THE WOOP (MCII) METHOD WORKBOOK: AN INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE TO A GOAL SETTING MASTER TOOL

"Our goals can only be reached through a vehicle of a plan, in which we must fervently believe, and upon which we must vigorously act. There is no other route to success."—Pablo Picasso







We all have behaviors we would like to change or habits we'd like to build in our lives. People set goals every single day.

But setting goals, and fulfilling them are two very different things.

Psychology has provided us with a tool to help us set goals and fulfill them, and it uses the automatic processes of our own minds to do it. This isn't conjecture, this method has been proven scientifically over decades to succeed. It's changing lives, and it's about time you added it to your tool box so that you can build the fulfilling, accomplished life that you've always dreamed about.

WHAT IS THE WOOP METHOD?

The WOOP method is a scientifically proven tool in the repitoire of very successful people for setting goals and evaluating life decisions. The WOOP Method is different from other goal-setting strategies because it combines two known and effective tools called Mental Contrasting and Implementation Intentions. On their own, each of these tools have both been scientifically proven to have a large impact on actual behavior and significantly increase the likelihood of people achieving their goals. The WOOP Method fuses these two tools together to create an even MORE powerful tool.

Developed by Professor Gabriele Oettingen at New York University, the WOOP Method has more than 20 years of testing in classrooms, gyms, and health care settings.

In schools, the WOOP Method has been shown to significantly improve effort, homework completion, attendance, and GPA. Outside of schools, the WOOP Method has been shown to reduce stress, increase engagement, improve time management, and promote physical fitness.

Oettingen introduced the WOOP Method to the public in 2014, with the publication of her book "Rethinking Positive Thinking." She also recently developed an app that allows users to use the WOOP Method for health-related, professional, and interpersonal goals. You can learn more on her website:

http://www.woopmylife.org

"Set your goals high, and don't stop till you get there." -Bo Jackson The WOOP Method stands for: Wish, Outcome, Obstacle and Plan, which are the steps to go through when using the method. We will explore them more closely shortly.

WOOP is a relatively simple tool like a bicycle or a hammer, and more or less everyone can use it.

Using the WOOP Method, you can make yourself do things you don't like to do, or stop doing things you don't want to do any longer. You can gain insight into your habits, you can develop your passions, or even decide that something isn't actually a wish or goal that you want to pursue.

The WOOP Method helps you achieve goals that are feasible, and helps let go of goals that really aren't feasible.

WAYS TO USE THE WOOP METHOD

You can choose a goal that is feasible and attainable to you, that may require a little bit of exercise. You will likely discover an obstacle that's surmountable and you can press forward to achieve your goal.

Or you can use the WOOP Method to help you clean up your life, to get rid of things in your life that you're not passionate about, or that you realistically aren't able to do.

You can also use the WOOP Method to assess whether something is feasible for you to try to achieve or not. If you have a scenario you aren't sure about, then you can use the WOOP Method to imagine/visualize/review it and decide if it's something that fits in your life and you want to pursue, or if it's something you want to let go of pursuing because it doesn't fit in your life at that moment.

The main objective of the WOOP Method is to get you directly and consciously involved in assessing your wishes and goals realistically. So maybe yoga seven times a week isn't feasible, but evaluating your schedule, abilities and levels of commitment using the WOOP Method you may decide that four times a week would work instead. The WOOP Method gets you into the process, involved and active in the problem solving.

The process is similar to the visioning style that Albert Einstein would use. He would immerse himself imaginatively in whatever process he was considering at the moment. He would imagine himself as an atomic particle, or a space-and-time wave travelling through space. The WOOP Method is similar in that you visualize yourself IN THE PROCESS of whatever wish or goal you are assessing.

HOW DOES THE WOOP METHOD WORK?

The WOOP Method works by creating attachments between concepts in your mind. You attach an obstacle to an action so they are automatically partnered without you having to think about it in your daily life. When you see an obstacle happening that you've prepared for a part of your brain says "Aha, this is the obstacle we've prepared for!" and the response you planned for is just automatically there in your path. It makes taking action that you want to take that much easier. You don't have to rely on just will power or mere motivation to accomplish your goals. Your neurological circuitry is working FOR you.

By going through the mental processes involved with the WOOP Method for five minutes following the WOOP guidelines (outlined below), automatic mechanisms in your mind are triggered that do the work for you, and that's it. This process is not a hard, sweat-inducing, or a constant input process. You did the work, wrote the mental program, and can back and allow it to work.

You can discover a lot of interesting things about your life using the WOOP Method. It can be a great means to assess your decisions before acting on them. When you use the WOOP Method you get so much clarity in life. When you practice it, and experience its efficacy, and the ways it assists you in improving your life, the WOOP Method takes on a sort of addictive quality.

