

Forward Planning

My Positive Change guide to planning

Check your motivation

Before you start trying to plan something, ask yourself 'What motivates me to do this?' Read our free downloadable guide on motivation for more information on this. When you have established the reasons for doing something are right it will help you commit to the task and there is a much greater chance you will succeed.

Look at the final goal first

It helps to get a good idea of where you are going to. This enables you to break the task down into much more manageable chunks, making the overall goal become a series of smaller achievable goals.

Look at the wider picture

It is very important to get a feel for where the goal you have set yourself fits in the wider context. Ask your, 'Doing this will mean what to those around me?' Use this information to recheck your motivation and if necessary tweak the final outcome of your goal.

Imagine a time line

A time line is just a representation of what happens when and why. It is best to work the problem backwards. This is the core principle of good time management. Start by imagine the finished goal. Put yourself into the situation and really feel like what it would be like. Then ask yourself the question, 'What would I just have completed to achieve this stage?' and 'What needs to have been done to overall to achieve this stage?' Then imagine yourself further back down the time line to just before that task, put yourself into that place and repeat the questions. Keep moving to before each small task repeating the questions until you get to point that is in the here and now.

An example of this process may be

5 years from now, Run a marathon

4 years from now, Run a half marathon

3 years from now, be able to run 10 miles in a certain time

2 years from, be able to 5 miles in a certain time

1 year from, have training regime running smoothly to build to the marathon

6 months from now, be doing a variety of training following the advice of a trainer

2 months from, increase your gym time to twice a week.

1 month from now, join a gym and seek help from a trainer

Next week, look into what gyms are around and find one I like.

This week, buy gym clothes.

All of sudden the idea of running a marathon doesn't seem quite so impossible, and at the end of the day all you need to be worrying about in the short term is where you

train and what you will wear. But by keeping your eyes on the final goal you can structure your time appropriately.

Review your time line at every stage of your journey.

You may notice that the nature of the tasks becomes more precise as you get nearer to today on your time line, with future activities being a lot more woolly. This helps define what you need to do now without having to worry about the actual final process. In order to keep it real for you it is necessary to keep reviewing the process after completing each stage. This means that you get a new set of precise tasks to complete soon to enable you to get to the more woolly tasks later on.

This is only one method of forward planning that works for a lot of people. At My Positive Change we can help you with loads of different methods tailored to specific needs.

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