

# HOW TO Break Down Your Goals

A Simple 3-Step Guide for Goal Success





# Hi there, and happy new year!

That's right, **no matter what day of the year it is, TODAY can be your January 1st**—the fresh start you're craving! If you're ready to dig in, we have everything you need to make progress on your goals. We're going to make this simple and straightforward, because there's no need to be overwhelmed by your goals and what you hope to accomplish this year!

Still, the overwhelm can creep in:

There's so much to do.

There's so much you want to change.

And you want to do it all now.

**The good, big change you want in 2021 feels impossible, right?** How, exactly, are you supposed to make progress on those lofty, big-picture goals you've set? (You know the ones: we're looking at you, "get fit," "strengthen my marriage," and "pay off debt.")

The answer is simple: **you break them down.** In this guide, we'll walk you through the simple steps for success and give you helpful resources along the way.

First, though, consider the alternative. If you don't break your goals down? Those big picture goals that matter deeply to you will just sit there—pristine, untouched, and making you feel guilty. At the end of the year, you'll be no further along than you are right now.

**You don't want that to happen, so let's get to breaking it down!**


Bustin' a move right next to you,  
Team Cultivate





# GOALS

Get out of debt 

Create daily rhythms 

## STEP 1:

# Start with clear goals that matter.

Before we dive in, let's make sure you're starting in the right place.

**The number one reason we see people unable to break down their goals? They're working on the wrong ones.**

It's true!

Before we get into the how-to of breaking down your goals into actionable, bite-size pieces, let's make sure they're actually worth spending your time on — right now, right where you are, with what you have.



**DO THIS:** Pull out your 2021 goals, and ask yourself these 3 simple questions for each one.

- 1 IS THIS GOAL DEEPLY CONNECTED TO MY WHY?** *Did I set it out of thin air — or because it sounded good — or will it bring me closer to where I want to be when I'm 80? (One of the most important questions in your PowerSheets®!)*

**All of your goals need to point you toward that long-term vision for your life—** it's the secret to setting the right goals. (If you need help defining a long-term vision, that's what the PowerSheets Prep Work is for!)

**When the goal you want to achieve matters to you in the big picture, you'll follow through to break it down and live it out.** No matter how many times you mess up along the way, you'll get back up—because your heart is in it! How perfectly you get there doesn't matter as much as why.

If a goal doesn't really mean anything to you, of course you're not going to follow through on it—because achieving a goal often takes time, hard work, diligence, focus, and more of your resources that are in short supply. Which brings us to...

## 2 WHAT IS THIS GOAL GOING

**TO COST ME?** *Do I have the "budget" for it? A goal could be deeply connected to your why, but you simply might not be able to complete it with your current resources. Look at each of your goals, and ask yourself:*

### **Do I have the time to complete this goal?**

If not, could I shift some of my other responsibilities to give myself more time? Time is the currency we use to invest in the things that matter.

**Do I have the necessary reserves of patience, will power, and focus to complete this goal?** (For example, if you've just had a baby and are sleep-deprived, a goal that requires intense detail work might not be the best fit!)

We all have a finite amount of resources, and there are a lot of demands on them. **Carefully evaluate each goal to see whether it's realistic to make progress on it with the resources you have.** If it's not, tweak or discard the goal—you can always return to it in a different season! Which brings us to...

## 3 IS THIS GOAL THE RIGHT GOAL FOR RIGHT NOW? OR FOR A DIFFERENT SEASON?

*Maybe, after asking yourself the questions above, you realize you don't have the resources to complete one of your goals. Or maybe you're in a season of transition (moving across the country, in-between jobs, caring for an ailing parent). A goal can be good, worthy, and deeply connected to your why, but it will only lead to frustration if you try to tackle it in an already-full season of life.*

**Hold up each of your goals next to your life as it is today, and ask whether this is the right season to pursue it.** If the answer is no, gently tuck it away for another season—perhaps sooner than you think.



**DO THIS:** Use these questions to confirm, cross out, or tweak your 2021 goals.

**NOW, LET'S MOVE ON TO BREAKING DOWN YOUR GOOD GOALS!**





## STEP 2:

# Set Mini Goals.

### Get ready to Break. It. Down.

No, not the dancing kind of break it down, although this might make you want to bust a move, too! :)

**Break your big goals down.** Then break them down some more. Then break them down some more, until your steps are so small and simple that you can't help but take action!

### HERE'S WHY MINI GOALS AND ACTION STEPS ARE SO MAGICAL:

- ✓ Mini goals keep you motivated because they're easy to do (and our brains like succeeding at small things!).
- ✓ They're measurable, so you'll know when you've made progress.

- ✓ And they'll lead to more progress, per Newton's first law of motion: an object in motion tends to stay in motion (or a gal checking off one action step tends to check off another!).

### MINI GOALS HAVE TWO SIMPLE GUIDELINES:

- 1 SMALL** (they might be something you can accomplish in a shorter period of time than a year—perhaps something you can do in a month or in three months)
- 2 SIMPLE** (they're concrete, so it's easy to know when you've completed them!)

