

Your guide to:

# Setting Goals

and

# Achieving Them

A step-by-step process that walks you through setting big goals for the year and getting them down on your weekly to-do list.

brooke's **2**cents

## What is this?? | Introduction

At the start of January, I wrote about the importance of taking a look back at the previous year to help plan for the current year. Now that you've reflected on how the year went (AND I'M SURE YOU ALL TOOK THE TIME TO DO IT!!!), it's time to tackle the challenge of setting goals for this year.

*Awww, do I have to?????*

No, you certainly don't have to set goals for the year. But it sure does help. It helps you prioritize the things you want to focus on this year (and say no to the things you don't), and it increases the odds that you'll get it done.

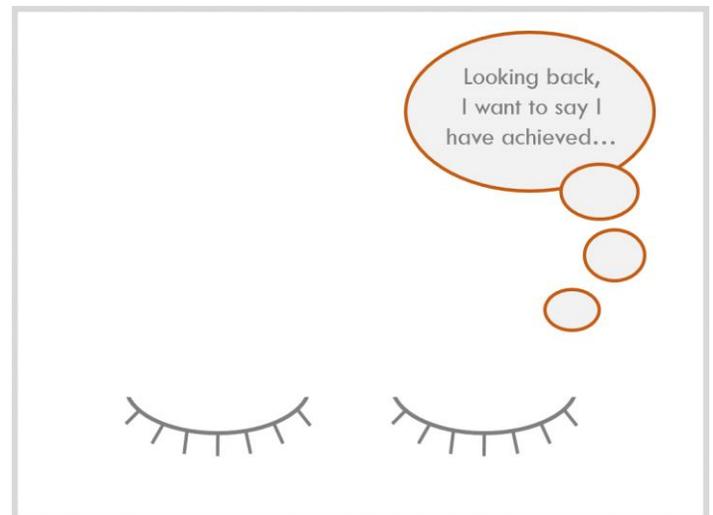
I follow a goal setting process that starts with big annual goals and then breaks them down into more sizeable tasks that can be achieved in my weekly to-do list. This is the process I'll walk through here.



## The Futuuuuuuurrrre | Setting your Big Annual Goals

This can feel so daunting, I know. You wonder how in the world can you know what's going to happen in 12 months' time, let alone next week?! But there is an easier and more effective way of setting your annual goals.

- Close your eyes. Take a deep breath.
- Imagine you are one year from today; it's the start of 2018. You're sitting down to do your "looking back" exercise.
- What do you want to say you've achieved in the past year? What do you imagine you're writing down as milestone moments from the year?



Use the same categories from your looking back activity this year: work, health, finances, relationships, etc.

- Write down the thoughts that come up.

Those things. Those thoughts of potential achievements that put a smile on your face and make your heart speed up a little bit. **THOSE are your annual goals.**

Now that you've captured your initial ideas, it's important to run them through some filters before you consider them final goals.

### **Hold up! I already have goals from my job, so why should I do this?**

If you feel good about the annual goals you've already set at work, then I recommend doing this activity for aspects of your life not covered by work goals, such as health, finances, relationships, etc.

In my experience, I have found that work goals tend to focus mainly on outputs and specific projects. You can use this process in addition to your work one to set more holistic, larger goals for yourself, such as additional skills to develop, side projects, a promotion or pay raise, increased visibility, and more.

Run your initial ideas through these 3 filters before considering them final.

#### **#1 | The Reality-Check Filter**

- If you have more than 10 goals total, then you gotta cut some out. It's not realistic to do all of that in one year.
- Look over your goals and be honest about whether or not they can happen this year. DO NOT doubt what you're capable of achieving! But do check to see if you've written down goals that may take 2 years to complete, or that are overly dependent on factors outside of your control.

#### **#2 | The Deets Filter**

- Revise your goals to make sure there are enough details in them so they're specific. Don't stop at "exercise more". Write a goal of "exercise at least 3 times a week" or even better, "exercise at least 3 times a week to get to a weight of 140 pounds by July when I have to put on that dang bathing suit again."

