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# REALISTIC RECOVERY GOALS GUIDE & WORKBOOK



CREATE &  
MAINTAIN YOUR  
RECOVERY GOALS

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The Walker Center saved my life. Physically, spiritually, and mentally. After 23 years of drug use, I had settled with the idea that I would die using drugs. Not from them, but definitely on them.

I had no hope of my life getting better than the next big score. I didn't see a light at the end of the tunnel. I didn't think I'd be able to feel good or be happy without heroin.

**- JESSIE HADLOCK, WALKER  
CENTER ALUMNUS**

YOUR GUIDE TO  
STARTING  
RECOVERY





If you're trying to get recover from drugs or alcohol and feel like you've already failed by succumbing to those same old temptations, where do you go next? If you're afraid of yet another failed resolution, what next?

Do you try again? Do you search for a less significant, more achievable resolution?

## CREATING RECOVERY GOALS & STICKING TO THEM

Making a resolution seems to always be on the brain when the calendar year comes to an end. You might see it in commercials, ads on the street, or hear your friends talk about it.

Resolutions are often things that are supposed to improve us, which is why they are so challenging. They are also why roughly 80% of resolutions fail each year.

In this guide, we're going to walk you through the steps you can take and what you can do about creating realistic recovery goals and staying on track with workbooks & more exercises. We cover:

- Rethinking your resolutions
- How to make proper resolutions
- The importance of taking small steps
- How to use a goal journal
- Reviewing your progress
- **Printable sheets to track your progress every week**

REALISTIC RECOVERY GOALS  
GUIDE & WORKBOOK



LET'S GET  
STARTED



# RETHINKING HOW YOU MAKE GOALS



SETTING  
REALISTIC  
GOALS DURING  
RECOVERY

After trying to create goals and fail to follow through, it can be easy to succumb to feelings of hopelessness. Feelings of aimlessness or being rudderless. Wandering around without a purpose.

Not only have you failed yourself, but you've failed friends, family members, and maybe even coworkers.

Instead of casting all the blame on yourself, think back to the process. You might have just set a goal to recover this year.

That is great, but there are a lot of smaller steps that can go into achieving that big goal.

Many times, we look past the journey and only at the result. It's great to have the big picture in mind, but throwing out the little things often doesn't help.



# NARROW DOWN YOUR GOALS 2

Many people make goals that are simply too big and broad. Those big and broad goals can be broken easily and dismissed even quicker.

Make them too hard, and you're likely to give up early.

Make your goals attainable but challenging, going for that sweet spot.

GOAL ACHIEVED

0%  100%

# 3 BE SPECIFIC ABOUT GOALS

Along with the idea of narrowing down your goals, you need to be specific.

Being specific goes hand-in-hand with one action: being measurable.

If you had a goal that was simply 'get in shape', what does that mean? Does that mean to be able to bench-press 200 pounds? Swim a mile? Have six-pack abs?

You need a specific goal that you can look back on and say 'I achieved that' at a certain point. The more specific, the better.



# 4 THINK LONG-TERM

In today's day and age, it's easy to focus on instant gratification. Just about everything you want is at your fingertips.

You're not going to change in a day, week, or even month. But, in those days, weeks, and months you can be starting to change and reaching your resolution.

Michael Jordan never played a game of basketball, missed his first shot, and said 'guess I'm not feeling it today'.

Think about your goals in the long-term instead of the immediate result.

# TRAINING FOR THE MARATHON 5

Unless you're from Kenya or Ethiopia, you probably don't have that natural-born gift of being able to wake up and run a marathon before your morning coffee is ready.

Runners and aspiring runners know that you have to build up your stamina and endurance before you can go the full 26.2 miles.

That doesn't mean, however, running 26.2 miles on the very first day of training. Depending on your fitness level, you may just make it a mile or two before calling it quits.

And that's OK.

