

A Six-Step Plan for Success

By Debi Silber, MS, RD, WHC The Mojo Coach®

How do you create lasting change this year in the six areas that, as moms, we struggle with most? Here's a six-step plan for success:

1. The first step is to re-evaluate the previous year and asks yourself "How did it go? How did you handle things? Did you handle yourself the way you wanted to?" Find your answers using the six areas we struggle with most.

For example, how did you handle yourself with food? Did you do a lot of social/binge/emotional or mindless eating? How was your fitness? Were you motivated, did you enjoy your workouts and did you get the results you wanted? How did you handle stress? Who or what was stressful for you and how did you handle it? How was your emotional outlook? Were you as positive or optimistic as you would have liked? Take a look at your relationships. Were they supportive, nurturing or toxic and destructive? How was your spirituality? Were you barely getting through your days or were you excited about your life and living with passion and purpose?

2. Based on the answers you just found, next determine what you want. Here are some questions to consider:

Do you want to lose weight? Do you want to eat healthier? Do you want to cook better meals? Do you want to food shop more effectively? Do you want to take more time to pre-plan your meals and snacks? Are you ready to end binge eating behavior?

As far as your fitness, if you realize you didn't take time for fitness, what do you want now? Do you want to create a more exciting workout? Do you need more motivation? Would a workout buddy or new exercise program help?

When evaluating your stress, do you need a more effective outlet for better stress control? Do you want to learn to journal, meditate or to do yoga instead of eating or doing another destructive self-soothing behavior when you're stressed? Do you want to become very familiar with the signs and signals that let you know that your body's under stress?

As far as your emotions, do you want to become more optimistic, positive, less serious or just more fun?

As far as your relationships, do you need to reset boundaries, would you like to have a closer connection with your partner or do you want to have stronger, more fulfilling friendships?

When you look at your spirituality, is it time to pursue that goal, feel the joy, fulfillment and satisfaction that occurs when you're doing what you absolutely love to do?

Once you come up with all those answers, be as specific as you can so that what you want becomes clear and it feels real down to the very last detail. The more clearly you can determine what you want, the more effectively you can create a plan to get there!

3. This next step is crucial but often overlooked. You want to consider every obstacle you may encounter. When you consider all of your obstacles, you're not as thrown when they arise. They're already somewhat familiar to you and it prevents you from being derailed by them. Money, time, self-doubt and fear may be some obstacles you discover but look closely and you may find fear to be the biggest obstacle of all!

4. Once all obstacles are considered, come up with a strategy to overcome *every one of them*. We often don't think of what may derail us or what may sabotage us. That's why when we're faced with it for the first time, we fall off track. Without planning, we fall off and we haven't considered how to get back on.

5. After you've discovered what it is that you want, it's helpful to set small, manageable goals based on what you want to achieve and the strategies you just created. The reason why you break it down into small, manageable goals is to prevent overwhelm and encourage success. When you set a goal and you reach it, it builds your confidence and motivates you to continue.

6. Lastly, how will you measure and track your progress? How will you reward yourself? Will you monitor your progress and reward yourself daily or weekly? Will you reward yourself when you reach a specific goal or when you handled something in a way that made you proud? What's important is that you determine, set up and implement a tracking and reward system for many reasons. Besides keeping us motivated to continue, monitoring our progress and rewarding our efforts validates our progress, helps us see what's working and what's not, helps us stay encouraged to continue, focused and on track.

How will your year turn out? While many things are out of our control, our thoughts, behaviors and

actions are things we have complete control over. Destructive behaviors can lead us to continue down a path that doesn't work for us while taking the steps towards creating new, positive behaviors brings us closer to becoming the woman that's been patiently waiting to be unleashed. As always, the choice is ours.



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