

TRANSCRIPT OF EPISODE #35 “RETHINK YOUR GOAL SETTING”

Hello, podcast universe! I'm April Price. Welcome to Episode 35 of the 100% Awesome Podcast and welcome to 2020!

I think it's pretty awesome that we're here at all. I remember growing up in the 80's, sure that Gorbachev and the Soviet Union was going to drop a nuclear bomb on all of us at any moment, and thinking like there really isn't much time left on the planet, right? So here in 2020, I'd say we're doing pretty good. As my brother says we're all just playing with house money at this point. So this year is a gift that maybe some of us never thought we'd get. But here we are. The world is still spinning and we're going around the sun one more time. So welcome to the New Year! I hope your holidays we're happy. And now we're back at it.

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The beginning of the year for me always feels like a fresh new start, right? A new beginning. And we all, I think, have a natural tendency to kind of look around our lives and take stock and then want to make a few changes. We want to stop living on default and we want to start living with intention. We want to clean up and set some goals, buy some vegetables...remember vegetables? Then we tell ourselves that this is the year that we're finally going to make some changes.

So today I want to talk to you a little about your mindset going into a new year and if you have a desire to set new goals, I'm going to give you a few tools today to help you out. Because while we all have goals, we all also have human brains and our brains do not care about our goals. Our primitive brains don't know that it's a brand new year. Our primitive brains don't care that we're ready to require more of ourselves. Our primitive human brains don't have a single concern for “future you.”

Your primitive brain cares about one thing and one thing only—survival. Survival right now in this present moment. That's it. So the more tools that we have as we go to set our goals and create both our present and our future on purpose, the better chance we have at succeeding at them. So as I have coached people on all kinds of goals, there have been some common roadblocks to change. And I think in lots of ways, the things that we have been traditionally taught about goal setting and our instincts about setting goals kind of have us doing it backwards. We have the cart before the horse in a way and this then makes sticking to and accomplishing our goals extra difficult.

So in this episode I want to have you rethink the way you've always thought about goal setting and no matter what your goal is—whether it's about your spiritual practice, or your money, or your weight, or maybe your connection with other people, your desire to put your work or your art out into the world—I believe that these things that we're going to talk about today will make a huge difference for you this year as you go to accomplish them.

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So I want to start by just giving you a little metaphor about why this is, right? So when I was first learning to do pull-ups I would think about pulling my body up to the bar. And theoretically that's exactly what I'm doing, right? I'm hanging from a bar and I'm trying to pull my body up so that my chin goes over the bar and so it seems natural to think about it in terms of pulling up onto the bar. But as I was really struggling

to get better at my pull-ups and to pull my weight that far up into the air, I started looking for better and better ways to do it.

And so I did some research and tried to learn what exercises I needed to do to get stronger to be able to do more pull-ups. Anyway in all of this research, I heard one trainer say to not think about pulling your body up but to think about driving your elbows down to the ground. Now this seems like the opposite of what we want to do when we're doing a pull-up, right? We think we're trying to go up and we should think about up. But this trainer said no, what you really need to do is focus on your elbows driving down towards the ground.

And so I started doing this and, magically, it helped immensely. Now I want to point out that my actions didn't change. I was still pulling my body up over the bar, but the way I thought about it changed my ability to be able to do the action better.

So driving my elbows down seemed easier in my brain to think about than pulling my whole body up, and it concentrated my mind on my lat muscles instead of my arm muscles. And so in a way it was kind of thinking about the pull up backwards, right? It was the opposite of what I thought. Instead of thinking about “up,” I started thinking about “down.” I started thinking about pulling my elbows down. And that made all the difference. Now my action was the same. So sometimes it's not even the action that we're taking, but it's how we're thinking about it that gives us more power to be able to do the thing.

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And that's how I want you to look at this episode today. When we think about our goals in a different way, when we think about it backwards, when we think about it from a different perspective, it may make it easier to keep going on the goals. It might not change our actions, but it will change the power we have behind it, the thoughts we have behind it. And that will allow us to make more progress towards our goals. So today I want to show you how much of our instinctive thinking about goal setting is sometimes working against us and how it by just changing our mindset, it will give us more ability to achieve what we want.

