



LIFE SKILLS

MID-YEAR GOALSETTING AMIDST A PANDEMIC

There are few things as unexpected and derailing as a pandemic and coping with and overcoming it were probably not items on your goalsetting list earlier in the year.

Goalsetting is a fantastic way of motivating yourself during times of adversity, but it is important to acknowledge the challenges that you may have experienced and may continue to face. Associate Professor Jodi Oakman, Head of La Trobe's Centre for Ergonomics and Human Factors, says that it is important for us to adjust our expectations of what is possible given the current COVID-19 situation. "It isn't fair to think you'll march on unaffected, as if nothing has changed", she explains.

However, she also says that we shouldn't underestimate ourselves. "Humans are very adaptable. Many of us are doing things today we didn't imagine doing a week ago, so we have great capacity to adapt to our situation and make things work." So, how can we do just that?

Goals are good for you

According to Health Direct, setting goals can help with depression and anxiety. The process can provide comfort and direction. Also, in the wake of a very trying time, "setting goals can be used as part of cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) to start the process of getting well and rebuilding a meaningful life", explains the website endorsed by the Australian Department of Health.

SMART is still smart

Associate Professor Oakman suggests that any situation, however difficult, will not last forever and that considering this is a great way of "re-setting your GPS".

According to Alabama A&M University, the SMART goals technique is still a highly effective way to plan for success, even during or after a crisis.

S – Specific. Go into detail and be specific about what you want to achieve.

M – Measurable. There should be a way to measure your goal. How would you determine how close or far you are from achieving it?

A – Actionable. What actions will you need to do to make it a reality? What steps will you have to take to get there?

R – Realistic. Be reasonable in your expectations for yourself. Don't set yourself up for disappointment. Plan to do something you believe is achievable and worth striving for.

T – Time-specific. Try to set a timeframe in which you hope to achieve your goal to stay motivated and work towards a specific date.

If you've been wondering what you can do to feel more in control of your current situation and how you can reignite your motivation going forward, setting goals for the next six months will definitely help.