



Episode 17: Want to Achieve Your Goal? Do this.

Welcome to In the Right Direction podcast, where we believe you get to choose what's on your plate, you can manage the overwhelm, and that change is possible. I'm your host, Deb Elbaum and I'm here to share insights and strategies to increase your happiness, one baby step at a time. Let's dive in.

Hi everyone, it's Deb. And today we're going to talk about how to stick to our goals, because we all set goals, right? Maybe you set them only once a year, or maybe you are always having ideas about what it is you'd like to accomplish next. And here's the thing about setting goals. It is really easy to set our goals. The hard part is following through. Today's podcast is especially for all of you who have a tough time following through, all of you who are really good at setting goals, and then not so good at making them happen. Today, I'm going to share how to make it much more likely that you will actually accomplish what you set out to do.

I call this topic action planning. Action planning means making a plan to move forward and to take the next step. And I'm going to teach you the three pieces that you need to have in an action plan to make it easy, doable, and one you can stick with. Because having the right type of action plan makes the whole difference between staying stuck and moving forward.

Here's my real life example. The other day I woke up and I decided that this was the day I was going to add more exercise to my life. Although I take walks most days, I've realized that recently some parts of my body are not feeling as toned as I'd like. So I decided I wanted to do a bit more of a whole body workout.

It was a good idea. And I knew it was an important idea. But I actually didn't have a plan to make it happen. And because I didn't have a plan, I didn't do anything about it that day. An idea with no action plan often stays just an idea. Our ideas need motivation. They need energy and they need direction.

I'm guessing that you also know this cycle. That you have ideas, I'm sure great ideas: maybe to start your own exercise routine or to look for a new job or to write a book and maybe you get excited. You know, it's important, but then you say, nah, it's too hard or it's too late. Or my favorite: I'm too old.

Well, I'm here to tell you that you are definitely not too old. It is not too late, and it is not too hard to start. It just takes an effective three-step action plan. So let's talk about the right type of action plan and those three key pieces.

The first piece involves what it is you are actually going to do. And the key with this piece is to break down action and to small, specific bite size baby steps. When I decided to make my new exercise action plan here were my baby steps first, I needed to decide how I would exercise. I remembered that my doctor had suggested a few months ago an app called the seven minute daily workout routine that she thought was really good. I decided that I could

handle seven minutes. And so I chose that. That was my first baby step. I downloaded the app on my phone: second baby step. Then I played the app through once to pause, to watch all of the exercises so that I would know how to do them. That was my next baby step. You see how we break our action down into really tiny baby steps and do them one at a time?

The next piece of a good action plan is to decide on your timeframe. When we try something new, whether it's trying a new mindset or new behavior, we get to try it for a certain amount of time. Maybe you want to try something for an hour or a day or a week? Treat your new action step like an experiment. You get to try it for a short time to collect some data, because we don't actually know how it's going to go. So it's really important to give yourself permission, to try something new for a short period of time to collect data and then to assess and evaluate. For me, I decided that I was going to do the seven minute app for three mornings in a row.

The last key piece of action planning is accountability. Accountability is key. We are so much more likely to do something when other people hold us accountable. That's what actually makes us do our jobs at work because we know other people are counting on us. The truth is we're not so good at following through when we only hold ourselves accountable. There are a few different ways to build accountability into an action plan. First, you can use people. You can tell someone what you're going to do and have them check in with you after, or you might even invite someone to be a buddy to do the thing with you, or you can use an object to help make it easier to do what it is you'd like to do. I did two things for accountability. So first I told my husband that I downloaded this app and I was going to start the next day and do the exercise. Then I used my sneakers for an accountability partner. I put my sneakers in the middle of my bedroom carpet, where I planned to exercise. I even tucked my socks into them so that when I woke up the next morning, it would be really easy to put on my socks and my sneakers and get going.

And here's the great news: with this action plan, baby steps, timeframe, and accountability. I did it. I did that seven minute app for the next three days in a row. And I know that the action plan deserves most of the credit for keeping me on track.

So now let's think about your life. Think about your life, and one thing that you are excited. To start or to try or to finish this week. And if it's really important to you and you're really committed to doing it, I invite you to make an action plan first. First, choose your baby steps. Get really specific and break it into tiny bite-sized pieces Two, choose a timeframe. How long are you going to try this experiment for? One day? Two days? A week? And three, build in some accountability. Find an accountability partner to help you stay on track. Then go for it. Put your plan into action. Lastly, please remember to celebrate, even a few just did at one time or took one baby step, please give yourself credit for trying.

Thanks so much for listening and being part of my community. If you found this episode helpful, I invite you to share it with a friend who always talks about what they keep meaning to do and offer to be their accountability buddy. Remember, you've got this, you can do it, and it's one baby step at a time. Until next time!