



NEWSLETTER

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THIS WEEK'S TOPIC...

GOALS THAT HELP, GOALS THAT HURT

Remember to Think Positive

-by Dean Anderson, Fitness & Behavior Expert, SparkPeople

Whether you're brand new to SparkPeople, or a seasoned veteran, you have no doubt noticed that we put a lot of emphasis on setting goals. From the small first steps you take during the "Fast Break" phase, to the long-range visions that shape the new lifestyle you are trying to create, we know that *the people who succeed at permanent weight loss are the ones who have chosen their goals wisely and pursued them vigorously.*

But how do you know if the goals you set are "wise"—i.e., the right goals for *you*? Setting goals that don't suit you can be the root of much avoidable suffering. You can determine whether your goals are helping you or hurting you in three easy steps:

Step 1: Take a close look at the words that express your goals.

Take a moment to read over your goals. If you keep them written in your head, jot them down on paper quickly before you read further. Done? Now look through your goals for any of the following words: NO, NOT, NEVER, STOP, LOSE, REDUCE, LIMIT, or QUIT. If these negative words (or similar ones) play an important role in the way you have stated your goals, you may be setting yourself up for problems. Here's why.

Words are very powerful! They focus your attention in one area while other possibilities fade away. When words are negative (like those above), their results are negative. When you say, for example, that you will "Stop eating chocolate," what are you really doing? *You are focusing your attention on the very thing you want to avoid—chocolate.* IF going without something you want when it is always on your mind were easy, this might work. But, we all know that "out of sight, out of mind, out of reach" works a lot better.

Step 2: Do your goals deprive you of something you want (or think you want)?

If so, you're just setting yourself up for feelings of deprivation, resentment, and rebelliousness. How

many times have you gone a day, a week, or even longer without caving in to a food on your forbidden list, only to find yourself binging on it later, as if out of sheer spite? Contrary to belief, making something off-limits isn't the best way to maintain control. It'll get that 2-year-old inside us really geared up to do battle.

Step 3: Do your goals set you up for failure?

Framing your goals in negative terms creates an all-or-nothing situation, where even one small slip means failure. And we all know where this leads—"Well, I've already blown it, I might as well enjoy it and start over tomorrow," which turns into next week, next month, or next year. Soon you feel like you can't control your own behavior, but aren't sure what to do about it.

It all starts with the words.

The great thing about having the capacity for language is that we can use words to help ourselves want what it is best for us to have.

Framing your goals in **positive terms** makes reaching them that much easier. Positive words allow you to:

- Focus on what you really want, and on what is helpful and achievable. This creates positive energy and momentum instead of feelings of deprivation and resentment.
- Adjust your plans when you have the inevitable slip-up or bad day. Instead of giving up when you mess up, you can make small changes to balance things out.
- Check in with yourself before you act. Ask yourself if what you are about to eat will help you reach your goals.
- Have true freedom of choice, rather than forcing yourself to rely on will power alone. We just aren't designed to white-knuckle our way through life, always resisting what we think we really want.

So, go through your goals with a fine-toothed comb, and make sure they are positive. Focus on what you **DO** want to eat and what you **WILL** accomplish—not just on how many pounds you want to lose. Keep track of your calories as a necessary tactical measure, but don't confuse going over on any given day with "failure." There's more going on than what happens on any single day, and well-framed goals can help you keep that in view.

MAKE SOMEDAY TODAY!

RECIPE

HEALTHIFIED CHICKEN AND BROCCOLI-PARMESAN PASTA

8 ounces dried whole wheat or multigrain penne pasta (about 2 1/2 cups)

- 3 cups Fresh Broccoli, cut into florets
- 1 pound skinless, boneless chicken breast, cut into bite-size pieces
- 1 teaspoon adobo seasoning
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/4 cup light mayonnaise
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 tablespoons shaved Parmesan cheese

1. In a Dutch oven cook pasta according to package directions, adding broccoli for the last 5 minutes of cooking. Drain well. Return to hot Dutch oven.
 2. Meanwhile, in a medium bowl combine chicken pieces and adobo seasoning; toss to coat. In a large skillet heat oil over medium-high heat. Add garlic; cook and stir for 30 seconds. Add chicken; cook for 3 to 4 minutes or until chicken is no longer pink, stirring occasionally.
 3. Add chicken to drained pasta and broccoli in Dutch oven. Stir in mayonnaise and pepper. Cook over low heat until heated through, stirring occasionally.
 4. To serve, sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.
- Use frozen broccoli instead of fresh.

Yields 6 Servings. Per Serving: Calories 320, Fat 10g, Carbohydrates 33g., Protein 24 g., Fiber 3g. Exchanges, 2 Starch, 1 Vegetable, 2 ½ Protein, 1 Fat

Recipe from eatbetteramerica.com.

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