THE PRACTICE - HOW THE WOOP METHOD IS DONE

To start, establish a daily ritual. Use the WOOP Method consistently in the morning, or in the evening before bed. You need 5 minutes of uninterrupted calm in order to take yourself out of your busy life and work through the steps (which we'll cover in depth shortly). If you can bring yourself to do this practice for 5 minutes every day you can achieve real empirical success toward your goals. Take these five minutes and just go through the process. Do it at the same place and at the same time every day to build the process into a habit in your daily life.

You will have wishes or goals come to mind. Then use the WOOP Method on them. Don't think you have to go achieve your wish or goal immediately. Fulfilling your wish RIGHT NOW is not the point of this exercise. You are creating neural links through the process that will make themselves obvious to you when you reach a point where the opportunity to act toward your goals presents itself.

Trust the process, that it's speaking directly to your brain's automatic processes, and the WOOP Method will help you achieve and lead a more pleasant, constructive and fulfilling life.

You can use the WOOP Method on every wish or goal that you have. Consider the process as a close friend who is always there for you to bounce your ideas off of and ask, "What do I really want out of this situation? Why am I really here?" Think of it as daily help to clarify your mind and objectives.

You can use the WOOP Method under stressful situations as well. It is a great way to help you collect yourself mentally and to get a clearer understanding of the situation, and to help you decide how you really want to proceed.

LET'S GET STARTED

Vital Living has provided this workbook to help guide you through the steps. This process does not need to be done on paper. It's effective done just in the mind. However, when learning new processes, having a place to write down your thoughts is helpful.

At the end of this guide you will find examples of practical uses for the WOOP Method, and a short exploration of some of the research illuminating it's efficacy. Please stick around to read further.

In this guide each step of the process will have its own instructional page, followed by a page for you to write down your thoughts, impressions and conclusions. We hope you find much benefit from the process and from this workbook. You can find more, similar instructional guides on our website at http://www.vitalliving.life.

Thank you for your time, and enjoy!

W = WISH

STEP ONE of the WOOP Method is the searching process. Ask yourself: "What is my most important wish RIGHT NOW? What goal is it that I really want to achieve?"

Think about your wish or goal as specifically as possible.

An example: I want to meditate three times a week for 30 minutes at 8pm on Mon/Wed/Fri.



GOAL SPECIFICITY – The degree of quantitative precision with which a goal is specified. I'm going to meditate x amounts a week for x minutes at home on these particular days. Get specific about the task and how you're going to do it.

Those who have more specific goals have better task strategy. Figuring out how you're going to do specific tasks leads to better performance. Make your goals incredibly specific.

Isolate that one important wish that is really dear to your heart. Then formulate it into three or four words and put it in front of your mind and write it down on the next page.

Your wish should be challenging, compelling, and realistic.

The time horizon of the goal doesn't matter. It could be due today, tomorrow, in 3 weeks, in 2 months, in a year, in 5 years, or in 100 years. Or it could be a behavior, skill, or anything else that you just want to generally improve (with no time horizon at all).

Note: If you choose an unrealistic goal, using the WOOP Method will make you less motivated, less energized, and less likely to achieve that goal. That's a good thing because when that happens, you know that it's not realistic and, you can stop wasting your time, and set a more feasible goal.

Don't go back to old wishes. What is my wish for today? For next week? Our wishes come from our needs. Since life changes all of the time, your wishes will come from your current needs and change on a daily basis.

In order for this process to work you actually have to take time to really mentally experience the different steps - imagine the wish, the obstacle and the outcome. It takes real mental effort. In order for the WOOP Method to work don't just think abstractly about the steps but immerse yourself in the process. Let your mind visualize and explore as you move through each of the steps.

The mechanisms that make this process work are automatic and do the work for you, but the procedure itself to trigger the mechanisms takes real immersive work.

TODAY'S	wish
CO.	



"If you are a dreamer come in.

If you are a dreamer, a wisher, a liar,

A hoper, a pray-er, a magic-bean-buyer,

If you're a pretender come sit by my fire

For we have some flax golden tales to spin.

Come in! Come in!" — Shel Silverstein

O = OUTCOME

STEP TWO: Ask yourself "What's the best possible outcome that would result from accomplishing my goal?" It might be an emotion, a good result, the BEST thing. Really let your mind go. How would you feel? Visualize this outcome in your mind. Experience it imaginitively. Really feel it out.



This could take from 30 seconds to a minute, or longer if your wish. On the next page jot down some of the highlights you experienced. How did the best outcome to your wish make you feel? What was going on around you? What's the big picture look like?

