Make a Plan

Module Two, Session Four

It's time to make a plan. You've now set a powerful goal. If you're still playing with your goal, no worries. Just take a few more days. You cannot get behind in this program. As always, you are right where you're supposed be.

What is a strategic plan?

A strategic plan consists of a vision, a goal, strategies and actions.

A strategic plan begins with the desired result and works backward to the current state. This is really important. Most people plan by starting with their current state and laying down a path toward the future. This can lead to a sluggish pace, lack of motivation, and roadblocks that come up right away in the process. Strategic planning requires you to look at the larger picture first. This is what you've been doing so far- visioning and goal setting. Now you get to zoom in and attend to the details.

After the goal, come the strategies. Your goal is the WHAT and your strategies are the HOW.

A strategy is ongoing. It cannot be checked off a list. It is a habit, routine or something you do regularly. This is where I often find people are confused. I'll ask someone what her goal is and she'll say, "to work out three days a week" or "to ride my horse every day" or "to stop eating cheese." These are not goals! They are strategies. If I decide my goal is to work out three days a week, then the first week that I'm not able to do that, and there will be one, I'll likely decide I've failed. My real goal in this scenario, (probably to feel fit and look great in white breeches) goes entirely unidentified before I've even had a chance to get started. Mistaking strategies for goals is a sure-fire way to end up in a cycle of frustration. This is why New Year's resolutions tend to fail dismally. A goal

represents an end point you are excited about. Strategies are the things you'll do regularly along the way to make it happen. Strategy is flexible. It can be changed when it's not working. Strategy requires creativity. Most of us have had the experience of giving up on a goal because the strategy we used didn't work. You're not allowed to do that here! If a strategy doesn't work, you get to try something else. Make a list of all the routines, habits or practices you will put in place in order to accomplish your goal. There should be a lot of blank space in this part of your plan right now because I'll be giving you a lot of strategies that you'll be adding throughout this course!

After strategies, come actions.

An action is something that CAN be checked off a list. When you do it, it's done. Things like signing up for a show or making a phone call are examples of action steps. Make a list of all the things you will do in order to accomplish your goals that are one-offs. Put a date next to each action. You'll be constantly crossing things off and adding to your list of actions.

Remember, strategies are habits or routines that are ongoing. Actions are things that you can check of a list.

You should now have all the components of your strategic plan. Your vision, your goal, strategies and an action plan.

A strategic plan is perpetually updated. It can change and evolve as time goes on but it gives you a powerful framework to work with. This is a very creative process, not a linear one.

When you're strategic planning, try not to get stuck thinking there's only one way to accomplish your goal. This is where having a growth mindset comes in big time. If you have a goal that you think requires you to work out three days a week and that doesn't happen- look at other options. A performance mindset might have you say, "I have to do this the right way. There is only one way to do this. I need someone else to tell me the right way. That strategy didn't work so I suck. I'm just not good at setting goals. I've failed. I'll never be able to do this." A growth mindset is flexible and forward thinking. Maybe you need to switch the times of day or the days of the week. Maybe you need a workout buddy. Maybe you need to try another form of exercise that's more fun. Strategizing is about letting go of your fixed ideas about what is and is not necessary. It's about looking at all the paths available and choosing the route that might work the best.

If a strategy is not working, most people, instead of looking for ways to change the strategy, think they just need to work harder at it. They feel they don't have enough "will power" or discipline to accomplish their goals. This makes me crazy so don't do it! I know people who have been working on something for years and for years they've been thinking they just need to work a little harder and have a little more will power. If a strategy is not working for you, make the solution about creative, strategic thinking, not about will power.

All there is now, is to get into action. So onward to the fun stuff in Module Three!