

F O C U S

VISTA PSYCHOLOGICAL & COUNSELING CENTRE

SPRING 2018

HOW TO GET BETTER AT ACHIEVING YOUR GOALS

Intentions are never enough. Even full blown goal setting isn't worth much if you don't do it right. Enter behavioral psychologist, Sean Young. His book, *Stick with It*, summarizes all the science around how to change your behavior. And setting goals is, at its core, about behavior change. **First, state the big goal.** What would you like to accomplish in the next three months or so? Realism is better than idealism; taking small steps to success is better than ambitious failure on any day. Small successes show us that we can really change our behavior in a lasting way. **2. Next, break this larger idea down into long-term goals.** Long-term goals take about three months to accomplish. These are the activities that get us closer to our big goal. **3. Break it down again, into short-term goals.** These take one to three weeks to accomplish. These are the actions that get us closer to the long-term goals. **4. Now break your goals down into very specific, ridiculously easy baby steps.** What can you do today? Tomorrow?

Try to break your baby steps down until they are so easy you feel little or no resistance to them. **5. Set up your environment to make things easier.** Our environment dramatically influences our behavior. We like to think our behavior is all about personality and preferences, or that it's the strength of our iron-clad will that determine our success, but actually we are hugely influenced by the people, places and technology that happen to be in close physical proximity to us. This means that to be successful in reaching our goals, it's very helpful to set up our environment to make things easier, to create *structural solutions*. This usually means removing temptations—if your goal is to stop checking your phone while you drive, keep the phone in the trunk. And making sure that what we need is easy and convenient—if your goal is to eat more kale, keep a lot of kale in the fridge, and a list of restaurants that serve it. **6. Involve other people, even if you're an introvert.** We humans can

often get ourselves to do something we might otherwise resist if it makes us feel more a part of a tribe or a clan—if it deepens or increases our social connections in some way. Other people can also work as a bit of external willpower, getting us to do something we'd rather blow off. **7. Identify why your goal is important to you.** Think less about what you want to achieve and focus in on how you want to feel. Identify a “why” for your goal that will motivate you over the long haul. We do better when we let go of our logical reasons for why we want to do something. Why? Because research shows that good, solid, logical reasons for doing something don't actually motivate us over the long haul. It turns out that emotions are far more motivating than achievement goals in the long run. So shoot instead for a feeling-state that you want more of (i.e. happiness, confidence, or calm). **8. Make it a part of your identity.** Collect evidence that you are the type of person who does whatever

your goal suggests; that you are the type of person who already does whatever it is that you are trying to do. **9. Make the behavior more enticing.** We human beings pursue rewards. When our brains identify a potential reward, they release dopamine, a feel-good chemical messenger. Dopamine motivates us toward the reward, creating a real sense of craving, wanting, or desire for the carrot that is being dangled in front of us. Rewards need to be immediate or, even better, built into the routine when possible. **10. Make the behavior more habitual.** Once a behavior is on autopilot, everything is easier—we don't need much willpower to enact our habitual behaviors. Can you make your behaviors related to accomplishing your goal habitual in any way? Do this by anchoring behaviors in existing habits, routines, or schedules by using When/Then statements: “When I do X, then I will Y.”

Christine Carter, Ph.D., is the author of *The Sweet Spot, How to Accomplish More Doing Less*. This article adapted from August 29, 2017 <https://greatergood.berkeley.edu>

KNOWING THE SIGNS OF DRUG AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

September is National Recovery Month. However, recovery needs to be every year, month, day, hour, minute, and second. As with other chronic diseases, such as diabetes, asthma, or heart disease, drug addiction is treatable and can be successfully managed. People in recovery are at risk of a relapse possibly for their whole lives. Research shows that combining addiction treatment and medications with behavioral therapy ensures the best changes of success for most recovering patients. Treatments are tailored to each patient's drug use patterns, with any related medical, mental or social problems being addressed. About 64,000 people in the United States died from drug overdoses in 2016, a 21 percent increase from the 52,898 deaths reported in the previous year, according to a governmental account of nationwide drug deaths released by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. If you think a family member, friend or someone they know is falling under the vices of legal or illegal substance, here are a few telltale things to check in various categories. The following information was supplied from a brochure from Pennsylvania State Rep. Vanessa Lowery Brown (D-190).

