

STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME SETTING

1. Stated in positives

Too many of us, when asked what we want, give our answers in the form of something to move *away from*, rather than what we want to move *towards*. We are clear about what we want to avoid or get rid of, but not so clear about what we want instead. If I ask you *not* to think about a kangaroo with Wellington boots on, what happens? *You cannot not think about what you don't want to think about without thinking about it first!*

So get into the habit of saying things in the way you want them to turn out.

2. Started and maintained by you

When confronted with health challenges, many people leave their outcome in other peoples hands, allowing themselves inadvertently to become victims of a developing situation, with the resolution being outwith their control. If we set up our outcomes such that other people have to make changes before we can get what we want, then we are significantly reducing our chances of success, leaving things more and more in the lap of the gods. This in itself is both stressful and further health debilitating.

Ask yourself: "What resources can you personally bring to bear on this situation?"

3. Sensory based evidence

One of the main problems about setting outcomes is being too vague about what is really wanted. A goal of "feeling better in myself", "I just want to be happy", or "to have more self-esteem" is really too abstractly conceptualised to allow for meaningful accomplishment. Accepting aims that are so general almost dooms the ensuing intervention to failure. We need to express outcomes in far more sensory specific and detailed terms.

"How will you know when you have your outcome?"

"What will you be seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling, tasting?"

"If someone else saw you achieving your outcome, what would they be noticing?"

4. Consider consequences and by-products

We indulge in consequential thinking when, having imagined successfully achieving our outcome, we notice the knock on effects, for better or worse, that may also occur as a result. Sometimes, getting what we think we want may have unlooked for negative effects that quickly become apparent. We may lack a safety net. Also, choosing one particular course of action means choosing *not* to pursue other avenues - in effect leaving them closed

off. Every choice has an upside, the potential benefits and gains, and a downside, the potential drawbacks and losses.

“What will you gain/lose by achieving your outcome?”

“What will you gain/lose by remaining the same?”

5. Identify limiting factors

Sometimes, accessing the specific resources required and applying them to our goal is all we need to do to ensure our outcome. However, there may be particular obstacles that get in our way and current limitations that we need to deal with first, before the path to our destination is clear.

“What prevents you from achieving your outcome?”

“What resource(s) do you need instead?”

6. Ecology concerns

An ecology check ensures that the current aims, aspirations, goals and outcomes fit not only with yourself, but also within the wider systems to which you belong such as family, friends, work, social system and larger community. When outcomes fail to materialise it is often because ecology has been violated in some way.

“How will this outcome fit with the rest of you? Your family? Friends? Business? Job?”

“How will getting your outcome benefit the other people in your life? Is it win/win?”

“Is it worth the cost to you?”

“Does it fit with your sense of self?”

Find out how you can apply the results of this kind of thinking in **Consulting with NLP** and **Changing with NLP**