It may take weeks before you can even get to double digits and months before you feel comfortable to go the distance. Runners often use a log to track their progress and set weekly goals for themselves. While you may not be running a marathon, you can still have a log for yourself.

Let's talk about the goal journal.

# 6 THE GOAL JOURNAL

The goal journal is about setting small, realistic goals that you need to be successful. This isn't just about recovering, but also your attitude, other activities, and reaching out for support.

All of these smaller goals should be part of your larger goal. Each goal you write down should play a role in getting you where you need to go.

If you write something down and are unable to answer the question, "How will this help me get where I need to go?" then it doesn't belong on the list.

The goal journal should be a comprehensive journal that helps you track your progress and mini-goals along the way. It also should be, as a journal is, a chance for you to write down how you're feeling, what's been tough, what's been great, and any other necessary thoughts.





The journal is a chance for you to take an honest look at yourself and your progress. Not only is it how you should keep yourself on pace, but also a chance to look back at the progress you made and be happy about what you accomplished.

When you look back on your work, here are some things you can ask yourself:

- Does this month look different and in what way?
- How are you feeling about who you are and what you are accomplishing?
- Are your daily goals too much or too little?
- Have you experienced any setbacks?
- What is required to move back these setbacks?

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## HOW THE JOURNAL WORKS

The journal is meant to be personal, and it plays into what you do well. It combines three important things: happiness, strengths, and savoring.

Happiness can depend on many factors, but making sure you're taking care of your mental health should also be a priority during this time. There's a scale available to help put your happiness into a numerical amount to see how you're doing.

Strengths also play a role in how you approach your goals. By laying out your strengths, you can use and focus on them to tackle your resolutions.

Lastly, savoring is where you can look back and review your progress by checking on what worked and what didn't work. What did you improve on? What can be better? All of this is available during the savoring section of your journal.



**Vision  
without  
action is  
merely a  
dream**

# FOCUS YOUR VISION

When you look at it, 365 days is a lot. Just counting to 365 would take you a few minutes (and probably annoy the person next to you if you did it out loud).

**Vision is important** when it comes to your goal. Oftentimes, we let our vision be confused with how we are feeling at this exact moment.

Looking at an entire year can feel incredibly daunting, so why not look at it day by day? Mastering daily discipline is hard, but once it becomes part of your routine, that new daily routine is much more likely to turn into an actual routine where you don't even have to think about doing it. You just do it.

Instead of being overwhelmed, start looking at those days as bite-sized opportunities to set you on the right path. Great authors never wrote an entire book in a day, but they took it chapter by chapter, page by page, and even paragraph by paragraph.

Use those days to set benchmarks for yourself, like "Today was the 5th day in a row I took a walk in the park instead of sitting home and drinking" or "This was the 3rd time this week I checked in with my recovery group." Soon, those actions will become part of who you are and make sure you're going on the right path.





MASTERING  
BOUNDARIES  
IN RECOVERY

## RECOVERY IS ABOUT PROGRESSION, NOT PERFECTION

Hey there! Now that we went through the theoretical part of the guide about building smart goals, the importance of working on your happiness & strengths, and practicing savoring, it's time to put all the theory into action! And we mean daily action.

In these printable pages you will engage in a series of challenges designed to increase your own happiness and build more productive habits. There are a lot of misconceptions about happiness, annoying features of the mind that lead us to think the way we do, and practicing healthier thoughts and habits can help us change. You will ultimately be prepared to successfully incorporate a specific wellness activity into your life.

To begin, we recommend taking a few minutes to be specific about your goals. Print these worksheets to start creating healthier habits in order to accomplish your goals. The idea is that you tackle one worksheet each week, see what you enjoy & what works, and continue applying throughout the year.

Good luck as you get started, and we hope these exercises help you stay on track.

# GOAL SETTING USING SMART PRINCIPLES

## S SPECIFIC

## Specific & narrow goals

## M MEASURABLE

What evidence will prove you reached your goal?