Marijuana, Grass, Pot, Weed, Reefer, Sensemilla, Hash, Mary Jane, Ganja, Kill, Dosia

Physical Symptoms: Sleepiness, wandering mind, enlarged pupils, lack of coordination, craving for sweets, giggling, short term memory loss.

Look for: Cigarette or rolling paper, plastic bags containing dried parsley like material with small round seeds, strong odor of leaves, roach clips, pipe.

Dangers: Inducement to try stronger drugs, distorted perception, chromosome damages.

Amphetamines, Speed, Pep, Crank, Tweak, Rush, Crystal Meth, Pills, Methamphetamine, Ice

Physical Symptoms: Aggressive behavior, no appetite, rapid speech, confused thinking, dry mouth, shakiness.

Look for: Pills and capsules of varying color, chain smoking, needles and hypodermic syringes, cotton, burnt bottles caps and spoons, cigarette lighters, matches, needle marks inside of arms and feet, crystalline substances that look like rock candy.

Dangers: Death from overdose, hallucinations, mental deterioration, drug dependence, possible exposure to AIDs virus.

LSD, PCP, Acid, Purple Haze, Hog, Microdot, Mescaline, Mexican Button, Cactus

Physical Symptoms: Severe hallucinations, feelings of detachment, incoherent speech, cold hands, and feet, uncontrollable crying and laughing, vomiting.

Look for: Small pills and capsules of varying colors, quarter inch squares of blotting paper (often decorated with designs), strong body odor.

Dangers: Suicidal tendencies, unpredictable behavior, brain and chromosome damage, hallucinations, violence.

Inhalants and Volatile Solvents, Glue, Spot Remover, Gasoline, Paint Thinner, Nitrous Oxide, Whippets

Physical Symptoms: Violence, drunk like appearance, hallucinations, blank or dreamy expressions.

Look for: Tubes of glue, strong smell of sniffed substances on clothes and breath, paper and plastic bags with dried substances on them.

Dangers: Damage to lungs, brain and liver, death from suffocation or choking.

Heroin, Morphine, Smack, Horse, Hard Stuff

Physical Symptoms: Stupor, drowsiness, running nose, drunk like appearance.

Look for: Needle and hypodermic syringes, cotton, burnt bottles caps and spoons, cigarette lighters, matches, small plastic bags, needle marks on inside of arms and feet, white powder or crystalline substances that look like rock candy.

Dangers: Death from overdose or contaminated drugs, mental deterioration, destruction of brain and liver, physical addiction, possible exposure to AIDs virus.

Cocaine, Crack, Flake, Snow, Blow

Physical Symptoms: Short lived pleasure followed by depression and intense craving for more cocaine, loss of appetite.

Look for: Needles and hypodermic syringes, cotton, burnt bottles caps and spoons, cigarette lighters, matches, small plastic bags, needle marks on inside of arms and feet, white powder or crystalline substances that look like rock candy.

Dangers: Death from overdose or contaminated drugs, mental deterioration, destruction of brain and liver, physical addiction, possible exposure to AIDS virus.

Alcohol, Beer, Wine, Hard Liquor, White Lightning

Physical Symptoms: Slurred speech, impaired coordination, memory lapses, impaired judgment, severe mood swings.

Look for: Empty cans and bottles.

Dangers: Physical addiction, volatile burst of temper, hazard to those around them, long term heavy use can result in liver damage and death.

Barbiturates, Tranquilizers, Depressants, Downers, Goof Balls, Uppers

Physical Symptoms: Drowsiness,, stupor, dullness, slurred speech, vomiting, drunk like appearance.

Look for: Pills and capsules of various colors, pills often are brand name drugs obtained illegally such as Valium, Quaalude, Halcion and Seconal, some may involve injection rather than oral use.

Dangers: Death from overdose, unconsciousness, physical addiction.

Designer Drugs

These drugs are chemically different from the other drugs listed, but have the same effects. Until recently they were not prohibited, but new laws have now designated them illegal drugs. One designer drug, called **Ecstasy**, has similar effects to LSD.

There are a number of signals that may indicate your child is using drugs or abusing alcohol. Below is a list of potential signs and symptoms to watch out for. Keep track of how many signs or symptoms apply to your child and calculate your score, which indicates the likelihood that your child is using drugs. (The result of this test is not designed to be used for diagnosis or as a psychological evaluation.)

