. My mindset was a pretty important factor along the way. You have to believe you can do it. No matter what. Because any goal you set will be worthless without an unconditional commitment.

Maybe you're tired of setting goals only to abandon them. But you still long to experience the satisfaction of achieving them. There really is a different path. Like growing a garden, sometimes you have to dig down before you build up. Be clear on what you're tackling. Make a plan and commit to it. And don't give up.

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