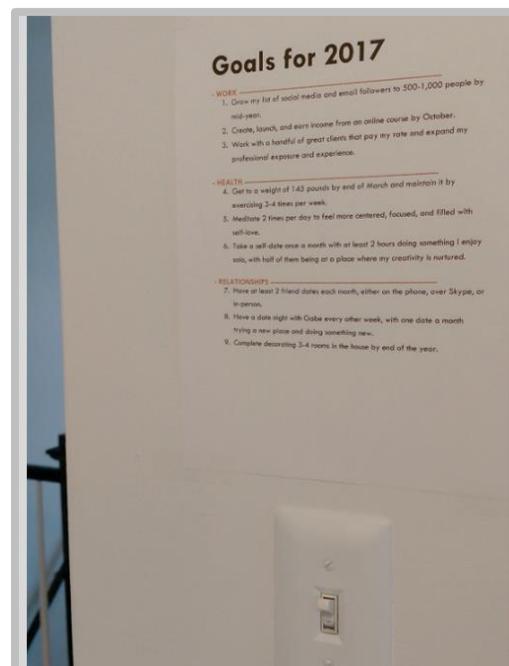
#### **#3 | The Balance Filter**

- Make sure you have at least 2 goals for the most important 3-4 categories of your life. Don't let them all be about work, or all

about hanging out with friends. Balance comes with some effort and starting with balanced goals will help you get there.

By now you should have a list of no more than 10 annual goals that are realistic, full of details, and represent the balanced life you want. **As you read through them, they should feel motivating and inspiring to YOU**, so that a year from now you'll feel proud of what you've achieved.

Write up the final ones nice and neat, or type them up, and keep them visible in a place where they'll be regular reminders. To show that I practice what I preach, here are my 2017 goals, pasted right above the light switch to my office.



## The Pieces to the Puzzle | Your Quarterly Activities

*Wait, I thought we were done???*

Nope! Often times annual goals don't get achieved because they still feel too big or too far out into the future, so we need to break them down into bite-sized chunks.

This will ensure that your goals are achievable and that you make progress towards them throughout the year.

**First,**

Pick out 3-4 goals you want to focus on most heavily in the first quarter of the year. (Yes, we *have* to prioritize AGAIN.)

You can choose these based on which ones need to happen first, based on known time factors, or based on which ones you're most excited about.

For me, my goals this quarter are growing my email list, building out my website, dropping some pounds, and having more friend dates. The other goals are still on my mind and I will be opportunistic about them, but I'm not going to focus my energy on those areas just yet.

## Second,

Break those 3-4 annual goals down into activities that need to happen in the next 3 months.

All big goals require a series of smaller activities to be accomplished before we can consider the goal as achieved. So, let's dig into the specifics.

Some examples for how you can break down a goal into quarterly activities.

<b>Goal: lose 15 pounds by October 1st</b>	<b>Goal: Transfer domain name to new registrar by end of January</b>
Research gyms near me and their rates	Conduct online research on good domain registrars this week
Choose a gym and join by Feb 1st	Choose a company by mid-January
Week of Feb 6, start going to gym at least 3 times a week.	Submit request to transfer with current registrar as soon as new company has been identified.
Weigh myself after every two weeks.	Complete transfer process for new registrar by third week of January
	Call current registrar 5 times since they keep screwing up your transfer request as a shady-ass means of not letting your business go!!!!
	Complete transfer and pay new company, by end of January.

