

Goal Setting

The idea of setting goals may be positive for some women while others prefer not to discuss the topic, or perhaps they just don't understand what goals are. Still for others, they may have tried setting goals and fell short, or haven't tried because they already feel like a failure and are afraid to set themselves up for just one more thing to confirm this diminished self image. But I am here to tell you that goal setting is important, it's how you look at it (keep it simple) and manage it (realistically and consistently) that makes the difference between achieving them or giving up on them.

Many people, including myself, have set New Year's resolution goals that are never looked at again, much less achieved. Then at some point in time we happen to come across them, and realize that we haven't focused on them at all or taken steps to make them become a reality. I wish I could say I was one of those woman that knew from the get go what I wanted in my life with career and family, set goals to get there and stayed focused until I achieved them, but I am not. I'm definitely more that way today but initially that was not the case. I went through the majority of my 20's raising a family and not focusing on a career and not really even knowing what I wanted to do for a career. It was important to me at that time in my life to stay home with my kids and work only part time until they were in elementary school. I don't regret that at all and I'm glad I had the opportunity to have done that, although financially and emotionally it was very challenging at times.

I have come to believe that having goals is important in one's life. It gives us perspective on where we are today in both our personal and professional lives and where we want to be in the future. I think too many times we start by setting lofty goals and expecting ourselves to accomplish them sooner than what may be a realistic time frame. Then if we fall short, we get discouraged or down on ourselves for not

completing them. As women in the workforce today, we have so much on our plates that it can be overwhelming at times to juggle our responsibilities between home, work and community. For that reason, I now set goals that are realistic. Even though I know I may not accomplish all of them in the timeframe I assign to each, I at least do something, however small the step may be, to work toward that goal.

As an example, one of my goals was to write a book and design a website for women wanting to climb the career ladder. The content would focus on the challenges and accomplishments from a woman's perspective, starting with my own. I wanted to do this because I thoroughly enjoy inspiring and helping others to use their talents and abilities. In turn, they can help and inspire others while improving their own self worth and confidence. I wanted the website and book to provide an avenue for women to learn about managing people, building a network of relationships, overcoming challenges and becoming a stronger person for it. I wanted it to be a place that encourages women from all walks of life to reach for their goals even if it seems impossible at the time, because I believe nothing is impossible if you work toward it and stay focused.

That doesn't mean your focus has to be on a goal 24/7 as we all have other things we must balance our lives with. What it means is to stay committed to your goal and work on it even if you only have a few hours now and then. When I set the goal to design a website and write a book, the first thing I did was to start writing down topics and experiences that I thought would be of interest to other women. Then I started talking to people in my network about setting up a website and getting their thoughts on the subject and eventually the website was up and running. It didn't happen over night; it took commitment on my part and dedicating time on the weekends and early morning hours to write material and design the website. I have not completed the book, but it remains a goal of mine and one that I continue to spend time on. The website is up and running but always a work in progress as more material is added for the readers.

I'm a true believer that regardless of what your goal is, it's important to do something weekly if possible, toward its accomplishment no matter what it may be. It can be as simple as doing some research on the internet on the subject or talking to someone in your network or simply planning out the steps to get you there. The important thing is putting the goal in motion which gets the universe coming together to help you see your goals to fruition.

So if you haven't set any goals yet, start with one or two and write them down and then begin doing something to get them in motion. Remember, it's how you look at goal setting (keep it simple) and how you manage it (realistically and consistently) that makes the difference between achieving them or giving up on them.