Okay, so first one of the things that we think about goal setting is that it will make us better. We think if we do something to change in some way then we will suddenly be a better version of ourselves.

And I think people kind of fall into two camps when it comes to goals. In the one camp are all the people that love to set goals and think they need to be accomplishing something in order to feel okay about themselves. And then the other camp are all the people who don't think they can ever achieve their goals and setting goals makes them feel terrible about themselves because they always fail at it. And so what I want you to see is that either way—no matter what camp we're in—we're making the goal mean something about us. It's making it so our value is in what we do and what we accomplish.

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And so either we need goals to feel worthy or we use our inability to reach our goals or our track record of failing at goals as a way to prove that we're unworthy. So we have it backwards. Right? The point of goals is not worthiness. Goal setting is totally optional. You don't have to set goals to be a good person or to be valuable or to be worthy in some way. You don't have to achieve anything and not achieving your goals doesn't make you bad or unworthy or broken or unacceptable. I want you to remember that there's nothing wrong with you as you are.

So many times we're pursuing goals to outrun ourselves. There are things like we don't like about ourselves and there are things we wish we're different. So we set goals to change those things and make ourselves more palatable—even just to ourselves, right? We kind of hate ourselves and then our solution is to just change everything. And what I want you to know is that not only will this work against you, but you can never grow enough to escape yourself. There's always parts of us that are flawed and so it's a painful way to try to accomplish anything. And it's completely unnecessary because there is nothing wrong with you no matter what.

And I can hear your objections already. You think, “April you have no idea. I'm a total mess and I've got to fix the mess.” What I want you to understand is that we can't make lasting change from negative emotion. Disparaging and hating ourselves never leads to our best action. And this is the way we've always done it. We've set goals and we've hated ourselves and we've tried to be different. In order to change and I want you to think about it in a different way, because not only then do you have to overcome the discomfort of doing the goals themselves and expending all that energy, you also have to endure all this emotional abuse that you heap upon yourself, and it wears you out. It makes you want to quit. It creates discouragement. It doesn't drive action.

And like how do I know this? Because I spent years in this loop, not liking myself, trying to change out of fear or disgust or shame. And quitting because I couldn't fight all the ways I hated myself. It was like the head of Medusa, right? As soon as I'd make a little progress on one part, another part would rear its head, and I would just think like, “It's impossible,” and I would give up.

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So do you want to change? Awesome! But don't do it from shame and pain. Do it because you just want to. Do it because you want to have certain life experiences. Do it because you want to see what's possible for you. Do it to grow in knowledge and capacity and ability to be uncomfortable...but never do it to grow in worthiness. Because that is impossible.

Every goal we have is arbitrary and optional and they don't have anything to do with your worthiness as a human. You're already 100% worthy and whole and lovable. Goals just allow you new opportunities to grow and manage your brain, which is what we came to do on Earth. We came to learn to be the boss of our humanness and choose for ourselves, and goals allow you to do just that, to get practice doing just that. And that's why goals are so valuable. The first thing I want you to change up is your reason “why.” We're not doing it to achieve a level of acceptableness somewhere down the road. We're doing it to learn to overcome our own human brains.

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Okay, number two. The next thing that we get kind of backwards is we think achieving our goals will make us happy or some other positive emotion. We think incorrectly that our achievement or the accomplishment will allow us to feel better. We think if we can lose weight then we'll feel confident. We think if we can finish our book then we'll feel proud. We think if we can save ten thousand dollars and get out of debt then we'll feel secure. And we think if we get the result of the goal then we can feel a certain way. And this is completely backwards. So let me show you what I mean.

When I went to the Modelthon in Dallas this fall, Rachel Hart was conducting a session with us and she had us make a list of 25 goals. We wrote them down on a piece of paper. Twenty-five things we wanted to do and achieve in our lives. And then she had us imagine that we had achieved all the things on the list, and she had us write the feeling we would feel next to each item on the list. So once we had achieved it how would I feel? And we wrote that emotion next to the item on the list.

So as I wrote my 25 things and discovered the feelings that I thought I would feel when I achieved them, I noticed a pattern. There were like three feelings that came up over and over and over again on my list. And the three most common feelings on my list were confident, capable, and proud. Now when you look at it like this, my list of goals suddenly became just a list of feelings I wanted to feel.