Remember that you actually have to take time to really mentally experience these different steps – imagine the wish and the outcome. It takes real mental effort. In order to work don't just think abstractly about the steps. The mechanisms that make this process work are automatic and do the process for you, but the procedure itself to trigger the mechanisms take the work.

WARNING: Don't switch the 0's (outcome vs obstacles).. Once you switch the 0's the WOOP Method doesn't work anymore. You only can discover the obstacle in the framework of the outcome. Don't first think about the obstacle. First the outcome, then the obstacle.

If you only think about the obstacles you'll never get started because you'll be quagmire with the scale and effort involved in the task. You need a happy medium of both intentionally and effortfully.

"I didn't come here to be average."
- Michael Jordan

THE BEST POSSIBLE OUTCOME...



Every great dream begins with a dreamer.

Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world."

- Harriet Tubman

O = OBSTACLES

STEP THREE: Imagine whatever personal obstacle that you might face that would prevent you from achieving your goal. Really let your mind go and imagine that obstacle in action, The biggest, most prohibitive obstacle. Experience it clearly in your mind. What does that obstacle look like, how does it make you feel? Who is with you, and what's happening?



What is standing in the way between you and achieving your goal?

You could spend 30 seconds to a minute on this process, or longer if it feels right. Just let your mind go and really experience it.

Examples:

"I don't feel motivated or excited to exercise in the morning."

"I procrastinate and get distracted by Facebook and social media."

"I'm tired when I get home from work and just don't feel like reading."

Switch gears and be truthful with yourself. What is really stopping you from fulfilling your wish? What is in YOU that stands in the way? What is your main inner obstacle to success? Search inside of yourself, no excuses. Is it an emotion, an irrational belief, a bad habit, or something somebody said? Dig deep. Once you identify that obstacle, that main inner obstacle, jot it down on the next page. Don't worry, nobody but you will see what you wrote.

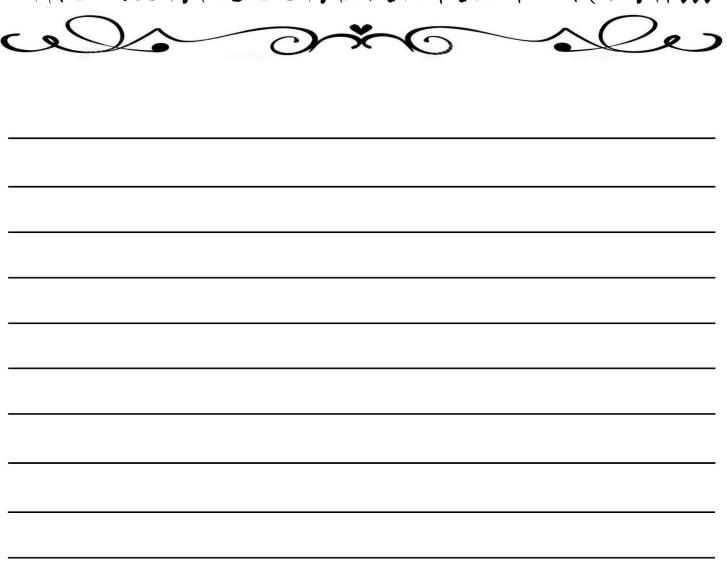
It's helpful to think about your obstacle in a lot of detail. Spend the same amount of time thinking about the obstacle as you did your wish and outcome.

MENTAL CONTRASTING – A visualization technique involving first thinking of a positive future outcome followed by thinking of obstacles. If you only think about the goal you're not spending of your cognitive work getting ready for the task.

An example: to climb a mountain I'm going to need shoes, and rope, etc.

"If you find a path with no obstacles, it probably doesn't lead anywhere." - Frank A. Clark

THE OBSTACLE	STANDING IN	YOUR WAY





"The greater the obstacle, the more glory in overcoming it."

- Molière

P = PLANNING

STEP FOUR: Forming the plan. To establish a plan, ask yourself what you can do to overcome the obstacle from step three.

What effective action or thought could you use to surmount and defeat that obstacle?

Make a very simple If-Then Plan. If the obstacle presents itself then you will put in an effective action to overcome it.

Have a plan so implicitly thought out that it allows you to get through obstacles to your success automatically without having to recruit much will power.

IMPLEMENTATION INTENTION – A self-regulatroy strategy in the form of an "If-Then Plan" that can lead to better goal attainment.

The WOOP Method allows you to practice your plan outside of the situation first using mental visualization in order to assess your plan's efficacy.

An If-Then Plan can help you achieve your goals three times more than if you don't have one, especially on difficult goals.

If / When _____ (obstacle), then I will _____ (action to overcome obstacle).

Examples:

"If I get distracted during my work, then I will block all distracting websites and get back to work."