## A ACTIONABLE

Make sure you can reasonably accomplish within timeline

# R RELEVANT

Goals should align with values & long-term objectives

## TIME-BASED

Attach a timeline to your goals to check in on yourself.

# WRITE DOWN YOUR SMART GOALS

## Week # 1 – Measure your Happiness

1

MEASURE THE FOLLOWING  
ON A SCALE OF 1-5

POSITIVE EMOTIONS

—

ENGAGEMENT

—

RELATIONSHIPS

—

MEANING

—

ACCOMPLISHMENT

—

HEALTH

—

NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

—

LONELINESS

—

OVERALL WELL-BEING

—

2

MEASURE YOUR HAPPINESS  
(ONCE A WEEK)

AUTHENTIC HAPPINESS,  
OVERALL

—

AVG DAILY HAPPINESS

—

## Week #2 – Use your signature strengths

DISCOVER YOUR TOP STRENGTHS AND USE THEM IN NEW WAYS EVERY DAY FOR A WEEK

### 3 LIST YOUR TOP STRENGTHS:

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1

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2

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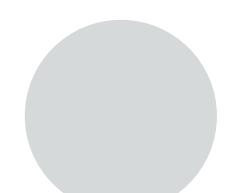
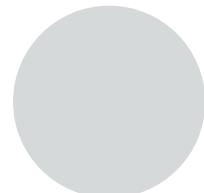
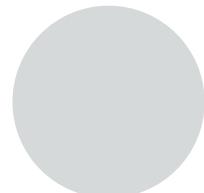
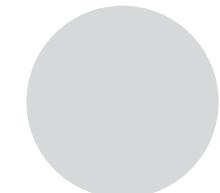
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4

#### Track your progress!

USE THE CIRCLES BELOW TO TRACK YOUR PROGRESS. EACH CIRCLE REPRESENTS A DAY OF THE WEEK AND THE SIGNATURE STRENGTH THAT YOU USE.



## Week #3 – Savoring

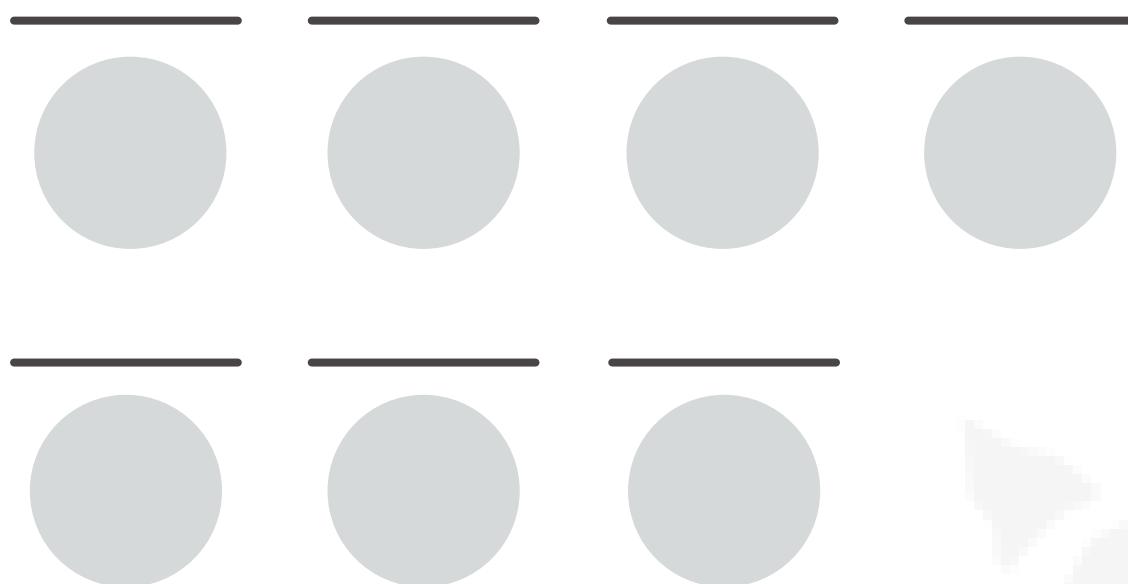
**SAVORING: THE ACT OF AN EXPERIENCE TO REVIEW AND APPRECIATE IT. SAVORING INTENSIFIES THE POSITIVE EMOTIONS THAT COME WITH DOING SOMETHING YOU LOVE.**