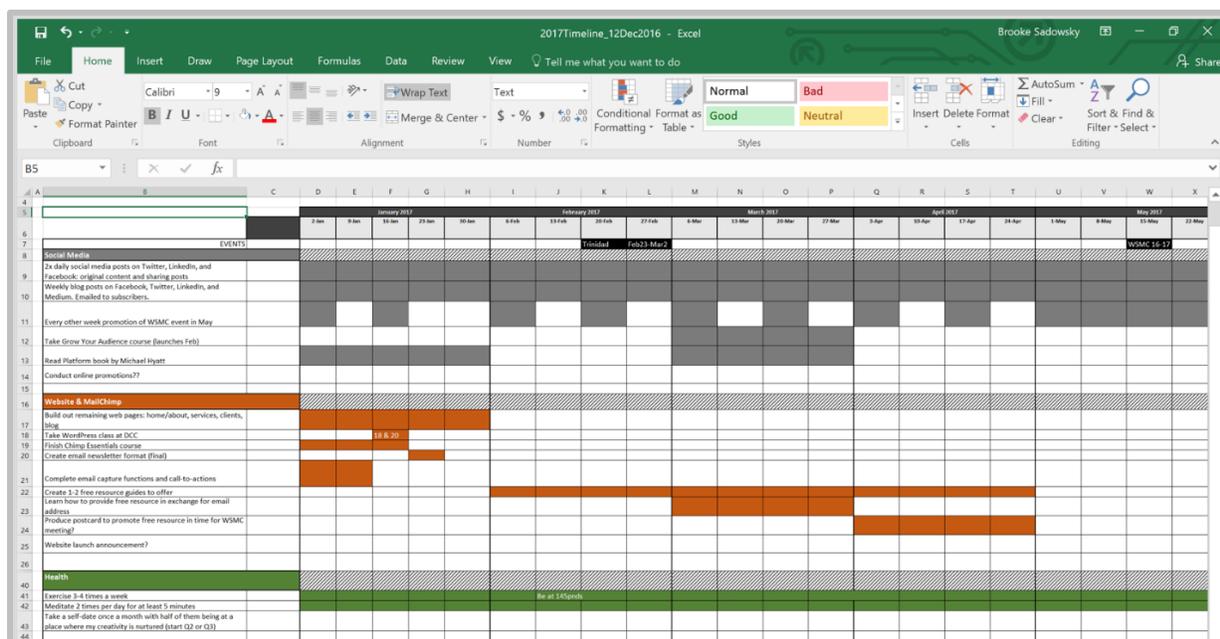
Even though some of these steps may seem obvious, it's still important to write them down so you're clear on everything it will take to achieve your goal.

And the more you can write them in chronological order and attach deadlines to these steps, the easier it will be to create your action plan.

You may start feeling that rush of anxiety or an overwhelmed sensation while you're writing these down – that's totally normal – just take a deep breath and keep writing until you're out of steps for the quarter.

## Chart your Path | Your Monthly Action Plan

I'm one of those weirdos who likes to use Excel in my personal life as well as my professional life, so I opt for a good old Gantt chart style timeline for my action plan. As proof – here's a screenshot of it!

