



Mindset Matters

When you set healthy goals, they need to be relevant; this means asking yourself why you want to lose weight now. Your answers may include to improve your health or to prevent health problems. Maybe your weight is interfering in your quality of life and you are unable to participate in activities you want to because your weight makes it difficult. You may no longer enjoy, or be able to travel, participate in sports, play with your kids, or go to amusement parks. Perhaps you want to lose weight to fit into a particular outfit. Keep in mind that short term, external weight loss goals are less likely to lead to sustained weight loss. They can, however, be good goals to reach along the road to a healthy lifestyle.

Like writing out your commitment statements, it is wise to write your long-term goals as part of your commitment and review them often. The mind moves in the direction of its most dominant thought. Make your dominant thought, your long-term goal, and your commitment: I CHOOSE LIFELONG HEALTH. Repeat it often and your behavior will reflect it.

Goals need to be specific. This is where a long-term goal and smaller, short-term goals can be useful. Think about it in another area of life. If I state my goal as: “I’m going to save some money,” that doesn’t say much, and I’m not likely to do anything toward meeting that non-specific goal. A specific, long-term goal might be: “In the next year, I will save \$2600 in my vacation fund.” The short-term goal then becomes, “I will save \$50 a week out of my paycheck.” In order to have accountability, I say, “I will have the money automatically withdrawn from my check and put into a specific account.”

Regarding weight loss, the long-term goal or mantra is “I choose lifelong health.” Broken into smaller, specific goals:

- “I will lose 50 pounds in order to be at a healthy BMI.”
- “I will lose an average of 2 pounds a week for 6 months.”
- “I will meet once a month with my dietician to review my food logs.”
- “I will meet two times weekly with my trainer to work out at the gym for 40 minutes.”
- “I will walk outdoors for 40 minutes an additional two times each week.”

Goals need to be measurable because measurable goals are a way for us to be accountable. “I will save money” is not measurable. “I will save \$2600 a year for my vacation fund at the rate of \$50 a week” is measurable. “I will lose weight” is not measurable. “I will lose 50 pounds in 6 months at an average rate of 2 pounds a week” is measurable. “I will exercise” is not



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measurable. “I will work out for 40 minutes twice a week at the gym with my trainer and will walk for 40 minutes an additional two times a week” is measurable.

Healthy goals are attainable. This is a problem area for more than a few people.

We often tend to want more and better results in an unrealistic period of time than is realistic or possible. Make sure when you set goals that you discuss them with others. It may be a mentor or friend. Perhaps a professional would be most helpful. You want to set yourself up to win. Having attainable, realistic goals will help you do that. When we set incremental goals and meet them, it boosts our self-efficacy, or our belief that we can do something. This makes it more probable that we will continue to work toward and meet our goals.

Having timely goals, or those with a time frame is important. Having a time frame within which to work is important when it comes to setting goals. You don’t want “Someday” goals.

“Someday I’ll save money.” “Someday I’ll write a book.” “Someday I’ll lose weight.” Your specific, measurable goals are best with realistic timeframes:

- “I will lose 50 pounds in 6 months in order to be at a healthy BMI.”
- “I will lose an average of 2 pounds a week for 6 months.”
- “I will meet once a month with my dietician to review my food logs.”
- “I will meet two times weekly with my trainer to work out at the gym for 40 minutes.”
- “I will walk outdoors for 40 minutes an additional two times each week.”



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