**4**

This week, practice the art of savoring. Pick one experience to truly savor each day (it could be a nice cup of coffee, a delicious meal, a walk outside or any experience that you really enjoy)

### Track your progress!

USE THE CIRCLES BELOW TO TRACK YOUR PROGRESS. EACH CIRCLE REPRESENTS A DAY OF THE WEEK AND THE EXPERIENCES THAT YOU SAVOR.



## Week #4 – Daily Gratitude Journal

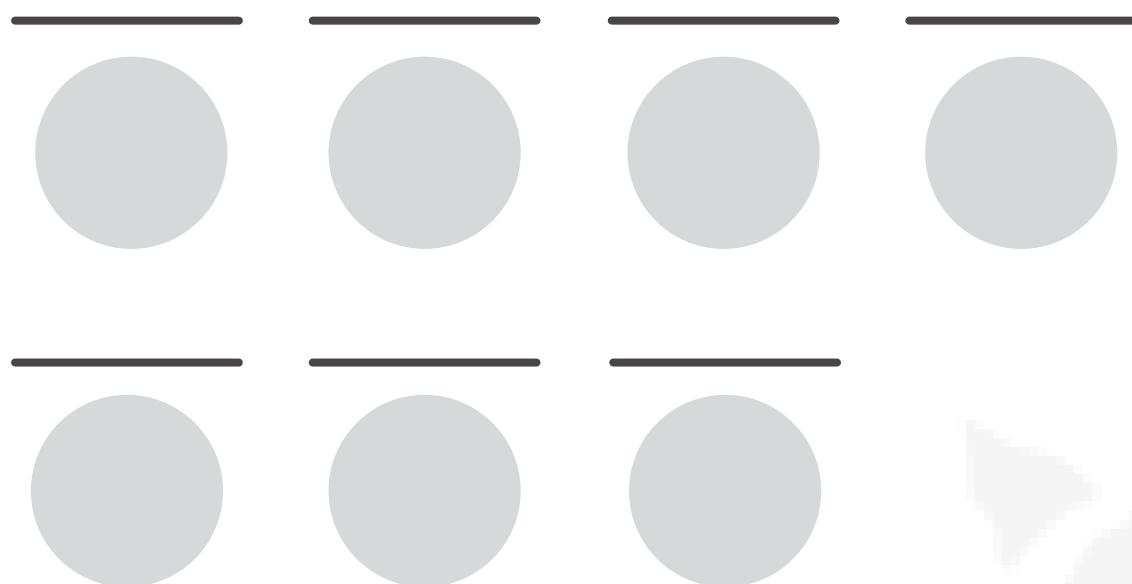
**GRATITUDE: TAKING TIME TO EXPERIENCE GRATITUDE CAN MAKE YOU HAPPIER AND EVEN HEALTHIER. FOR THE NEXT SEVEN DAYS, TAKE 5-10 MINUTES EACH NIGHT TO WRITE DOWN FIVE THINGS FOR WHICH YOU ARE GRATEFUL.**

**5**

**This week, practice the art of gratitude, they can be little things or big things. But you really have to focus on them and actually write them down.**

### Track your progress!

**USE THE CIRCLES BELOW TO TRACK YOUR PROGRESS. EACH CIRCLE REPRESENTS A DAY OF THE WEEK AND THE EXPERIENCES THAT YOU SAVOR.**