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And my human brain told me, okay, you have to accomplish these goals in order to feel them. In order to feel confident, capable, and proud, you've got to do these things on the list. And for each of you, this is what your goal is. It's just a feeling that you want to feel, right? You want to do this thing so that you can feel X, Y or Z later.

So if you make a list of your goals this year, it really is just a list of feelings that you want to feel. But this is backwards because results never create feelings. What creates feelings? Thoughts. Only ever thoughts. So no result in my life will ever make me feel confident, capable, and proud. My thoughts are the only thing that can make me feel anything. And I have to think the thoughts that will create confident, capable, and proud, in order to feel them.

So I know that you may be thinking that I'm like just splitting hairs here, right, and this is just semantics. But it is so important in your goal setting and it can make such a difference, right, to think about it in a different way. Because when we set goals just to chase a feeling, we often never get there because it takes so long to feel capable, and confident, and proud.

We give up before we get there. And not only that, but often we find when we get to the finish line, when we get to accomplish the goal, we still don't feel confident, capable, or proud, or whatever feeling it is we want, right?

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And this is because we aren't thinking the thoughts that create it yet. So here's what I want you to know. You can feel what you want to feel anytime you want. You don't have to achieve something first. You could just think a thought. There are no thought police, and you can think whatever you want about yourself. Don't wait to feel the feelings you want until you get the result. Allow yourself to think about yourself and your goal in a way that generates these feelings ahead of time because these feelings will drive your best action towards your goal.

For example, let's say I have a goal to finish my book in 2020. (Solely hypothetical.) And I think like when I finish it I will feel proud, but if I decide to feel proud ahead of time—right now, in fact—and all the way along as I am working on the book, if I choose to feel proud, how much better will my writing be? How much more work on the book will I do if I'm feeling proud? How much more excited will I be to go and sit at my computer every day, right?

This is what I want you to know. Accomplishing your goals won't ever make you feel better. Only the thoughts you think about yourself will, and you just think like, "If I accomplish it then I can give myself permission to think it." But I'm telling you, you don't need permission to think whatever you want.

Okay so I want to give you a little example of how accomplishing our goals actually doesn't make us feel better. It's what we think that matters.

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And I don't know if I've shared this example or not, I might have. But it bears repeating because it is so instructive. So every year there's an incoming class of students at the Harvard Business School. And every year, they have this like little introductory session together before the semester starts. And the instructor asks the class, "Okay, how many of you think the admission committee made a mistake? That this is just a fluke and you're not really supposed to be here?" And every year more than two thirds of the hands go up. More than two thirds of the students at the Harvard Business School think the admission committee made a mistake with their application and they really shouldn't be there. Like they don't feel confident that they should be there, even though they accomplished getting admitted.

And this is because the result doesn't create the feeling. Our thoughts do. These students achieved what they wanted. They reach their goal, right? They got into Harvard Business School, but their thoughts didn't catch up. They didn't feel qualified to be there. And because their thoughts and nothing else create their feelings, they felt insecure about being there. The success of getting in didn't create the feeling of confidence. Like this is amazing, right? It's only ever our thoughts and what we allow ourselves to think about ourselves.

So if you want to feel something you need to think something instead of doing something. And this probably isn't how you've ever thought about your goals. So when you feel this feeling, the feeling that you want, it can fuel way more positive action towards your goal, than willpower ever will.

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These feelings will allow you to press forward through all the hard times and through all the obstacles without giving up. So think of the goal you have for 2020. Imagine that you've already reached that goal. Imagine that you're at your ideal weight, or your debt is zero, or you started your coaching practice, or you sold your first script, okay. Whatever it is, imagine how you're going to feel when you accomplish that. Whatever you think you will feel, you will only feel because you'll be thinking a new thought. What is that thought? What would you be thinking about yourself? Now I want you to know that you can think that thought any time you want. Right now before you reach your goal. And this will create the best action toward your goal over the long term.

