

sort **your** life out

# new year, new goals, new you

“If you don’t know where you are going, you might wind up someplace else.” **Yogi Berra**

**Imagine stepping** out of your front door and not having a clue of where you wanted to go: not knowing which way to turn or you would probably wander around aimlessly. Although this seems a crazy thing to do, many of us amble through life in this way without any kind of direction or purpose. You can let life take care of itself and you may well be OK; but many more of us would like a greater guarantee that life will not only be OK – but that life will be great! As we prepare for another year ahead and consider the resolutions we wish to make and outcomes we anticipate to attain, perhaps we should contemplate the goals we hope to achieve

**“Begin with the end in mind.”**

*Stephen Covey*

When we truly focus on something, we are much more likely to achieve – whether it’s gaining a job, buying a house, acquiring a qualification or having a harmonious relationship. By sending a message of desire to our brain, we start to make pictures of what we want and in turn we begin to action in order to make it happen. Similar to a builder having an idea of what a project will look like when it’s complete or a hairdresser knowing what style they want to create before they start cutting, we can all design the future we want – and then set out to obtain it.

A study by Yale University on goal setting was carried out in the 1950’s. The researchers surveyed those who graduated in 1953 to determine how many of them had specific, written goals for their future, only 3% of them had. Twenty years later, the researchers surveyed the surviving members of the original group and found that the 3% who’d set goals had accumulated more personal financial wealth than the other 97% of the class combined! Whilst goal setting and happiness are not all about money, this anecdote shows how powerful we can be when we set our mind to something.

However many of us do not focus on positive outcomes, we prefer to obsess about what we don’t want, or centre on what is missing in their life. For such people, it’s easy to forget what’s great, what’s working in their lives and what resources they have to create even more happiness and success. Because we tend to get what we focus on, when we focus on what’s not working or spend time wondering why bad things always seem to happen, then we merely get more of what we don’t want. What’s the point of that?

It’s also important to remember that few of us have a 100% hit rate so there may be times when you set a goal and make a mistake or find that your goal doesn’t work. This is not the end of the world! At this point you have a choice:

you can get all flustered, beat yourself up and go back to wandering about without direction – or you can learn from the experience and move on.

The final point to consider when setting your goals is to clarify why you want this outcome. If your goals are about things that you need in your life and will benefit you and others, you’ll feel happy when you achieve. But if you set goals just because you think you should, or to please other people, you may not feel that special even when you do achieve what you set out to do. It’s important to ask yourself ‘What’s in it for me?’ and ‘What will happen if I don’t manage to do this?’

**“Without goals, and plans to reach them, you are like a ship that has set sail with no destination.”**

*Fitzhugh Dodson*

To help you with your new years resolutions and your goal setting for the year ahead, follow our Sort Your Life Out guide to goal setting.

## **1 Enjoy the journey**

If you achieve a goal without feeling fulfilled, you may as well not have bothered. There is nothing worse than getting where you thought you wanted to be and thinking ‘Is this it?’ If you enjoy the process of reaching your goal it doesn’t



matter how you feel at the end because you'll have enjoyed the journey.

## 2 Bite-sized chunks

It can feel overwhelming to set a goal so break your goal down into bite-sized chunks. Each step will feel manageable and you'll easily be able to track how you're doing. You will be amazed how lots of small actions soon add up:

## 3 Have a Wish List

I remember about ten years ago I was at a workshop and we were asked to write down all the goals we wanted to achieve.

### I wrote down:

- I want to write several books
- I want to live in quiet and peaceful place
- I want to appear on TV inspiring and motivating people

Now the strange thing is that I didn't really think about this list very often until a few years ago when I was having a clear out: I found the book that I had written this list in and, to my amazement, nearly everything I had written down as a goal had come true.

This works for any kind of goal, no matter how small it may seem. So I suggest you get a piece of paper and write 'The sky is the limit' at the top of it: then take five minutes to write down a list of all the goals you want to achieve and then put it away somewhere safe. You can look at it every now and again but, as you can see from my story, you'll probably forget about it after a while: but it doesn't matter. Your focus will be set on those goals and, before you know it, they will become reality.

**By recording your dreams and goals on paper, you set in motion the process of becoming the person you most want to be."**

*Mark Victor Hansen*

## 4 One small action

Some people feel intimidated by their own desires and, if they've experienced failure in the past, they might even feel anxious that they can't achieve them. If you're one of those people who feels worried or scared about your goal, just take a small step towards it. Do one thing – no matter what it is – that gets you that little bit nearer to what you want. By taking even the smallest action you will build momentum and confidence in yourself and before you know it you'll be on a roll.

## 5 Failure is OK

It can be frustrating for some people when they come across an obstacle or a setback. For many people, when the going gets tough, they give up and feel like a failure. When we do this, we develop a huge fear and dislike for failing and so we often go to



**"Your ability to achieve is immeasurable – and it can be easier than you think to get what you want"**

great lengths to avoiding getting something wrong. But we would never have learned to walk, without failing and falling over! Because of our burning desire to move around and play, it did not matter how many times we fell down or how many times we felt like giving up, we just kept going.

## 6 Practise persistence

Walking was our first big experiment in learning to do something new and we had to practise it over and over again before it felt natural: we needed to learn how to get it wrong, to know how to do it right. When you're striving for your goals, if you treat it like an experiment, it will help you deal with setbacks – because experiments are all about trial and error. If something you do works, that's great; but if something doesn't work or you hit a stumbling block, then see what you've learned from the experience, move on and try something else.

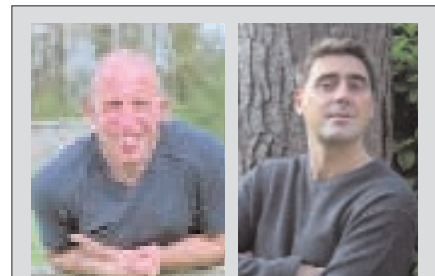
## 7 Let go

It's very easy when you set a goal to become completely consumed by it. You can think about it every minute of every day and be so obsessed that you get to the point when you don't think you could live without it! But if you do this you risk losing sight of all the other things in your life: so the best thing to do, once you've set the wheels in motion, is to have high intention and low attachment. This means working hard to get somewhere but not having such tunnel vision that you believe

your whole future depends on it. Set your goal and then focus on the day-to-day tasks rather than the overall aim and trust that your goal will take care of itself.

Whatever goals you set, you have to demand more of yourself to push your performance: and you have to realise that we are all more capable than we think we are. Your ability to achieve is immeasurable – and it can be easier than you think to get what you want. **UF**

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Pete Cohen and Carl Benton are both health and fitness professionals and Life Coaches. Pete is also a motivational speaker and author of numerous best-selling books. For more information visit [www.petecohen.com](http://www.petecohen.com) or email Pete at [info@petecohen.com](mailto:info@petecohen.com) or Carl at [balance-cb@fsmail.net](mailto:balance-cb@fsmail.net)