

How to achieve any goal

By Fred Sassani
Special to the Pflag

Do you have unmet goals? You aren't alone. In fact, many people live with unfulfilled aspirations and the self-help industry is booming.

Unfortunately, many widely used self-help techniques fail to deliver results.

Case in point: You've probably heard of the "Yale Goal Study" in which researchers were said to have interviewed the graduating Yale seniors in 1953, asking whether or not the students had written down specific goals that they wanted to achieve. Then 20 years down the road the researchers looked up each student and discovered that the 3 percent of the class who had written down their goals had accumulated more personal wealth than the other 97 percent combined.

Very compelling story, but complete fiction.

The "Yale Goal Study" never happened, though motivational

speakers and self-help books have quoted it for years.

Best-selling author and psychologist Richard Wiseman went on a mission to craft a no-nonsense response to the bogus self-help techniques. Using a diverse range of scientific data he uncovered a proven approach to achieve any goal.

The following five successful techniques and five unsuccessful techniques are from Wiseman's book, "59 Seconds: Change Your Life in Under a Minute."

Do this:
Make a step-by-step plan

If you are serious about achieving your goal, then you need to create a step-by-step plan on how to do it.

Successful goal-achievers break down their overall goal into sub-goals. Each sub-goal needs to be concrete, measurable and time-based.

• Not that: Motivate yourself by focusing on someone that you admire.

Studies show that focusing on

someone you admire is not a strong enough motivator to see you through your goal.

Do this: Tell other people about your goal

How badly do you want to achieve your goal? If you want it bad enough, you'll tell your friends and family.

This technique works on two levels. First, you've put yourself on the spot by letting the world in on your goal, so it's all-eyes-on-you. Failure would be public. Second, your friends and family are there to offer support and encouragement. Don't underestimate the psychological power of having someone in your corner.

• Not that: Think about the bad things.

When you focus on the negative it becomes your reality.

Do this: Focus on the good things to achieve your goal

Remind yourself of the benefits associated with achieving your goal.

Make a checklist of how life

FRED'S EXTRA FITNESS TIP OF THE WEEK:

"Just a few minutes"

Are you a chronic procrastinator? Do you put off going to the gym? Research shows that by spending "just a few minutes" doing the dreaded task you'll feel an urge to see it through completion. These initial few minutes of activity create an anxious brain that refuses to rest until the job is done.

will be better once you have achieved your aim. This gets your focus on a positive future, one that's worth the effort.

• Not that: Try to suppress unhelpful thoughts.

Rather than trying to erase that image of chocolate cake from your mind, learn to deal with the reality of temptation head-on.

Do this:
Reward your progress

Studies show that attaching rewards to each of your sub-goals encourages success.

Your rewards should never conflict with your major goal. When aiming to lose weight, never use food as a reward.

• Not that: Rely on willpower. Willpower alone rarely gets anyone to their goal.

Do this:
Record your progress

Make your plans, progress,

benefits and rewards concrete by expressing them in writing.

Use a hand-written journal, your computer or a bulletin board to chart your progress. This process is priceless for maintaining motivation.

• Not that: Fantasize about life after achieving your goal.

Daydreaming is fun, but simply fantasizing about your new life will not make it a reality.

Are you ready to achieve your fitness and weight loss

goal once and for all? Now is your time to get into the best shape of your life.

Fred Sassani is founder of Bodies By Design Personal Training Services, nationally certified personal trainer and nutrition specialist in Pflugerville. For comments or questions you can reach Fred at getfit@trainerfred.com or visit his website at trainerfred.com.

HEALTH BRIEFS

Doctor to speak on diabetes-related heart disease

Join Dr. Mary Beth Cishek, a cardiologist with Seton Heart Institute and medical director at Seton Heart Specialty Care and Transplant Center, at Seton Medical Center Austin on Feb. 23 to learn what can be done to reduce the risk of heart disease for those with diabetes or pre-diabetes. Cishek will also talk about some of the medical interventions available to persons with cardiovascular disease.

Seton Medical Center Austin is located at 1201 W. 38th St., Austin. The event begins at 6:30 p.m.

This event is offered free of charge, but seating is limited and advanced registration is required. Call Seton Diabetes Education Center at 324-1891 to pre-register or register at goodhealth.com/classes_and_events/classes/02_23_2011_ask_the_cardiologist online.

Area residents encouraged to participate in cancer study

The American Cancer Society along with Austin Mayor Lee Leffingwell and Sen. Kirk Watson are encouraging 1,000 Austin and Central Texas residents to participate in the historic Cancer Prevention Study-3.

The American Cancer Society's Cancer Prevention Study-3 will follow the health of participants for more than 20 years to better understand the genetic, environmental, and lifestyle factors that cause or prevent cancer. Nationwide, 500,000 study participants are needed, with 25 percent of study participants from diverse populations.

The study is open to anyone between 30 and 65 years old who has never been diagnosed with cancer. Those enrolling will be asked to read and sign an informed consent form, complete a comprehensive health survey, provide physical measurements, and give a small blood sample. Participants must be willing to make a long-term commitment to the study and complete periodic surveys at home.

On-site enrollment is scheduled for March 1-5 at the American Cancer Society offices in Austin. To schedule an appointment go to seeuthere.com/cps3enroll/austin or call toll free 1-888-604-5888 to speak to someone in English or Spanish.

Cancer Prevention Study-3 builds on the history of Society-sponsored follow-up studies, starting in the 1950s, that have provided insights into the causes and prevention of cancer.

For more information on CPS-3, go to cancer.org/cps3 online.

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Numbness, tingling, weakness, in the hand and fingers?

A free seminar provided by St. David's North Austin Medical Center.

Plan to attend this free community seminar as we answer and discuss the many options available to those who suffer from carpal tunnel. Join Dr. Harris S. Rose as he discusses the symptoms and diagnosis of carpal tunnel. He will also talk about the newest treatments and surgical options available to treat carpal tunnel.

Free seminar
Thursday, February 24, 2011
6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

St. David's North Austin Medical Center
Classroom B (2nd floor)

Dinner will be provided

Presented by:
Harris S. Rose, M.D.

Please RSVP to 888.868.2104 or 512.478.3627.



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*Annual Percentage Rate. All rates are expressed "as low as". Actual rate may vary depending on credit qualifications. **Rate applies to 1st lien commercial real estate loans with a loan to value of 80% or less; construction/development loan rates/terms may vary. ***Annual Percentage Yield. Penalties for early withdrawal may apply. Rates and terms are subject to change without notice. Austin Telco FCU is federally insured to at least \$250,000 per member by the National Credit Union Administration.

