



Goal Setting in 2021

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With 2020 now behind us, finally, and the New Year here, I began to think about what goal setting should look like for 2021 (our typical New Year's resolutions).

My first reflection was, of the goals that I set for myself in 2020, prior to the pandemic, did I reach any of them? What happened to them as March, 2020 hit and turned our lives upside down? How did I have to pivot as I began to work from home and as my time of caring for others quadrupled (family, friends, neighbors and therapy clients)? This time quickly became a time of uncertainty. None of us knew what was happening as things were changing at what felt like light speed. I won't revisit all of that....we have 10 months of knowing what that was like. To be honest with you, most of my longer-term goals for the year went by the wayside as I moved to a day-to-day approach.

With the vaccine distribution now under way, there feels like a light at the end of the tunnel. It feels like hope is in the air. It feels like just the right time to refocus and get back on track to regaining our collective mojo. Like you, I think we've all learned a lot during our time in isolation, we've learned what is important. We've learned not to take our freedom for granted. We've learned to appreciate the outdoors and the power that being in nature can provide to helping us stabilize our minds. We've learned to connect more, in ways that we never thought we would (although I have to admit, I'm ready to throw Zoom away....I like in person so much better)!!!! We've learned to focus on mindfulness and to increase our self-care. Lastly, but certainly not an inclusive list, we've learned even more than before, how learning and education, yes, even on many Zoom Webinars, can add to our strength, positivity and resilience.

It's now time to put all of this into practice.....

Maybe, just maybe we've learned how to set realistic, attainable goals and not the pie in the sky ones that often end by March 1. And, maybe, just maybe we've learned how to adjust goals that we do set. A good review and revision of goals as time goes on can help us continue to stay focused on the prize....whatever that may be for you.

So, for 2021 I am setting goals in the opposite direction. I am starting the year off by continuing with my day-to-day approach, and building from there. No SMART goals for me right now. I will focus on good habits and practices as a way to keep me anchored as this year begins. The aim is to sustain and maintain. To be as impactful as possible, while still navigating a great amount of uncertainty. To make it through, and to hopefully lead myself and others towards thriving in the near future and for years to come.

Do you know where the term resolution came from? It came from the idea of loosening things up by reducing them to their smaller elements. The thing you focus on should be resolvable into parts so that no piece of it is so large as to derail you. Therefore, my day-to-days goals may be in good company.

And, by all means please do not compare yourself to what others do. Goal setting, like many other outcomes in life, ends up looking like a bell-shaped curve. Some people thrive by doing a lot, some are better off not focused on thriving, instead focusing on doing their best to get by; and, the largest segment of the population is somewhere in the middle. I have a quote posted on a bulletin board in my office that reads...."all unhappiness is caused by comparison." I believe this to be true in many circumstances.

Welcome to 2021. Let's make this a happy, healthy, realistic new year in whatever way that looks for you.