

Creating a Wellness Vision

Discover how to set a vision and meaningful goals that align with it for the new year.

Are you as excited about your fitness program today as you were when you began working in the industry? Are you satisfied with the state of your health? Do you have dreams for your business that you want to put into action? The turn of the year is the perfect time to get enthused about your goals for 2007. If your schedule and life have caused you to put ambitions on hold, now is the time to take them out. Hesitate and you'll stagnate!

Many people set New Year's goals, but often people don't tie their goals to a personal vision. Following a reflective process for creating a wellness vision for the year and then planning goals that support this vision will measurably increase your likelihood of achieving specific dreams.

Setting a Vision

Why create a big-picture vision for the year? Goals rarely fail because of a lack of commitment or enthusiasm. They die for lack of a compelling vision with a plan designed to achieve it. With a vision, you imagine an outcome that you then make come to life through the goals you set. A goal that is not tied to some kind of vision will often just "float out there" with a vague sense of importance.

Why, as a wellness coach and a fitness professional, do I believe in having a vision? When I struggle to follow through with an action tied to a goal I want to achieve—such as running a marathon—I can look out into my year and see myself being someone who achieved that goal. If my vision is, "I am someone who is healthy and strong and who pursues physical challenges," running a marathon fits into that image.

Here are some examples of visions:

- A year from now, I will be more fit and more well-rounded in my exer-

cise program.

- A year from now, I will have spent quality time being active with my family.
- A year from now, I will be a trainer who has a variety of revenue streams.

Note that you may have the same vision year after year, but the *goals* you set to achieve the vision may vary, depending on your age, season of life, family commitments, job, health, fitness level and other priorities.

Before creating a vision and goals, brainstorm what you really need and want. Be self-reflective, strategic, open to brainstorming and solicitous of support and input from others. Take your time. Consider several visions, set them aside and then come back later to reflect on what feels most meaningful.

Creating Effective Goals

Follow these steps to create a goal that works with your vision. Repeat the steps for each of your goals.

1. Define your goal. Use all your senses to describe what it will look like completed or accomplished.
2. Connect the goal to specific, personally meaningful motives that are primarily intrinsic in nature. Decide what would be personally meaningful to you about accomplishing the goal this year. Your motives will fuel your energy for action.
3. Identify your obstacles to success. You will likely have goals in many areas of your life. Stop. Consider each of them and cross-reference how they are going to impact each other. Do you realistically have time to achieve them all? Which are the most meaningful? When would you get them done, given your job, family and other commitments?
4. Boldly claim and own your strengths and the resources you have at your

disposal to minimize or eliminate your obstacles and resistance.

5. Enlist the support of others—ask for specific help.
6. Expect to take risks and make mistakes. Both courage and humility are essential to success.
7. Artfully balance between structure and flexibility as circumstances change and you become clearer, more focused or better informed.
8. Regularly re-evaluate the goal. Continue what is working. Throw out or adjust whatever is not working or is ineffective.
9. Build in ways to celebrate small successes and accomplishments. Most of life is lived on the journey, not at the destination.
10. Renew your goal as you grow and change through each of the seasons of your life and business.

For help in defining workable goals, see the following three examples.

Goal Example #1: A Triathlon

Kim, a group fitness instructor, set the following vision for 2007:

"I am a healthy, vibrant, fit and active woman who continues to challenge herself."

Goal. I will participate in my first triathlon.

Motivators. I want a new challenge. I haven't tried something different in a long time, my program is boring, and I don't want to run as much as I have been doing.

Obstacles. I have never been a swimmer before, and my only cycling experience has been indoors on the stationary bikes in cycle classes.

Strengths/Resources. I have discipline and know how to train, having completed nine marathons. I have friends who will help me get started.

Support. Club members, friends and peers. We have a triathlon club where I teach.

Potential Risks/Mistakes. What's the worst that could happen? I drown? No, this would be a calculated risk.

Structure and Flexibility. I can tap into a wealth of information on how to train beforehand, and I can choose from a number of events this spring and summer. I'm not locked into one.

Re-Evaluation. I will do one triathlon and see how I feel about it.

Celebration. I will go to Chicago to see my best friend when I complete my first triathlon.

Renewal. I will decide if or how I will renew after I've experienced the triathlon.

Goal Example #2:

Health Checkups

Mark, a personal trainer, set the following vision for 2007:

"I will role-model proactive health care by knowing my health markers and maintaining regular doctor visits."

Goal. I will get all of my benchmark vitals this year, including a blood workup, dental appointments, a prostate check, etc.

Motivator. I haven't had a checkup in 4 years. I hear stories every day about people who avoid doctors or don't make time to go and discover things that they could have been proactive about if they had known of them earlier. I want to be a role model for my family and clients.

Obstacles. Time; not sure who I should go to.

Strengths/Resources. I will make the checkups a priority and not wait for an emergency. I can ask clients and club members for references.

Support. See above.

Celebration. After I've seen a doctor, I will experience peace of mind, which is a reward in itself.

Renewal. I will find out what the doctors suggest as good intervals for me to make checkup appointments.

Goal Example #3: Coaching Training

Rachel, a personal trainer and a group fitness instructor, set the following vision for 2007:

"I will add wellness coaching to my business as an additional revenue stream and a reinvigorating way to work with clients."

generating your vision and goals for 2007

After brainstorming your vision, complete the following information for each goal you'd like to achieve, to figure out which goals make sense for you.

Vision. To define your vision for 2007, complete the following statement: A year from now, I would love to say the following is true of my fitness level, health or business.

Goal. _____

Motivators. _____

Obstacles. _____

Strengths/Resources. _____

Support. _____

Potential Risks/Mistakes. _____

Structure and Flexibility. _____

Re-Evaluation. _____

Celebration. _____

Renewal. _____

Goal. I will complete wellness coach training during 2007 so I can begin offering coaching services for clients in 2008.

Motivators. I want to have less face time with clients. I want to work from home more often. I need to continue making money. I am bored and believe that challenging my thinking and learning in an active community will light a fire in me. I believe I can have a deeper impact with my clients but am uncertain of how to do that. I believe I would learn that in coaching training.

Obstacles. I don't know who does coaching training. I don't know how much it costs. (Can I afford it?) Will I be good at it? How will I get clients?

Strengths/Resources. I have successfully engaged people in exercise classes for years. I love to learn. I am willing to ask for help and say I don't know. I can do research online and by asking peers. Once I have information, I make decisions that I stick with.

Support. I can call two friends who have done coaching training and ask them for some of the information I need. My husband is good in business; he can help me strategize a plan.

Potential Risks/Mistakes. I don't know what these will be yet. However, I know that I can take calculated risks and have been successful in the past.

Structure and Flexibility. I'll ask for some help in figuring this one out. If I have a plan in hand, the structure will help. My instincts and stomach (I have irritable bowel syndrome) will let me know when I need to lighten up or get more flexible.

Re-Evaluation. I will review my plan once a month.

Celebration. As I complete each class I have to take, I will tell all my clients so they can help me celebrate. When I am done with a program, I will give myself a spa day at my favorite salon.

Renewal. I will take myself through this goal-setting process again a year from now.

Which are the most important for you to do? Which will you intentionally choose, and which will you let go of this year? Sometimes you need to make tough choices. Life is complex. You may not be able to achieve all the goals that you want. However, by intentionally selecting the most important ones—ones that align with your vision—and then going after them, you have a better chance of following through and accomplishing these goals. And that's a powerful feeling.

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Determining High-Priority Goals

Give yourself the gift of taking time to set goals that work with your life. Devise goals at the beginning of January 2007 and then take the whole month to reflect and see which ones are really workable.