So I want you to know that if you find yourself stuck or stopping or giving up this year along the way to your goal it's because you aren't accessing the feeling you will have when you get it. You're waiting to feel proud. You're waiting to feel capable or fulfilled or excited or loved or whatever the feeling is that you want. You're waiting to feel that. But remember results don't produce feelings. Thoughts do. Manage your own mind and keep working towards your goals by thinking the thoughts that will produce powerful feelings to fuel your actions

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Okay, the third thing that we sometimes get backwards is that we have this idea that goals shouldn't be hard. Right? So I mean, of course we all know it's going to be hard intellectually, right? But then when it actually is hard we're kind of like surprised and shocked and maybe a little bit ticked off, right? And we have this idea like, "Well it's not hard for other people." It's only hard for us because we're weak or undisciplined or we have a sweet tooth, right? We think it's hard for us because we don't have anybody in our life that supports us, or we're so busy, or our genetics will never allow us to achieve what we want.

So I'm telling you, when it comes down to it, there's a part of each of us that believes it shouldn't be hard. But this is the wrong way to think about it. It's hard for everyone. How would it change your persistence and your willingness to keep working in the hard if you accepted that it is supposed to be hard?

The idea that it shouldn't be hard it's just the result of our lower brain. Right? Because our lower brain hates anything that requires us to have less pleasure, more pain, or use more energy, our primitive brain tries to talk us out of anything that is hard. And so it offers excuse after excuse about why it shouldn't be hard. But in order to achieve any goal you have to get really, really comfortable with being uncomfortable.

And actually this is where we need to change our thinking. We want it to be hard because we want the byproducts of what will happen to us when we overcome the hard, and overcome the excuses and the whining of our lower brain.

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So what happens is when we set a goal is we say, “Okay, I know it's going to be hard, but I'm committed.” And then we start after the goal and then our lower brain starts piping up, right? It has commentary. It has an opinion about all this pain and energy we're spending, and the significant decrease in pleasure that it's feeling, and it starts whining. And it will literally say anything to get you to stop. Any excuse.

Like I have a client who wanted to lose weight so that she could be more active and go hiking with her family and do all these things outdoors, right? Until like a week or two into her protocol, her brain said, “We don't even like being outside! Why are we doing this?”

Your brain is relentless. What I want you to know is your brain is also irrelevant. You don't need your lower brains buy in. You don't need it to agree with your goals or support your goals or be all in on pain and energy and less pleasure. It can complain and you can keep going. Your brain is going to have really good reasons why you should stop this year. Whatever your goal is, it's going to be like, “Hey this is a dumb idea. You should give up.” And this is because the lower brain cannot act for itself and so it has to talk us into stopping. It has to talk us into quitting.

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So the more often that you don't give into this cajoling and just get to work anyway, the more you become the boss of your life, the more you become in charge of your brain. And this is why we want it to be hard. Because doing the hard thing, and not giving into the needling and whining of your brain, helps you become the person you want to be and to be the boss of your human body with its brain. And that is so much more important than the goal itself.

Okay, so I want to give you a little example of this. One of the biggest thoughts that our brain uses is the thought that like “this isn't working.” Right? Like we're doing all this stuff and then our brain says, “Hey this isn't even working,” right? And so my brain does this all the time. And early on this fall, I had a goal to get 12 clients in my coaching practice. And so I was like halfway to my goal when things just kind of slowed down and I went a couple of weeks without signing any new clients. Even though I was still working as hard as ever to reach my goal and doing all the things I had been doing. And so then my brain started telling me every day and every hour of every day “This isn't working. We should just stop. We should just give up. This is clearly not working.”

So whenever I would go to work on anything in my business—record my podcast or write my emails or talk to my clients—my brain would tell me “this isn't working” and “I should just stop. It shouldn't be this hard.”

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Do you see? It was giving me all these excuses. One by one, trying them out on me, right? Throwing darts at the board, trying to hit the bull's eye that would make me stop; trying to get something to land and stick and stop me from doing scary, hard, vulnerable, uncomfortable things.

So about this time I heard an idea from my coach and about the difference between outcome goals and behavior goals and it really helped me. So I'm going to give it to you. Maybe it will help you. She told me outcome goals are the ultimate result that we want. So for me it was 12 clients, and I don't have full control over that, right? I didn't know when I would get twelve clients or how they would come to me. I didn't have control on the when, actually, of that outcome goal.

But what I could control, always, were my behavior goals. So my behavior goals were all the things I did in order to try to achieve that outcome, right? So in my case it was to record the podcast, send out emails, make offers for free sessions, show people the value of coaching. I had 100% control over my behavior goals.