## Week #5 – Random Acts of Kindness

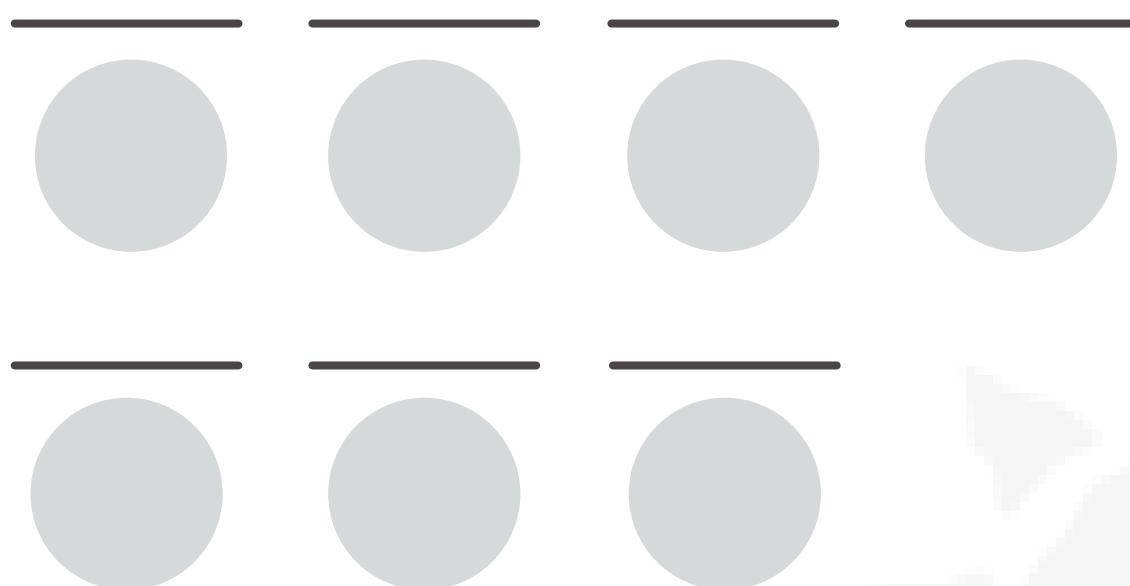
**ACTS OF KINDNESS: HAPPY PEOPLE ARE MOTIVATED TO DO KIND THINGS FOR OTHERS. OVER THE NEXT SEVEN DAYS, TRY TO PERFORM SEVEN ACTS OF KINDNESS BEYOND WHAT YOU NORMALLY DO. YOU CAN DO ONE EXTRA ACT OF KINDNESS PER DAY, OR YOU CAN DO A FEW ACTS OF KINDNESS IN A SINGLE DAY.**

**6**

**This week, do something that really helps or impacts another person. At the end of each day, list your random act of kindness. Just make sure you've finished seven total new acts of kindness by the end of the week.**

### Track your progress!

**USE THE CIRCLES BELOW TO TRACK YOUR PROGRESS. EACH CIRCLE REPRESENTS A DAY OF THE WEEK AND THE EXPERIENCES THAT YOU SAVOR.**



