



Think Big, Start Small! – Take Your First Step Towards Achieving Your Goals Today

2009 is a new year, a new beginning! As you enter 2009, what changes do you want to make this year? What are your priorities? Do you want to eat healthier, lose weight, manage your time more efficiently, decrease your stress level, increase your productivity, secure a new job/change careers, become a better person/friend/parent, develop healthier relationships or create a healthy balance between your personal and professional life?

If you answered yes to any of these questions or have another goal in mind, your next step is to actually make the change. This is where people get stuck. Often, people desire a change but the thought of it is overwhelming. They don't know where to start. They don't know if they have the time or energy to tackle the change. They have many tasks/projects on their plate competing for their attention. They tell themselves that they will get to it later. However, they never seem to get back to it. Does this sound like you?

When a change seems too big or overwhelming, try the following steps:

1. Identify the change (goal) you want to create.
2. Develop a list breaking your goal down into small, manageable, action steps (objectives). You can list as many action steps as you need to successfully complete your goal. For each action step, make sure that it is:
 - a. Clear/well-defined – when you read it, does it make sense? Do you know exactly what you need to do to complete that action step?
 - b. Realistic – is the step actually achievable? Do you have the time, energy, and resources to complete the action step?
 - c. Measurable – how will you know when the action step has been completed? How will you measure its success?
 - d. Time limited – set a date for completion of each action step. Make sure you monitor your deadlines to ensure you achieve them.

For example, you may want to lose 25 pounds. You decide to begin work on your goal January 1st. Your first step might be to call three weight loss centers in your community and obtain membership fee quotes by January 31st. This is a clear objective (you know exactly what you need to do), it is realistic (you have approximately four weeks to make the three phone calls and obtain quotes), it is measurable (you can measure whether or not your calls were made and

quotes obtained by January 31st; you either made these calls and obtained quotes or you didn't), and it is time-limited (you set a January 31st deadline to complete this step).

After you complete one action step, proceed to the next one and so forth until all of your action steps have been completed. Remember to allow yourself sufficient time to complete each step, but don't forget to assign a deadline to each step.

3. On a regular basis (e.g., weekly), review your list and action steps to ensure you are completing each step according to its assigned deadline. There may be times when completing an action step is not possible due to extenuating circumstances (e.g., family emergencies, illnesses, child care, last minute work/school assignments). However, make sure that you go back to that step and establish another deadline that is still realistic. Changing one deadline may affect your other action steps, so review them as well for possible modification.

4. Once you've achieved your goal, celebrate your hard work and success. You've created the change you desired.

The exercise mentioned above is a great way to pace yourself, decrease your anxiety, and facilitate the change you truly desire.

Make 2009 your best year ever!

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If you want to make positive changes in your professional life, and create the job or career you desire and deserve, then working with Executive & Life Coach, Sharon L. Mikrut, is the solution. Although her specialty is in partnering with nonprofit executive directors and managers to maximize their resources in a competitive environment, she is passionate about working with all individuals committed to personal and/or professional growth. Visit her website at <http://www.createitcoaching.org> or Nonprofit Professionals blog at <http://www.createitcoaching.com>, and sign up for her free monthly newsletter that provides information and resources designed to help you manage your nonprofit organization in a more effective and efficient manner. You can also visit her Empowerment blog at <http://www.createitcoaching.net>, and sign up for her free monthly life coaching newsletter.