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Now my brain was trying to talk me out of doing my behaviors, but I was the boss. And so I just decided I can just keep attacking my behavior goals regardless of what happens on the outcome goal. Eventually I believed my outcome goal would catch up, if I just kept after my behavior goals. And so that's what I did. And I have a full coaching schedule now with twice as many clients as my original goal because I didn't let my brain's assessment that "this isn't working" stop me from doing my behavior goals, when my outcome goals were not what I wanted them to be.

My brain told me it wasn't working, and I said, "It doesn't matter. I'm just here to perform the behavior goals." And by doing that I became the boss of my brain just a little bit more. So remember that when you're going after your goals this year it's supposed to be hard.

And in fact you want it to be hard because that's when we get to be the boss. And when your brain tells you that you're working so hard and you're not making progress, you just have to remind it, "Okay, I might not control the timeline of the outcome, but I do control my behaviors along the way. I do control the behavior goals." And if you control the behavior goals long enough and resist the whining of your lower brain, the outcome goal will catch up.

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Number four. The last thing I want to talk about that we sometimes get backwards is that we think that all the change and all the accomplishment for a goal happens in the "A" line— in the action line. We think reaching our goals happens because of our actions. And while it's true that reaching our goals requires action, this is not where lasting change happens in our lives. All change, all achievement is dependent on the "T" line, on the thought line.

What do you think about your goal? What do you believe about your ability to achieve the result you want, to achieve the goal? If you really want to achieve your goal this is where you need to spend some time and effort. Because it's really hard to just sustain action and be uncomfortable when we don't believe we can get there, when we don't believe in the goal.

So I heard this story about Paul McCartney and apparently at one point he really, really wanted to get a swimming pool. And so he went to John Lennon and he said, "Hey let's write a swimming pool. I want a pool let's write a swimming pool."

Because he believed that they could write a song and it would be so great and so popular and they would sell a whole bunch of records. And then he could get a swimming pool. And he just believed so strongly, like I can just write whatever I want right. I want a swimming pool. I'll write a song. So what if you could just write whatever you wanted into your future?

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This is something that Brooke Castillo teaches. Right? That the future is all “Ts”. The future is all thoughts and you get to think whatever you want. You get to write whatever you want into there. None of what is going to happen this year has happened. And so that makes every “t” possible. It's all up for grabs. You could put anything you want in there. You just get a pick any thought you want to believe.

Now I know that some of you think this is ridiculous, right? And you think it's super scary because what if you get your heart on something and it doesn't happen?

Here's what I want to show you. There is no downside to believing in any goal. Because if you believe it and you don't get it, you're going to be disappointed. But if you don't believe in it and you don't get it, you're gonna be disappointed. See like, either way, like the worst that could happen is some disappointment.

There's nothing worse if you believe it. You're gonna be disappointed either way. So there is no downside, but there's a huge upside because believing something suddenly makes it possible. It puts it in the realm of possibility. Believing it puts it on the table. For example, when I set the goal to get twelve clients and I believed that I could get twelve clients. If that didn't happen, I would have been disappointed. True. But if I never set the goal and I didn't believe I could get twelve clients, then I still would have been disappointed, because I never would have got to have clients, right?

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But just believing it, just thinking it, made it possible. Before I chose to believe it, it wasn't even an option. It wasn't even on the radar. But believing it put it on the table. Then my brain could go to work to figure out what I needed to do to get twelve clients. Before I believed it could be a part of my future, I didn't even think about how I would achieve it, because it wasn't in the realm of possibility. So now my present is so different because I believe this impossible thing. Let's write a full coaching practice into my future.

And I'm telling you there is no downside to believing anything you want. So I want to give you a little example of how your belief is what creates the possibility of achievement in the first place. It's what makes the thing even possible. Like, yes, you have to take action, but first you have to believe that you have a reason for taking action. You have to believe you can achieve the goal in order to keep taking action.

So when my sister was writing her book we were talking about this idea of belief and like how powerful it is. Right? So she was telling me about this phenomenon called “talent clots” or sometimes they're called like “clusters of greatness.” And the idea is that like throughout history there are then like these clusters where like a whole bunch of achievement has happened in the same place like at the same period of time. For example, like the artists in the Renaissance, or the writers in Paris in the 20s.

