

70. Achieve All Your Goals Using Strategic Pessimism

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Welcome to coaching for Latina leaders, the only podcast dedicated to the advancement of Latinas at every level of life with your host Dr. Vanessa Calderon, a Latina with over 20 years of leadership experience, Harvard grad physician, and mother of two.

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Hello, my friends, welcome back to the podcast. So today I'm going to teach you a process to help you achieve any goal you set using something I call strategic pessimism. Now, this is incredibly important because we all set goals, and we get very excited and motivated about the goal. But when things get hard, we let the goals fall down by the wayside, and we don't meet them all the way to completion. But not anymore, not after today's podcast episode, right?

But before I go on, I want to remind you all that we have an incredible program called The Life and Leadership accelerator, where I teach you how to be your most effective self and use your brain to its highest capacity, which helps you get more done in less time and have more time for the things that matter to you. So I want to invite you to join us inside The Life and Leadership accelerator program. You can find more details on my website VanessaCalderonmd.com/join. VanessaCalderon,md.com/join We've made a lot of super fun updates to the program, the modules and everything you're learning is super fantastic. And one of the best part about it is that you pay once Join us now and you are in for life. You have lifetime access to everything included in the program. Any updates, any additions, everything included. So go to VanessaCalderonmd.com/join and take a look at everything we have to offer. And join us now.

Okay, let's get back to the podcast episode. So I am teaching you today how to achieve every goal you set using something I call strategic pessimism. Now, most of you are going to have one of two relationships with your goals, you might be someone who achieves most of the goals you set. So setting goals for you may feel really good. Or you might be someone who has a more sort of complex relationship with the goal. So you might actually hate setting goals, you might actually behave like sort of an aversion to it because you don't like the way it feels when you don't achieve your goal. So like most things in life, this is not black and white. You may love setting career goals because you have a tendency to achieve all the career goals you set. But you might hate setting weight goals because you've had trouble reaching weight goals.

And any type of like weight goal causes you to feel a little anxiety and concern, you just don't set those goals. Regardless of the type of relationship you have with your goal, you're gonna get a lot out of today's episode, because today you're going to, I'm going to teach you a technique to help you overcome the roadblocks to achieving your goals. Okay, so for those of you that like setting goals are

for those of you that like said, setting specific goals, have you ever wondered why you like to set a goal? I want you to take a second right now and think about how setting a goal makes you feel. You probably feel motivated or very expansive. The reason why is this, your brain connects goal setting with you actually achieving the goal. And you will consciously or subconsciously create thoughts about how great things will be once the goal is achieved.

So if you're someone that likes to set goals, it's probably because your brain is releasing those really good feel-good neurotransmitters or hormones like dopamine, when you set a goal because your brain has already attached your goal-setting with you achieving the goal. And your brain starts to fantasize about how great it will be when that goal is achieved. So setting a goal feels good because your brain is accessing motivation, and motivation releases those feel-good neurotransmitters in your brain like dopamine. But just because setting a goal feels good, even to you high achievers, it doesn't mean you'll actually achieve the goal. So what is getting in the way of you actually achieving the goal. So one of the biggest things that get in the way of us achieving a goal is not planning ahead for the obstacles that are gonna get in the way.

And this, my friends, is hard. Because when you have to start thinking about the obstacles, you're now accessing a different part of your brain, you're no longer accessing that part of your brain that releases dopamine, that part of your brain that's causing you to fantasize about how great it will be when you achieve your goal. On the contrary, you now have to access the part of your brain that requires two things that don't feel very good. One is pessimism. So you got to think about all the obstacles. And the second is commitment and commitment sounds like a positive word, but commitment is actually hard. It's commitment is what you

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Due to access when you don't want to do something you said you would do, you have to fall back on commitment. So if you are like me and you are a general optimist, then thinking about obstacles and thinking about pessimism, like being pessimistic about a goal is hard. It's really hard. This is why I want you to start thinking about it differently and think about it like like you're thinking about it strategically, which is why I called this episode strategic pessimism.

Okay, so I'm going to teach you a concept that has gone back with, like, 20 years of research, it works really, really well to help you think through the obstacles that are gonna help you achieve your goals. Okay, all the obstacles that are going to get in the way of you achieving your goal. Now, the concept is called woop, W. O O P, and it was introduced by the researcher, Dr. Gabriela Oden, Jen, this concept or whoop helps you use pessimism to your advantage in a way that's way more strategic. Okay. So I want you to think about this, again, like strategic pessimism. And I'm going to walk you through how to do it for yourself. The W stands for the wish. So the very first thing you do is you set your goal, okay, so your wish or your goal, you get crystal clear on your goal. And you set it by one day, you know those smart goals smart, measurable, attainable goals. So set a goal, make sure it's a super clear goal with a buy-when date, okay, don't just say you're going to lose weight, say I'm going to lose 10 pounds by December 1 2022.

Now, a lot of us don't like to use by when dates when we set goals, because now there's more of a chance that we're going to fail. But I'll tell you this, the more specific and clear you can be on your goal, the likelier you are to achieve your goal. And the more you declare it out loud, the more it becomes real to your brain, that that's what's happening. That's why when you set really specific and clear goals, you're more likely to achieve them by one date because now your brain is attaching to that new identity. Okay, so first you set your goal, okay, that's your W, for the W in the whoop your wish you set your goal. And now before you move on to the obstacles, the first O is outcomes. So what you do with the outcomes is you start to visualize what your life would be like once you achieve the goal. So you set your goal, I'm going to lose 10 pounds by December 1, 2022.