LET'S LOOK AT A FEW EXAMPLES:

**BIG-PICTURE GOAL** Take care of my body

**MINI GOAL 1**

Run a 5k

*find a local running shop, get fitted for running shoes, download the Couch to 5k app, pick a date for my first run*

**MINI GOAL 2**

Cook more meals at home

*ask a friend for her favorite easy meals, make a meal plan for one week, cook dinner at home three nights in one week*

**MINI GOAL 3**

Get a baseline read on my health

*ask for primary care doc recommendations on Facebook, call and make an appointment, ask about what vitamins to take*

**BIG-PICTURE GOAL** Grow my faith

**MINI GOAL 1**

Get in the Word more

*put my Bible on my bedside table, set an alarm at night to remind me to head to the bedroom and start reading, download a YouVersion reading plan*

**MINI GOAL 2**

Deepen my prayer life

*choose points throughout the day to anchor in prayer, order a book about prayer, get on my knees every morning*

**MINI GOAL 3**

Join a church family

*ask for a recommendation from someone I trust, explore potential church websites, look up the times of Sunday services*

**BIG-PICTURE GOAL** Love my children well

**MINI GOAL 1**

Set boundaries around my phone use

*move my charger to the kitchen counter, turn off notifications, put my phone away from 5-8 every night, find something to do instead with my hands*

**MINI GOAL 2**

Spend the hour before dinner together

*spend some time thinking about their love languages, move a read-aloud book to our coffee table so it's easier to pick up and read, move my phone to another room*

### MINI GOAL 3

Get to know their friends

*reach out to one friend's mama for a park date, ask each child what they love about their best friend, set aside time to sit outside in the afternoon/evening while they play with the neighbors*

So helpful, right!?!? **Breaking big goals down into bite-sized pieces makes them doable.** Making progress on your mini goals will feel so good because, little by little, you'll inch towards that big picture goal—no perfection required! Little by little steps really do add up.

**Having a hard time coming up with action steps?** Dream about what success for your goal looks like at the end of the year, and then fill in the space between that vision and where you are now. Psst — we've got a bank of action steps for common goals on page 10, too!



**DO THIS:** The Action Plan pages in your PowerSheets make setting mini goals and action steps as simple as can be, but if you don't yet have your PowerSheets, grab a piece of blank paper! Brainstorm possible mini goals for each of your big-picture goals, and then brainstorm action steps under each mini goal. Aim for at least three action steps for each — or go crazy and jot down 10, 20, or 30! The more specific and small you can get here, the better your chances of actually **DOING** these things.



### STEP 3:

## Pace yourself for success.

No matter how much you break your goals down, they'll still feel overwhelming if you try to tackle action steps 1-30 — or even 1-3 — immediately.

**The recipe for goal failure?** Do it all now. Do it alllllll now. Start on all of your goals right away, and cram as much progress in as you can. Burn the candle at both ends.

Once you lose momentum and do something imperfectly or something feels hard, stop trying altogether. End the year pretty much where you started, except angrier and more frustrated.

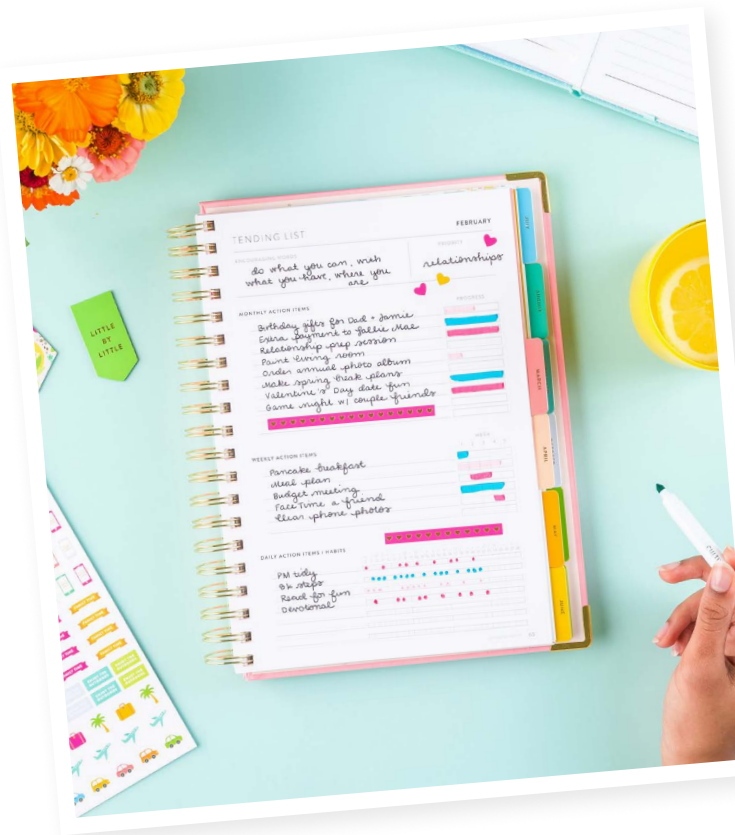
Ugh! No, thank you, right!?