## Week #6 – Exercise

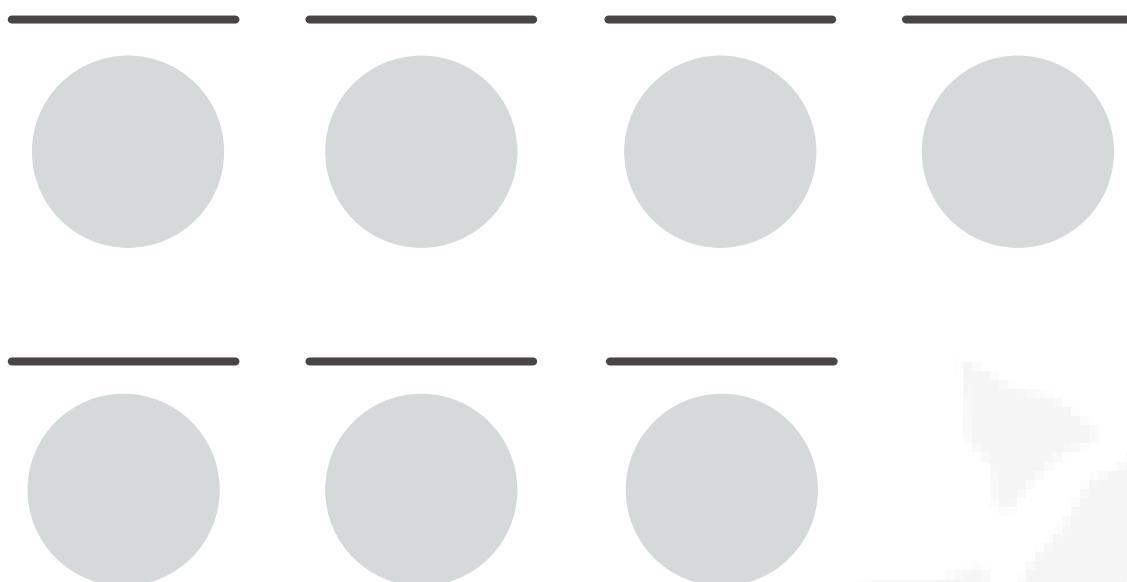
**EXERCISE: RESEARCH SUGGESTS THAT ~30 MINUTES A DAY OF EXERCISE CAN BOOST YOUR MOOD IN ADDITION TO MAKING YOUR BODY HEALTHIER FOR THE NEXT WEEK, YOU WILL SPEND EACH DAY GETTING YOUR BODY MOVING WITH AT LEAST 30 MINUTES OF EXERCISE.**

7

**This week, do a 15-20 min walk, do an online yoga class, or do some virtual workouts at home. Be sure to take a moment to notice how much better you feel after getting some exercise in.**

### Track your progress!

**USE THE CIRCLES BELOW TO TRACK YOUR PROGRESS. EACH CIRCLE REPRESENTS A DAY OF THE WEEK AND THE EXPERIENCES THAT YOU SAVOR.**



## Week #7 – Sleep

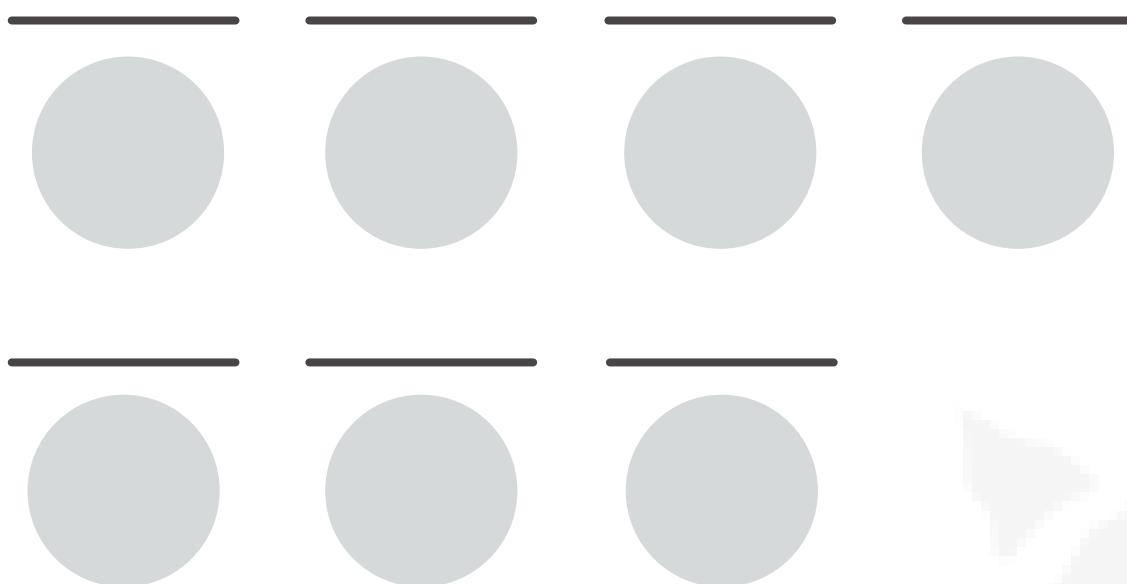
**SLEEP: ONE OF THE REASONS WE'RE SO UNHAPPY IN OUR MODERN LIVES IS THAT WE'RE CONSISTENTLY SLEEP DEPRIVED. RESEARCH SHOWS THAT SLEEP CAN IMPROVE YOUR MOOD MORE THAN WE OFTEN EXPECT.**