And then you start thinking and visualizing what would be possible in your life, what's going to be different when you achieve your goal. So some good things to ask yourself is, what would my life be like once this goal is achieved? What else is going to change in my life, you really want to put yourself in that space and visualize it. Visualizing again has been studied for years. And it's a really powerful way to help you achieve your goals. Because again, what you're doing is you're getting your brain to believe that that's possible. And that's one of the most important things because where our brain normally goes when we're looking for evidence of something being possible is our past. So if you've never lost 10 pounds before, then it's going to be really hard for your brain to believe that it's possible. So you set your goal and then you visualize yourself doing it, which makes it more attainable for your brain. Okay, so that's the W, the first outcome.

Now we're going to talk about the second Oh, obstacles, and this is where strategic pessimism comes in. So you now have to get crystal clear on all of the obstacles that are going to get in the way. Okay, so if this is hard for you, I want to remind you that this is in service to you achieving your goal, and the more obstacles you can come up with, the more specific obstacles you can come up with, the likelier you are to achieve your goal. Okay, so the more detailed you can be with these obstacles, the more successful you will be. For example, don't just say that one of my obstacles to losing 10 pounds is going to be overeating. Instead, get really specific my obstacle will be overeating when I'm up late, and I'm really tired, and I'm just looking for something to snack on. Okay, so come up with as many obstacles as possible.

So you've done your wish, you've set your goal, your wish, and you've created that visualization of what your life will be like when you achieve it. That's your outcome. Come up with all of your obstacles. Now, when I do this for myself, I am so specific about my obstacles. I even go through, what thoughts are going to come up for me and what unintentional thoughts will come up for me that will keep me from achieving my goal. That's how specific I get with my obstacles. It's not just you know, I'm going to, for example, let's see, I'm going to be too tired to exercise, it's, I'm going to be thinking, I'm going to be afraid that if I don't work extra shifts, then I'm not done. I'm not going to have enough money. So I'm gonna schedule myself for extra shifts, but if I scheduled myself for extra shifts, I'd be too tired and I won't have time to exercise. So you see how I go all the way back to the unintentional thought. Okay,

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So then you did the wish the first oh the outcome, the second oh the obstacle. And now we're going to do the P, the plan. Now for this part, you get to come up with a clear action plan for each of your

obstacles. So I literally go back to each obstacle, I put them in a line, and I put them in sometimes even put them in a graph. And next to the obstacle right next to it, I create a plan, a very clear plan of how I'm going to overcome that obstacle. So you go back to all of your obstacles and come up with a plan for each one. Something that works really well here is using the if-then statements, for example, if you know for overeating, when it's late at night, like that obstacle I shared with you earlier. And a good if when a statement is if it's late, and I'm craving food, I'll remind myself that this is a common pattern and that I'm actually not hungry, and I'm going to go to bed. So if it's late, and I'm craving food, then I will remind myself that this is a common pattern that I'm not actually hungry, and I will just go to bed. Okay, so that's an if-then statement. So go through, look at all of your obstacles, and create a super clear plan of how you're going to overcome each obstacle.

Okay, my friends, I want you to try this for yourself. Because when you use strategic pessimism in this way and think about all those obstacles, you are actually setting yourself up to climb that hill and achieve your goal. I think about it as like the water breaks in between, like, let's say your goal is to, if you individualize this, you are at the bottom of the hill. And at the very top of that hill is the success is the goal that you want to achieve. On the way, there are going to be obstacles. So there's going to be a hurdle, there's going to be rocks, trees, whatever. But there's also going to be water stations, those water stations are your plans.

Every time you set a plan, you're able to get over those obstacles. So create that ahead of time and helps your brain see that things are actually achievable. So I do this for all of my goals for the big goals that I set every year. So at the end of every year, when I think about planning my year ahead, I said all of my goals. And for every one of those goals, I actually use this process Exactly. I think about I visualize what it's going to be like when I get there, I create a plan of everything that's going to get in the way. And then I come up with a plan of how I'm going to overcome all of those obstacles. And I do I also do this for my smaller super, like nitty-gritty goals that I have in between, like what I'm going to achieve this week, or what I'm going to achieve this month. And you know, if you've been listening to this podcast, you know that mindset is absolutely everything.

And the sooner you create awareness around not just the obstacles, but the unintentional thoughts that are going to get in the way of you achieving your goals, the faster and the better you will be at living your life on purpose and creating your goals on purpose. So again, the more intentional, you will be able to create your life, the more intentional and more successful your life will be. Okay, so I'll leave you with this. I'll share this with you, you know, I started using whoop, I don't know, maybe like nine years ago or something like that I can't remember. And I used to set my goals by just being really like

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I used to be really forceful, I'd set a goal. And they would not let me quit or rest until I achieved my goal. And I got a lot done that way. But it was actually really uncomfortable and not a really fun way to achieve my goals. I achieved a lot of success. I climbed up the career ladder, I did all of those things. I made a lot of money. But it was actually not a really fun way to live my life. And this was actually a much easier, lighter, more intentional way to set my goals and achieve them because I'm still ambitious and I still love to create things for the world and do big things. But now I'm able to use this process to

do it in a way that feels more intentional, more aligned a little lighter, so that I'm still achieving big things in life but I'm not doing it in a way that is so

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bullish almost. If that's the right way to say all right, my friends I hope you enjoyed this podcast episode and I want you to try out WOOP for yourself W O O P tried out for this yourself. Again, it's a wish outcome obstacle plan. Alright my friends until next week, adios.

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Hey, if you love what you're learning, then you've got to check out my free Ultimate Guide to stop people pleasing, where I teach you a simple five-step process to stop saying yes. When you really want to say No, you'll be so glad that you did. There's a link to the guide in the show notes. I'll see you next time.