The Value of Goal Setting With a Chronic Illness

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The Importance of Setting Goals With Fibromyalgia

Why set goals? After all, you know exactly what's going to happen: you will set a few goals, work on them a bit, and then after a few days or weeks the goals will completely fall apart. Not only that, but they will leave a trail of damage in their wake.

The failed goals will serve as another reminder of your incompetence, and the notion that no matter how badly you want something, it just isn't going to work out. It's better to not even try, right?

Wrong.

Though that sounds familiar and seems to make sense, it is an example of faulty logic. Just because your most recent attempts to set and accomplish goals did not go well, does not mean you should abandon the entire process.

It only means you need to take a serious look at the latest examples to gain a better understanding of why they didn't work and learn what can be done to garner more success in the future.

Along the way, you must factor in the impact of fibromyalgia in your life. People with fibro are impacted in numerous physical and psychological ways that make goals even more problematic.

What Can Goals Do?

If you have yourself convinced that goal setting is a tremendous waste of time, think again. A life without goals is like a ship without a rudder or a car without a steering wheel.

Without goals, you are going somewhere, but your destination is a complete unknown. Sure, your journey might reach an interesting end, but you will have no say or control.

Without goals, life lacks direction. Without direction, life lacks meaning and purpose. When you are old and gray, do you want to look back on life as a series of accomplishments fueled by hard work and ambition, or do you want to look back full of regret and missed opportunities?

Lacking goals leads to unwanted feelings and thoughts. When goals are established and accomplished, your mood receives a boost due to the level of control and power you have. To be a happier, healthier, calmer you, setting goals is a must.

The Mistakes and Solutions

Now that you know the significance of setting and accomplishing goals, it is crucial to know the best ways to do

this. People who resist setting goals usually have had negative experiences in the past.

Because of this, they establish negative thoughts that stand in the way. Consider these negative thoughts and ways to push past them.

“I'm Happy With Life the Way It Is”

This thought is problematic in two separate ways. The first is people may try to convince themselves life is going well because they do not think they can achieve more.

They will have low standards for the people, activities and situations in life since they believe that is all they deserve. To combat this, someone would do well to take an accurate inventory of their status to see if they are actually happy, or if they are fearful of failure.

The second way this line of thinking is problematic is because it implies life is static. In reality, your life is in a constant state of flux.

All aspects of your life are either getting better or getting worse. To ensure the desired facets show improvement, you need goals. It is likely setting and achieving goals produced your current state. Additional goals will be needed to maintain it. Otherwise, gravity will pull your accomplishments down.

"My Goals Never Work out the Way I Want"

Setting goals is hard work, but setting the best goals *for you* can be even harder. Many people blame the act of goal-setting for their lack of success, but it is actually the types of goals set that create problems. The largest goal setting mistakes include setting goals that:

- Are too challenging
- Are too vague
- Are for someone else to change
- Are not really interesting
- Do not have a deadline
- Cannot be completed

If you set goals that fall into any or all of these categories, you are assured defeat. By avoiding these common goal-setting mistakes, you leave yourself in a better position to find victory.

"I Don't Know What Goals to Set"

Quite simply, look at your life and find areas that need to be improved. Even if you think the majority of your life is good enough, there is always room to improve.

Do you want to be happier, calmer, fitter or have better relationships? Do you want to minimize fibro symptoms? Start there, but do not end there. Goals need to be:

- Specific
- Measureable
- Attainable
- Realistic
- Timely

Saying you want to be happy is great, but the idea is far too broad. Narrow down the goal by considering the elements of happiness.

What makes you happy? How will you measure happiness? Avoid setting goals that are purely subjective

because they will be impossible to objectively measure. How do you know how happy you are?

To aid your efforts, consider making many small goals that are time-limited rather than one large goal. If you are still struggling, take your larger goal and break it down into smaller pieces.

Happiness might include components like improving relationships, better work experience, improved self-worth and increased physical health.

Any one of these can then be broken down into small parts. Once you can no longer separate, you have found your goal. Work on the tiniest piece and build from there.

Fibro makes each part of your life more challenging and arduous. This makes optimism with goal setting low. Don’t settle for this, though.

With fibro, goal setting is even more valuable and necessary. As long as the goals make sense, this year can be better than the others before it.