8

**Pick seven nights this week, note them in your calendar, and be sure to practice good sleep hygiene – no devices before bed and try to avoid caffeine on the days you're getting your sleep on. Make sure you get four nights of 7+ hours over the course of the week.**

### Track your progress!

**USE THE CIRCLES BELOW TO TRACK YOUR PROGRESS. EACH CIRCLE REPRESENTS A DAY OF THE WEEK AND THE EXPERIENCES THAT YOU SAVOR.**



## Week #8 – Meditate

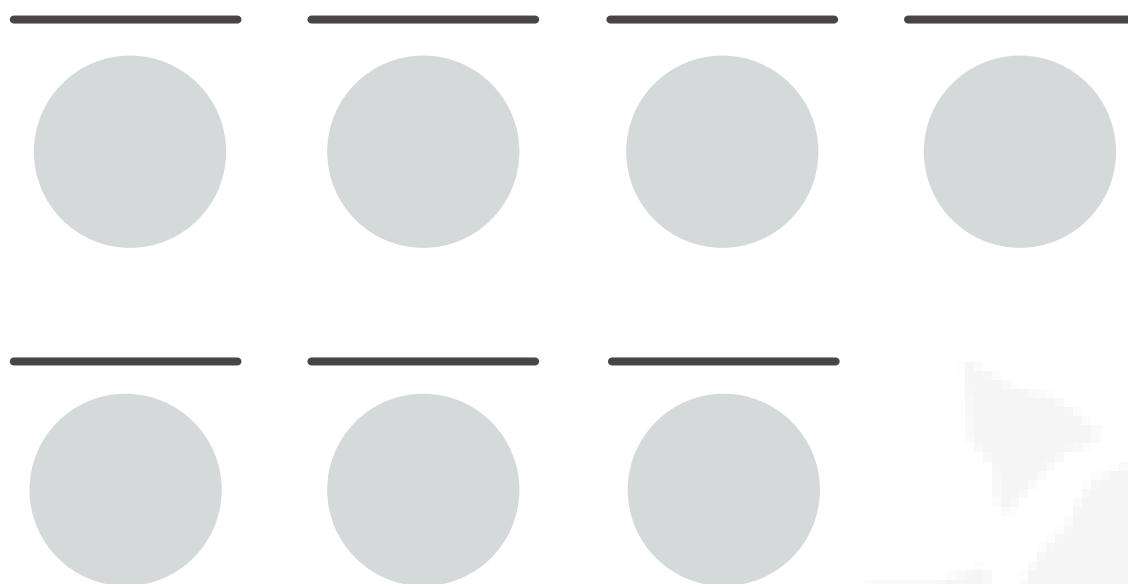
**MEDITATE: MEDITATION IS A PRACTICE OF INTENTIONALLY TURNING YOUR ATTENTION AWAY FROM DISTRACTING THOUGHTS TOWARD A SINGLE POINT OF REFERENCE (E.G., THE BREATH, BODILY SENSATIONS, COMPASSION, A SPECIFIC THOUGHT, ETC.)**

9

**This week, you will spend each (at least) 10 minutes per day meditating. Find a quiet spot where you won't be disturbed while you're meditating.**

### Track your progress!

**USE THE CIRCLES BELOW TO TRACK YOUR PROGRESS. EACH CIRCLE REPRESENTS A DAY OF THE WEEK AND THE EXPERIENCES THAT YOU SAVOR.**



## SOME LINKS TO HELP YOU MEASURE HAPPINESS & YOUR SIGNATURE STRENGTHS

The hope is that by this point, you have sampled several rewirings such as: using your strengths, savoring experiences, keeping a gratitude journal, performing kindness for others, exercising, sleeping more and meditating.