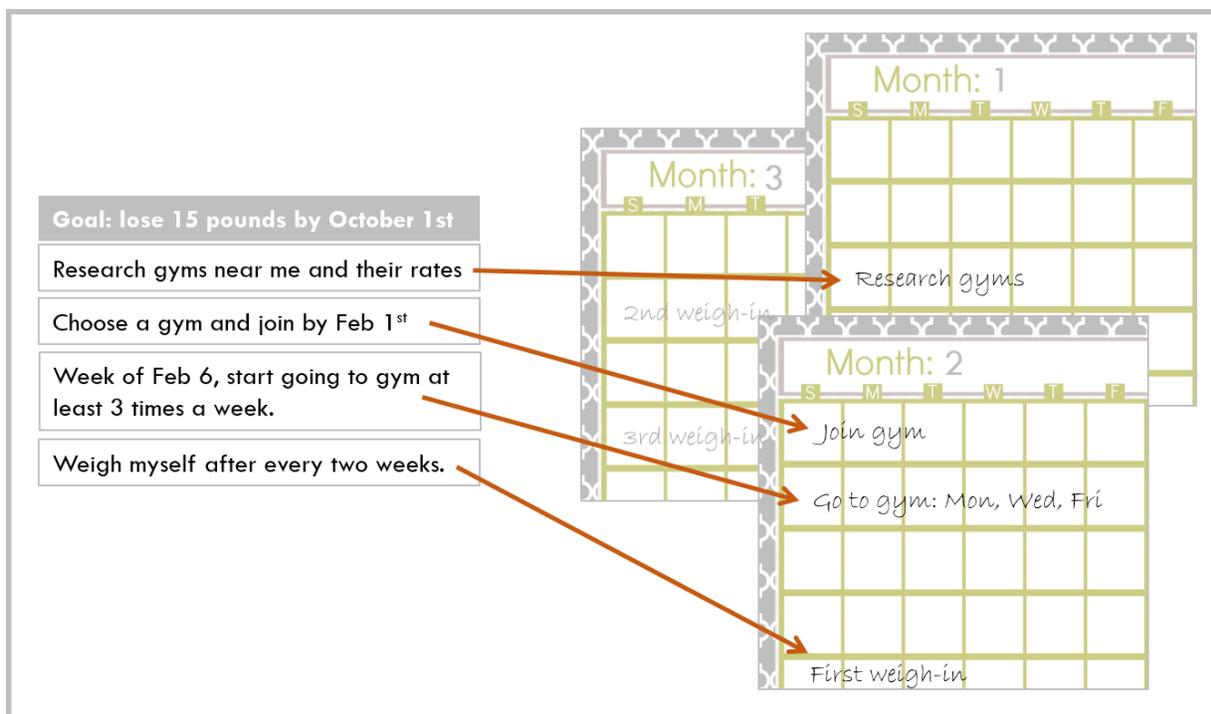


Use whatever format works best for you – printed calendars, online calendars, Gantt charts – anything where you can map out when you’ll do each activity.

The format should also be one you can continue to update, revise, and reference (working to achieve goals always requires some adjustment along the way).

**Take each of the activities you listed previously and create your timeline.**

If you didn’t include dates before, then now is the moment to really consider how much time you’ll need for each step. Especially since you will have several activities happening at the same time.



Maybe your schedule looks kind of light next week so you’ll have time to research local gyms. Maybe you’re so fed up with your website domain registrar that you’re going to transfer companies right now! (clearly this registrar topic is bringing up feelings for me.)



Do this only for the goals and activities you've prioritized for the first 3 months of the year. I find that it gets just too overwhelming and abstract doing more than that.

## One Day at a Time | Your Weekly To-Do List

The key to achieving your big annual goals is bringing it down to the 'today factor'. What steps can you take THIS WEEK to move that goal forward?

**Review your timeline and clarify what you will be doing this week, and this week only.** And then decide which days, or even which hours of those days, you'll get it done.

If your days are ruled by your Outlook calendar, then go ahead and mark those activities in as work blocks, or "meetings with thyself", and mark them under a different color.

	25 Monday	26 Tuesday	27 Wednesday	28 Thursday	29 Friday
8 am					
9:00		Boring meeting			Fake phone call so I can come into work late
10:00					
11:00	Team status meeting	Fake meeting to talk about the boring meeting			
12:00 PM		Meeting during lunch – no food being served ☹️	All day meeting – WTF?!?	Prep meeting for meeting	
1:00					
2:00	Other team status meeting	I can research gyms during this time!		Long meeting with no agenda	
3:00	I'm on too many teams				
4:00					Who schedules meetings at this time?!?
5:00					
6:00					
7:00					
8:00					
9:00					
10:00					

As things move and shift, be sure to adjust your weekly to-do's, keeping an eye on your overall goals so they don't fall off the radar.

## CONGRATULATIONS!

You've put in important up-front work to prioritize your goals for this year, and create a plan that is flexible and easy to follow. I look forward to hearing all that you've achieved this year!

If you have any problems along the way, or if anything in this guide isn't clear for you, then give me a shout at [brooke@brookes2cents.com](mailto:brooke@brookes2cents.com).