



## Don't Stop Achieving

by Hannah Thomas

### I've Got Goals

You know the saying, "New year, new you"? For me it is more like new year, same here. Sounds almost depressing, right? Well it isn't, because even though there is a lot of the same old, I have started and continue to work on some new goals, which I am sure many of you are doing as well. Good for you! Friendly reminder: goal setting is not confined to the beginning of each year. Rather, think of it like the continuous improvement cycle. . . . the opportunities are endless! Now that we have all found our motivation to reach new heights or to just stay above water, how can we be successful in achieving said goals? Clearly, I am not going to achieve perfection (it's all about the perspective) but there are several things that I know I want to do, both personally and professionally. The first step in reaching any goal is to figure out what the heck it is that you want to do! Next step, WRITE IT DOWN, memorialize it, text it to a friend, take it from your amazing brain and put it on paper, make that invisible goal visible.

### What Is Your WHY

Alrighty, you have said you want to do, accomplish, eliminate something. Tell me this: "why" did you choose that goal? Just like we teach in Change Management, stating and understanding "why" this goal is important to you, will help you get to your desired future state! Without a solid "why", we are less likely to commit to our goals. They become arbitrary, not meaningful. I am sure you can all relate to being forced to work on a goal that does not resonate with you in your personal and/or professional lives.

Example: I have set a goal to drink 141oz of water everyday of 2021. This goal is my goal, it will benefit my health, it is tied to a challenge I am participating in, it complements other goals I have for my physical health. I tried to get my husband to drink the same amount of water with me each day. He was (and remains) supportive, however, he politely declined. He recognized the importance of drinking more water, but he did not have the same driving "why" to make him want to commit to this particular goal. Without my "why(s)" I would not still be committed to this goal. People, it is challenging to drink 141oz of water each day, but my "why" continues to motivate me, even when my eyeballs are swimming.

### Don't Be Basic

When you set a generic goal you should expect to be confronted with a question of what you mean to accomplish? So, don't do that! Be SPECIFIC! Clearly stating what our goal is will help you (and others) to know when you reach it. Remember our S.M.A.R.T. goals framework? If you want to eat healthy, set a daily goal for your fruits and veggies. If you want to start running, set a goal in miles, or a number of minutes you will run each day. If you want to drink more water, set a goal in ounces. Being specific will help you figure out later if you were successful in accomplishing your goal. Basic goals are empty shells, more for show than anything else. Basic goals have no "why" and are a waste of time and as Lean practitioners you are proficient at identifying and cutting waste. So, I repeat, DON'T DO THAT!

## Victory Is Mine; or Is It?

Now that we have the specifics, how do we know if we did what we set out to do? Let's use the running example above. If I have a goal of running 25 miles a week, I can easily track that on my fitness application, in my planner, or on a piece of paper. I could also make my goal time bound by setting milestones, picking a race date, and/or committing to a training plan. If we measure our progress and make our goals time-bound, we create a clear path to success. Without this accountability how will we know if we achieved what we set out to do? If I am going to start running and I commit to a training plan, but I do not set a specific goal for mileage, how will I know if I truly reached my goal? What if I run from my office to my kitchen? Does that mean I reached my goal? You laugh, but you can also relate. Making these goals specific, measurable, and time-bound puts the guard rails on my path to success. Otherwise, we are watering down what success looks like. Goals mean work, and work should be challenging and targeted, making that moment of goal attainment even more powerful. Tracking that work will help hold you to your commitment and put you on a trajectory towards success, with the evidence to back it up.

## CELEBRATE

You reached your goal! WOO HOO! For many people, this is when they move on to the next thing, skipping a very important step: the celebration. When we talk about celebration, it is about recognizing the work and perseverance that you put in to get to this point. You challenged yourself and likely had to make sacrifices to reach your goal. You could celebrate by taking a personal moment and reflecting on the process, you could reach out to the people in your life that supported you during your journey and enjoy the moment with them, purchase that item you promised yourself when you set your goal or, my favorite, you can always have cake! Regardless of your celebration preferences, do not skip this piece of the equation. Celebrating the achievement of a goal brings closure and reinforces the accomplishment. You did it!