

# From Ideas to Actions

## Instructions

## Plan for Success Exercise

This exercise is for creating a plan to achieve one overall goal. Rather like the saying 'How do you eat an elephant? Answer: bite by bite' this works on the premise that breaking the goal down into manageable chunks makes it seem more achievable and less intimidating.

The end goal can be treated as a distant goal seen in your peripheral vision with your focused attention being placed on the first milestone goal that is achievable in the short term making it more motivating. Also, the fewer tasks you focus on, the more likely you are to succeed with them, making success with the end goal more likely too.

Having defined the goal clearly complete the following steps:

**Step 1:** Break down the journey, from where you are now to the end goal, into milestone goals. As for all goals, these must be:

- SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely)
- Personal (within your control)
- Stated positively
- Challenging

**Tip:** As well as looking forward to your end goal to define the key stages, here is another useful technique to provide a different perspective and add creativity:

- In your mind, go to the point in the future where you have achieved your goal and connect with that moment:
  - What is happening?
  - Where are you?
  - Who is with you?
  - What are you seeing, hearing, feeling etc?
- Now look back to the present moment from the future:
  - What are the key stages that you have been through?
  - What have you done?
  - Who has been involved?
  - What resources have you used?

**Step 2:** Within these milestone goals, there are two types:

- Target goals - where you work towards achieving specific gains that you don't have now
- Maintenance goals - where the gain has already been achieved but now needs to be maintained on an ongoing basis

**Step 3:** Define how you will measure and monitor progress with each of the goals

**Step 4:** Prioritise the goals on a timeline:

- Which goals need to be completed first?
- Which goals are dependent on others?
- Which goals are most motivating?

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**Step 5:** Reviewing your own time and resource capacity, taking into account the ongoing maintenance goals that need to be worked on, choose which goal you are going to work on first.

**Step 6:** For this first milestone goal, brainstorm all the options that you *could* (not necessarily would) undertake to achieve the goal:

- Which options have others used successfully?
- What would someone you respect advise you to do?
- If there were no constraints ie money, time, resources etc what would you do?
- If you couldn't fail what would you do?

At this point it is important to include everything that is possible regardless of any perceived barriers as inspiration often comes from thinking and doing things differently to your usual way. Also, it is possible to devise plans to overcome any real or perceived obstacles, so ideas should not be discounted on that basis.

**Step 7:** From this list of options select the actions that you are going to commit to take. For each action:

- Define when you are going to do it
- Provide a deadline for completion
- Identify any resources or support that you will need
- Plan a regular time when you will review progress

**Step 8:** Take action

**Step 9:** In order to maintain commitment, focus and progress, it is important to plan and prepare for the following:

- Find someone to share the journey with you – this will provide valuable motivation and enable you to review progress objectively and creatively
- Commitment to someone & have accountability appointments with them
- Celebrate progress – this provides valuable motivation
- Avoid “complacency of success” by setting next goal quickly
- Frame setbacks as feedback providing opportunities to improve the plan. “There is no failure only feedback.”

**Step 10:** Continue the above process for all the milestone goals and on an ongoing basis:

- Review the progress against the plan:
  - If target goals have been met move these to maintenance goals if applicable
  - Are the milestone goals still appropriate?
  - How does the plan need to be flexed?
  - Be aware of your emotions and behaviours and their impact on your success

Don't manipulate the results – be honest