**READY TO TRY A NEW WAY?  
HERE'S HOW TO SUCCEED!**



**Friend, it's okay to want change now—** that's why you're here, that's why you invested in the PowerSheets process.

Here's a truth that will change your life: **the path to lasting, sustainable change is embracing little-by-little progress over time—not all at once.**





**DO THIS:** Try these four tips for spacing out your goals throughout the year.

- 1 USE THE YEARLY OVERVIEW PAGES IN YOUR POWERSHEETS TO SKETCH OUT WHEN YOU MIGHT BEGIN EACH OF YOUR MINI GOALS.** Start small and just look at the season ahead—the next 90 days. What can you spread out over the next three months to help you make progress over time without burning out? At the end of March, you'll have a quarterly goal refresh, which is the perfect opportunity to evaluate your progress and plan out more mini goals ahead! *A tip: cut out little sticky notes to easily move mini goals around from month to month, if you'd like.*

**TRY THIS:** Choose four mini goals for each of your big-picture goals, and tackle one each quarter of 2021. Our brains LOVE 90-day windows — it's the perfect amount of time to focus intently before needing a refresh — and this is a proven way to take advantage of them. With this strategy, you'll know you're moving each of your goals forward throughout the year in a way that's sustainable and impactful!

- 2 CONSIDER WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN FIRST.** If you're struggling with which mini goal to tackle first, go with chronological order or whatever is best for your season. Some action steps need to happen before others, which makes for natural starting places!
- 3 REMEMBER YOUR TIME AND RESOURCE BUDGET.** Be realistic about how much you can accomplish in a given day, week, and month. Remember there are 12 months in a year to make progress, and that we tend to overestimate what we can accomplish in a week, and underestimate what we can accomplish in a year!
- 4 HAVE SOMETHING YOU LOVE ABOUT THE LIFE YOU'RE LIVING NOW.** It's natural to want instant gratification. Instead of fighting your desire for change, give yourself a quick win by identifying, making room for, and appreciating something that's already in your life, something that makes you feel like the person you want to be. Maybe it's writing a note to a faraway friend, or drinking coffee from your favorite mug, or lighting a candle as you do the dishes. Find a way to love the life you're living even as you work to make change.

**FEELING STUCK ON WAYS TO BREAK DOWN YOUR GOALS?  
WE'RE HERE TO HELP!**

Here are the top goal categories we see in this community and dozens of action step ideas for each. Click for ideas!



**FITNESS** ›



**NUTRITION** ›



**FAITH** ›



**PARENTING** ›



**RELATIONSHIPS** ›



**BUSINESS** ›



**FINANCE** ›



**CAREER** ›



# What's next? Take the first step!

You've got your goals—and you've checked that they're right for your season.

You've broken your big picture goals down into mini goals, and broken your mini goals into action steps. You've made a rough plan for the year. It's feeling so good! But, now what!?

**Maybe you're afraid to take the first step.** Perhaps you're fearful that your first step won't be perfect, and you'll fail.

*Here's a dose of truth for you: it doesn't need to be perfect.*

Say it with us: your first step doesn't have to be perfect. Neither does your second step. Or third step. Imperfect progress is still progress!

Imagine how it will feel when you take that first step. What if one step leads to another step and to another, until a few weeks or a few months from now, you're

in a new place, having achieved something that truly matters to you?

**How will that change your life? How will it change the life of the people you love?**

Friends, the hardest part of getting started is getting started. Let's embrace a little Nike wisdom and *just do it*. Don't overcomplicate this.

**Yes, you can make imperfect progress on starting your goals, and still achieve your goals!**

You do not have to do it all, or make perfect progress, or start flawlessly, or do more, or get it all done now, or have your goals perfectly formed by January 1.

It's never too late to start fresh.  
It's okay to grow slow.  
Little by little, change will happen.

**START TODAY - RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE.**

# Get started now with these resources:



## GET YOUR POWERSHEETS

to set good goals and  
finally follow through  
on them



## WATCH THIS FREE WEBINAR

with Lara Casey for more  
insight on breaking  
down your goals



## DOWNLOAD THIS GOAL SETTING CHECKLIST

to do a deeper check  
on your goals



## GET TIPS FOR CREATING YOUR TENDING LIST

to make the most out  
of each month



## JOIN THE POWERSHEETS FACEBOOK GROUP

for community and  
accountability



## LISTEN TO THE CULTIVATE YOUR LIFE PODCAST

for encouragement  
from Lara



## READ LARA'S BOOK, *CULTIVATE*

to help you  
embrace the  
season you're in



## DOWNLOAD FREE WORD OF THE YEAR WALLPAPERS

to remind you of  
what matters



## GET THE FREE POWERSHEETS GROUP GUIDE

and learn how to achieve  
your goals with friends



## COMPLETE YOUR COLLECTION

and get your favorite  
PowerSheets  
accessories



## READ THE CULTIVATE BLOG

for practical tips  
to live a more  
intentional life



## FOLLOW CULTIVATE ON INSTAGRAM

for daily inspiration,  
coaching, and fun