And so as we were talking about this she tells me about this little book by Daniel Coyle called *The Little Book of Talent*, and he shows in this book how in modern times this has happened, like in sports and

music, and that these little pockets of greatness show up. And so the question is like why does it happen? Why does it happen in clusters? And she had concluded that it was because of this idea about belief.

So she tells me about this guy named Bo Eason. And when Bo is in high school he played football on a team with 26 other guys. And he had this dream of playing in the NFL someday.

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He had had it since he was a little boy and he was positive that this was going to happen for him. He was going to play in the NFL. So the year that he went to the NFL, four other guys from his team in high school also went to the NFL. And the odds of this were like crazy, right? It was like 1 in 6 people went to the NFL from his high school— and before this no one from his high school had ever gone to the NFL, and no one after this ever went to the NFL, right?

It was just like one of these incredible talent clusters in this one place and this one high school, four guys went to the NFL, right? So Bo went and he was like asking these guys and he was saying like, “Why do you think this happened? Why do you think we all got here? I mean, like what are the odds?”

And so they said, “Well, we knew you were going,” right? “Your belief was so strong and so sure we knew that you were going to go. And we thought like, ‘Well if he's going, then I'm going. I'm at least as good as him’” Right? So Beau is like this little guy. He says like, “I wasn't even that great. But I believed I was going to the NFL.” And so they all said, “Well if he's going then I'm going. If he can go, I can go.” And so Bo's belief allowed them to believe, and I think that's kind of what happens in these talent clusters, right?

Like the belief becomes possible. Something gets put on the table that people can believe in and then they do the actions to get there. So what if it's not the action at all? But, first and foremost, the belief that creates the possibility of our lives. And so when it comes to your goal your “T” line, your thoughts, your beliefs, are so much more important than your “A” line, than the actions.

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Your thoughts matter so much more than your actions. So how do you increase the belief in your goals? How do you believe new things about yourself? You just choose to. And at first I promise you it's not going to fit very well. It's going to feel a little uncomfortable. When I said I can have 12 people in my coaching practice I was like, “Yeow!” Right? “That feels so like not who I am.” Right?

But you just keep trying that thought and that belief on and on. You just keep putting the belief on, you try it on, you try it on, and the more you think it the more evidence you will find for it, until it becomes so natural and you have a full practice with twice that many clients. So it's kind of like the queen says in *Alice in Wonderland* right? Like Alice is like, “You can't believe impossible things.” And the queen says, “I dare say you haven't had much practice.” It just takes practice to believe new things about yourselves.

And the reason that most of us don't practice believing in our goals or ourselves because we're scared that we won't achieve them. But I want you to know that there's actually nothing to be scared of because there's no downside to believing it.

So a really good exercise for this is to in your mind go to the place where you've achieved the goal, right? It's already done. A thing is accomplished. What do you believe about yourself in that moment that you don't believe about yourself now?

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That's the thought you need. That's the thought you need to try on again and again and again. Go to that future place. What is it that you believe about yourself there in the future that you don't believe now? And then you just kept practicing and practicing that thought. The future is just "T's," I'm telling you. You get to believe whatever you want. You to write yourself a swimming pool? You get to write whatever you want into your future.

Okay, that's what I have for you today. Instead of thinking about your goals like you always have, I want you to think about it a little differently. Set your goals because you want to not because it will make you better or more worthy in some way. Don't wait to get the result before you feel how you want to feel. Use those feelings to drive all your actions when things are hard. Know, in fact, that it will be hard and be glad that it is, because that's where the transformation is. That's where you get to be the boss of your brain. You don't need it to be easy to go after your goals. And finally, remember that your thoughts, your belief, will matter so much more in the end than your actions. We want to *do things* to reach our goals and we need to concentrate so much more on *thinking things* to reach our goals.

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Believing makes your goals inevitable. And I love inevitable goals. What if your goal this year was inevitable? You just need to nurture the belief that will create in your life. Remember that anything you want is available to you because the future is just "T's." You're just making it up...and that my friends is 100% awesome! I love you for listening. Happy New Year! And I'll see you next week!