"IF I walk into the restaurant and see pizza being served, THEN I will turn away and grab an orange instead."

Jot down an effective IF/THEN plan on the next page.

"A goal without a plan is just a wish."
- Antoine de Saint-Exupery



IF/THEN PLAN...

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"Without leaps of imagination or dreaming, we lose the excitement of possibilities. Dreaming, after all is a form of planning."

- Gloria Steinem



RESEARCH SUPPORTS THE RESULTS

There have been numerous studies that show the efficacy of this goal setting strategy.

One early experiment involved female students who were trying to change an unhealthy snacking habit. Some of the participants performed Mental Contrasting, some performed Implementation Intentions, and some used both (the WOOP Method).

The participants were asked to perform the same mental exercise each morning upon awakening. A week later the researchers checked back with the students and the results were striking! As expected, all participants reported making progress in their efforts to control snacking. But participants who utilized the WOOP Method reported substantially more progress than those who only performed Mental Contrasting or Implementation Intentions alone. That's remarkable considering both tools individually already work well.

IN ANOTHER STUDY on maintaining healthy lifestyles 256 participants were randomly split up into two groups.

Group 1: Utilized the WOOP Method, and also received detailed information about the importance of regular exercise and a healthy diet.

Group 2: Only received detailed information about the importance of regular exercise and a healthy diet.

During the study Group One was taught how to use the WOOP Method over the course of one session. They were then asked to apply the WOOP Method on their own to the wish/goal of exercising and eating healthier. They were taught to frame both long-term wishes and 24-hour wishes (e.g. "go for a jog in the evening" or "eat 3 portions of fruit today") related to exercise and eating healthier. The results?

Remarkable! Participants in the WOOP Method group exercised nearly twice as much as those who had only received the health information, starting at one week after the intervention and continuing for FOUR MONTHS. Group One also consumed more fruits and vegetables, an effect that became even more pronounced as time went on. After two years, participants in the information-only group were eating roughly the same amount of fruits and vegetables as they had been before the study. The group that were taught the WOOP Method were still eating more fruits and vegetables after TWO YEARS, even though they were not contracted by the researchers between the 4-month and 2-year mark.

It is obvious through these studies, and more, that the WOOP Method is a powerful transformational tool.

"Some people dream of success, while other people get up every morning and make it happen." - Wayne Huizenga

WOOP IN ACTION: SOME PRACTICAL EXAMPLES

Here are 5 specific examples of how you could start using WOOP in your own life.

GOAL: Lose weight by exercising every morning.

WISH: Exercise in the morning right after getting up.

OUTCOME: Feel proud and energetic. Feel like I'm doing a great job and losing weight.

OBSTACLE: Not feel like doing it and then just skip it.

PLAN: If I get up in the morning and don't feel like exercising, then I will immediately put on my

running clothes and start exercising.

GOAL: Becoming an early riser.

WISH: Wake up early on a regular basis.

OUTCOME: Get a lot done in the morning. Feeling great about myself.

OBSTACLE: My propensity to hit the snooze button.

PLAN: If the alarm goes off in the morning, then I will count down from 5 to 1 and immediately

get out of bed.

GOAL: Create a daily meditation practice.

WISH: Meditate for 10 mins before bed every night.

OUTCOME: Sleep better. Fall asleep faster. Feel centered. Feel proud of myself for

practicing meditation daily.

OBSTACLE: Not feeling motivated to do it, especially when I'm tired.

PLAN: If brush my teeth for bed at night, then afterward I will immediately set my timer for ten minutes

and get started meditating.

GOAL: Finish a work project by Saturday.

WISH: Finish this work project before Saturday.

OUTCOME: Huge relief for finally getting it done. Having the weekend free to play and relax.

OBSTACLE: The mindset that friday night is for fun and mental resistance to working.

PLAN: If I feel the urge to put the project off on Friday night, then I will immediately grab a cup

of coffee and my project folder and get to work.

GOAL: Watch less TV. and read more books.

WISH: Waste less time watching TV. Instead read more.

OUTCOME: Continuous learning and personal growth, and a detachment from the mental

programing of television.

OBSTACLE: I use television as a relaxation aid, and am drawn to it easily.

PLAN: If I catch myself watching TV for longer than 30 minutes, then I will turn it off

immediately, stretch, grab a bottle of water and a book and move to a different room instead.

The possibilities for the usefulness of the WOOP Method are endless. It can literally be used for anything. Your initial impression may be that the method sounds or seems a little strange, or too simple to be effective. However the science and decades of research and validation have proven its usefulness. Trust the process and see in what ways your life improves.

"Patience, persistence and perspiration make an unbeatable combination for success."
- Napoleon Hill

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