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Money missing from your purse or wallet | <input type="checkbox"/> Use of incense, room deodorizer or excessive perfumes and cologne |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excessive use of mints, mouthwash, gum | <input type="checkbox"/> Eye drops to reduce redness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personality changes | <input type="checkbox"/> Missing medications (over the counter as well as prescription) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excessive sleeping | <input type="checkbox"/> Decline in academic and work performance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weight loss or decline in eating | <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawal and decreased interaction with good friends |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increase appetite | <input type="checkbox"/> New friends and people whom teen is unwilling to introduce to you |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drug paraphernalia such as pipes, bags of seeds
rolling papers, empty bottles, baggies, etc. | <input type="checkbox"/> Over the counter materials such as computer duster, nail polish remover,
white out, hairsprays, or other inhalants found with their belongings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Your child's room is strictly "off limit" to you | |

A score of six and above may indicate that your child is using drugs or abusing alcohol, with a score of 6 to 9 indicating most likely and 10 to 15 indicating a strong likelihood.

Decisions made by our children during his or her adolescent years can have a life-long effect. Without proper guidance, your child could already be on a slippery slope to which there is no escaping. The faster you child receives treatment, the less likely there will be negative outcomes.

Drug use and addiction are preventable. NIDA-funded research has shown that prevention programs involving families, schools, communities and the media are effective at preventing or educing drug use and addiction.

Personal events and cultural factors affect drug use trends, especially when young people view drug use as harmful. Education and outreach are key in helping people understand the possible risks of drug use, with teachers, parents and health care providers playing a crucial role in educating young people to prevent drug use and addiction.

Vince Faust, The Philadelphia Tribune, www.phillytrib.com, October 3, 2017. If you have a fitness question or concern, write to Tips to be Fit, PO Box 53443, Philadelphia, Pa., 19105, or send an email to ftpstobegit@gmail.com. Past articles can be found at www.phillytrib.com and search "Tips to be Fit."

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The present informs the past....

“We must abandon completely the notion of blaming the past for any kind of situation we’re in and reverse our thinking and see that the past always flows back from the present. That now is the creative point of life. So you see, it’s like the idea of forgiving somebody. You change the meaning of the past by doing that....Also, watch the flow of music. The melody as it’s expressed is changed by notes that come later. Just as the meaning of a sentence...you wait till later to find out what the sentence means....The present is always changing the past.”

Philosopher, Alan Watts

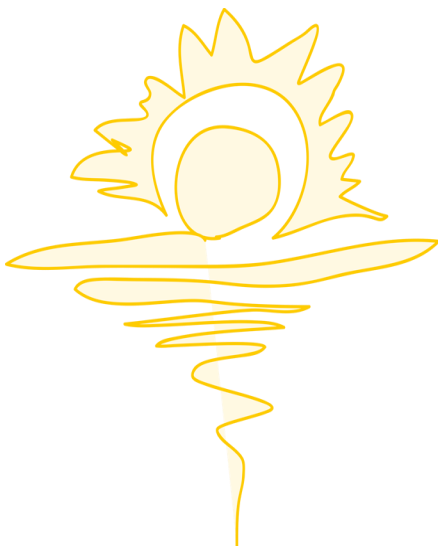
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LIVING MINDFULLY



As a concept, mindfulness has become quite popular in recent years. And as it’s grown in popularity, its definition has become blurry. In talking with our friends and family we found that “mindful living” means something different to everyone. There were a few common threads, though, and these have contributed to our definition. For us, living mindfully is about five things: presence, awareness, appreciation, reflection, and action. It is about taking

moments throughout the day to be fully present with our environment and everything within it. It is about being aware of our individual impact and acknowledging the ripples of each step we take. It is about appreciating what is around us, including the wondrous and serendipitous moments that brought us into the world. Mindfulness is about reflection. It’s about appreciating how the past informs the future and how the present informs the past.

It’s thinking about what we hope to get from our brief lives on earth and what we hope to give back to the forces that brought us here. Finally, it is about action: the steps we take to be present, to internalize our awareness, to voice our appreciation, and to embrace our reflections. Actions are the manifestations of our intentions. We cannot always choose what the brings to us, but we can always choose how we act in response to it.

Reflections from Holstee.com, Mike Radparvar, Co-Founder