All the printable pages are daily practices that are crucial to develop healthier habits and live a better life. You can repeat the daily activities that resonate more with you in hopes of making a long-term habit.

Keep track of your happiness every week during this challenge.



Link to measure your happiness:

- [www.authentichappiness.org](http://www.authentichappiness.org)

Link to measure your signature strengths:

- <https://www.viacharacter.org/character-strengths>

# REVIEW PERIODS

We already talked about how the goal journal can provide you moments to look back on what you did, but also set up **review periods for yourself**.

Those can be monthly, quarterly, bi-monthly, whatever. It is your goal journal after all.

From there, you can find out which goals you're honing in on and which areas you need to focus more on. You can maybe reevaluate how you approach your daily routine and what changes or tweaks you have to make.

Or, you may find out that you're ahead of schedule and on the right path.

**Either way, a paper trail always helps.**



# WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU KEEP FAILING

We've all heard the cliches: "Rome wasn't built in a day," "Michael Jordan missed numerous game-winning shots", etc.

It turns out that failure is part of the overall path. Many people believe success is a simple fork in the road. You go one way and you accomplish your goal. You go another, and you fall into a pit of despair.

That couldn't further from the truth.

The road to success is fraught with speed bumps, pit stops, getting lost, a flat tire or two, and lots of other little problems.

If you find that you keep failing, you might want to ask yourself why? To help you narrow that list down, here are what we think are the most common reasons for failure:

- You're overthinking it. We can often get caught up in our own minds. Your goals aren't rocket science so less thinking and more doing.
- You want success to come quickly. Remember, this is a marathon, not a sprint.
- You're not enjoying it. We're not saying getting clean or sober is like a walk in the park, but you should be filling those moments with things you enjoy. Perhaps an old hobby or a new one.
- You're not asking for support. This isn't going to be a one-man-band. Find a support group or individual to help you talk through your progress.

Your reasons could be completely different from what's listed above, but those are some ideas to get you thinking.

Remember that failure and setbacks are part of the process but keeping your goal in mind is the most important part.



6 ADDICTION  
AND RECOVERY  
PODCASTS TO  
HELP YOUR  
SOBRIETY  
THRIVE



# WRAPPING THINGS UP

Making goals is easy, following through is much tougher. Formulating a long-term strategy and journal is just as challenging.

But, making those effective habits and following a plan is what's going to help you become clean.

Remember to:

- Make **specific, measurable goals.**
- Have **deadlines and self-review periods.**
- **Practice patience.** Lots and lots of patience.

Keep monitoring your progress and making notes about where you are, what you're doing, and how you're feeling. If you're going along with someone else, review with them.

Take the time to set yourself up for long-term success by taking small steps throughout the year.

If you find yourself looking for an extra hand in recovery, we are here to offer you the help, hope & healing to get clean or sober. Our effective drug and alcohol treatment programs have helped thousands recover. Learn more about how we can help at [Thewalkercenter.org](http://Thewalkercenter.org).



# JOIN OUR COMMUNITY

Taking the first step towards change is powerful, but staying consistent is key. Our community is here to support your journey with tools, guidance, and a shared commitment to progress.

- Set clear, achievable goals.
- Stay accountable with regular check-ins.
- Practice patience and celebrate every milestone.

Join us today and be part of a supportive network that helps you grow, one step at a time.

**SIGN UP FOR OUR  
NEWSLETTER**

