



SETTING GOALS & MAKING CHANGES

ONE STEP AT A TIME

KATHERINE S. BUSH, LCSW

HCWP SOCIAL WORKER

What Makes a Good Goal?

- It's concrete- you will know exactly when you have done it
- It's personal- not just something that someone else tells you to do
- It will improve your life
- It doesn't have to be earth shattering or sound like it's really far away... some of the best goals are short-term goals that encourage us to set long-term goals
- Examples: I want to be able to walk to the bus stop; I want to drink water with my meals; I want to be able to play on the floor with my child (or grandchild!) for a few minutes.
- What is your goal? If it sounds too big to be real, how can you break it down?

Reaching Your Goals Starts with Taking Small Steps and Building New Habits

Small Steps: break your goal down into a series of steps. If you want, break your steps into steps. Let yourself start at the beginning, and don't try to jump to the end.

“Rome wasn't built in a day”- was anything lasting built in a day? Probably not!

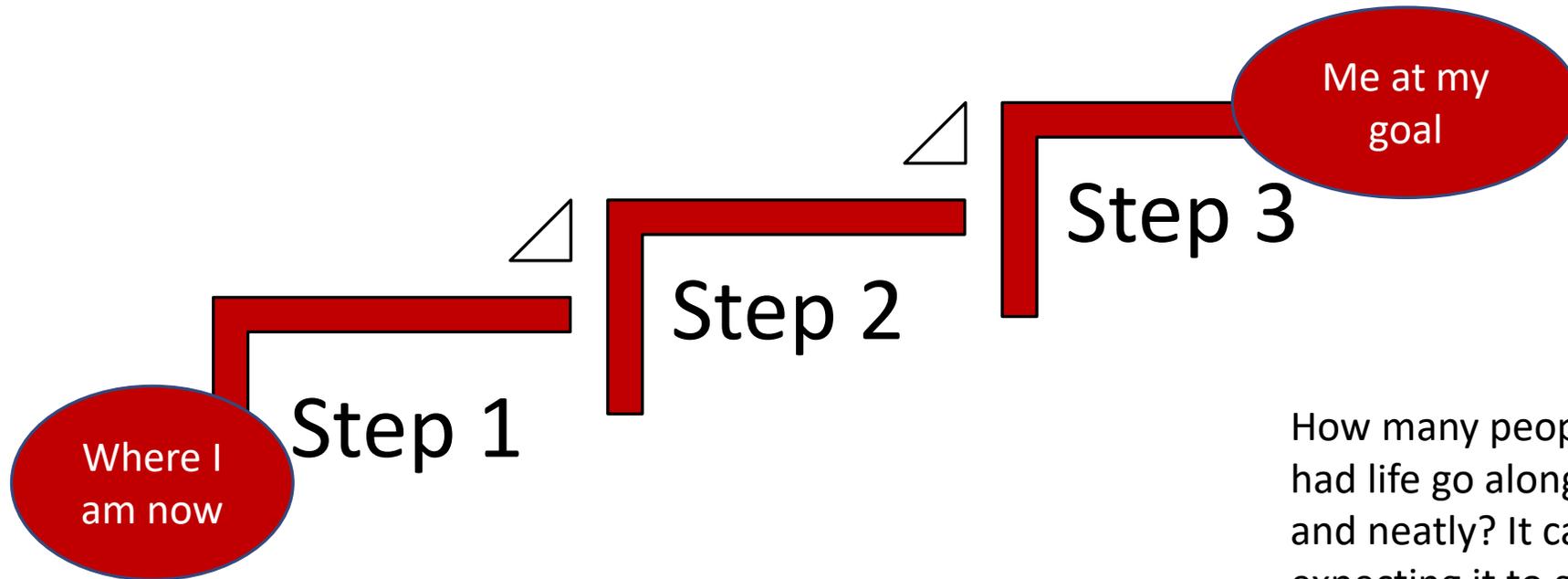
Celebrate! Find ways to mark achieving your small steps, not just the big one. Sometimes the hardest steps are the first ones.

New Habits: a habit takes about 3 weeks to develop, so help yourself out- set reminders, alarms, use notes, use your journal, give yourself a reward system, ask someone to help you remember....

Start with simple habits that don't require major life changes, then build from there. Want to drink water with meals but don't like it? Start with just a few sips to finish along with your regular beverage.

The best habits & changes are sustainable

Goal Setting Steps (In an Ideal World)



How many people have really had life go along this smoothly and neatly? It can happen, but expecting it to go this way is sabotage!

Goal Setting Path – A More Realistic (and Sympathetic!) Model

- Think of steps to change as literal steps with your feet- not a staircase. Our path is often winding- because we are human, and life is unpredictable.
- Expect that you will have detours, but you can keep stepping toward your goal anyway, and maybe even pick up some new insight along the way.



Be Kind to Yourself!

- If you are watching this, you are most likely human. Humans aren't perfect. We all stray off the path- including you and me.
- Straying off your goal path doesn't mean it's all over- it means you took a detour. The path may be a little longer now, but it can still lead to the same destination. Just regroup, visualize that goal, and review your steps and strategies.
- It's ok to evaluate why you had a detour, but don't get stuck in it- maybe your steps are too high to climb easily and you need to make them a bit smaller, or maybe life threw you a curveball and you need a curveball action plan for the next time. No matter what, you can choose to move forward from where you are.
- I'll say it again- be kind to yourself!! Keep yourself accountable, but don't be your own worst critic.

So, What's the Bottom Line?

- Will taking on making healthy and lasting changes be hard? Yes, and it will take time.
- But can I do hard things? Also yes. I'm sure you already have at some point in your life.
- Will it be worth it? Again, yes. Visualize you making your goal- I bet you feel good. There is a reason you want this goal in the first place.
- What if I mess up? Welcome to the human condition! We all stray, and then we have the chance to come back again. Missteps are not the end of progress.
- What if it sounds overwhelming? Sometimes it might be, a bit. But use your resources- review your steps and if they seem manageable for you, use your supports (including the chapter and the center), and remember that some days things are harder and some days they are easier

Resources

- We will be sending you a journal that you can spend some time with. Many people find them helpful.
- Habit tracking phone apps are plentiful. Habit Tracker is great for iPhone, and for Android try out Grow. Habitica is a great option for either.
- You can also get a habit tracking calendar or just start marking off your own calendar
- Like some additional reading? Check out these: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/18/well/mind/how-to-build-healthy-habits.html> <https://www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat/7-ways-to-jumpstart-healthy-change-in-your-life>

At the end of the day, all people are works in progress. We are all working toward our goals, and even if we are the only one working on our specific goal, we are still working together.

Taking part in this program is a phenomenal step toward change- and we are so proud of you!