

Personal Development Plan

A personal development plan will help you reach your goals in your career. It helps you think through what your goals and aspirations are, and to plan what steps to take in order to get there. To be effective it should also cover what motivates you and what habits you need in place in order to get there. It is also important that you can measure your progress.

1. Internalise and set goals

To begin with, spend some time on thinking and internalising. Consider what are you good at? What do you like to do? Where do you want to be in 3 years and in 5 years?

It's important that you reflect your own wants and goals and that you are not influenced by other people or what society expects of you.

Often we have people in our lives who have expectations, like our parents, our children, extended family, spouses and friends. And of course their opinion and expectations matter. But when making a personal development plan you need to make sure that it is your wants and your goals. If it happens to coincide with expectations from friends, family and society then that is a nice bonus, but it should not be steering your goal.

It can be difficult to think 3 year or 5 years into the future. But remember you can always change your plan as you go.

When you set goals and intentions for what you want to achieve, then dear to dream. Make some goals that excite you and that are a stretch. Do not worry too much right now about how you will achieve it. Or if it is possible. If the goal motivates you to do things that are outside of your comfort zone, then it is a good goal. Most people will overestimate what they can do in one year, but underestimate what they can do in 5 years.

1a What do you like to do? And how can you use this in your work? Think professionally what things in your work do you like to do? Still you can also think in a wide sense. If you are

passionate about music and like going to concerts for instance. You may think that this does not have a connection with your work. Still music connects people and connection is very important in business and work life.

1b What is your career goal? Is there something you want to achieve in your career? No matter how big or small you have space to put it here. Be specific and be ambitious. But don't be ambitious just to be ambitious. And do not avoid ambition because it is out of your comfort zone.

1c What is your goal for the next 3 years?

1d What is your goal for the next 5 years?

2 Consider the why

Why you do something is your driving force. Extrinsic motivation is money, benefits and position are important. But do not forget intrinsic motivators like learning, the greater good and giving to the community. Research shows that we need both extrinsic and intrinsic motivators. And when it comes to long term persistence intrinsic motivators become increasingly important.

2a Why is your goal Important to you?

2b Dig deeper Ask 7 times

A way to find your deeper and intrinsic why is to ask yourself why you want to achieve a goal and normally first the extrinsic motivations come. Like I want to make more money. If we then ask why do I want to make more money? Then we might get why I want to live more comfortably? Why do I want to live more comfortably? I want to have enough energy to play with my children and follow them up at school. Why do I want more time with my children? Because I want them to have a good future and be a positive impact in society?

This is best done in conversation with another person. Find someone that you can do this exercise with.

And write down the essence of what you learned from this exercise below?

3 Assess where you are now.

3a Where are you now? What skill do you have now that you can use in reaching your goals? And what skills can you build on? What are you happy with in your life and what would you like to change?

3b What skills do you have that will help you achieve your goals? And what skills do you still need to acquire to get there? For the skills that you still need to get, what can you do to get them? Is there a course or class you can take? Are there people in the office that have these skills, can they advise or mentor you?

4. Make a plan

Now it is time to make a plan. In doing so it's important that your goals are specific and that you can measure your progress. What are the parameters you can measure on each level of your goal? What needs to happen in order for you to say that you have reached part of your goal?

Make here an example. In making a plan you should divide your goal into smaller goals and stages and set a deadline for each stage. Start with the goals in 1d. Break them into smaller goals here under.

4a Which parts can go into your 3 year goal in 1c?

4b Break down your goal in 1c into smaller achievable goals?

4c How can you measure your progress towards each one of your goals?

5 Habits

In the beginning when we have set a goal we are excited and it's easier to do what it takes to get there. But after a while you will notice that the will power wears off. Reminding ourselves of the goal and our motivation helps. Still we can only go so far on will power and our will will get tired. This is what it's good to have good habits to fall back on. And to be aware while we are still motivated that we make habits that will help us get there.

This can be getting up a bit earlier every day. Time blocking our tasks. Exercising regularly. Having a planning session each week.

5a Which habits do you already have that will support you to reach your goals?

5b Which habits do you need to install in your life to help you get there?

6. Sticking with it for the long run

When it comes to goals it is easy to work on the motivation in the beginning while the goal is new. After some months one can experience that the motivation and goals fades. It is important to keep reminding oneself of the goals and why one is doing it.

A good tip is to involve more than our analytical side in this. When we plan we mainly use our left brain. The analytical one. But remember we also have a right side. On our right side is our creativity and our feelings. ANd ultimately it is one brain that works together. Therefore it's good to involve the right sude, our creative side and our feelings in our plans. How do we do that? By involving our imagination and feelings. So imagine how it will feel when you have reached the goal. Make a picture in your head of how it would look like. Make a moodboard of your goal.