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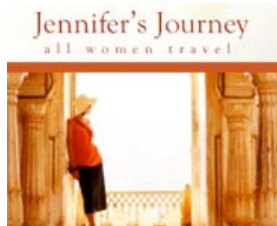
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FEATURED ARTICLE

**Fitness Guru Bob Greene Tells You How to Set Goals—and Reach Them**

Relationship Advice

By Josie Brown, updated 4/3/2008 at 12:44:52 AM



Oprah's fitness coach, Bob Greene, is not a fan of New Year's resolutions. "As the saying goes, they are made to be broken."

Maybe that's not the intent, but more than likely it will be the end result, explains Greene, for the simple reason that most of us make the mistake of choosing a goal that is almost impossible to reach. Then filled with the unbridled enthusiasm, we push ourselves too hard, and expect miracles—overnight.

"When that doesn't happen, frustration sets in," warns Greene. "And that's when people quit."

In other words, the failure of your on-again/off-again diet and fitness regimen is a fait accompli.

Unless, says Greene, you take these six necessary steps to reach your personal best:

**Step 1: Ask yourself why you want to make a change in the first place.**

"Are you bingeing because you're stressed out? Is your unhappiness due to a traumatic relationship? Or maybe you're anxious over a family issue," asks Greene. "In truth, excess weight is not a cause, but a symptom. That said, to take weight off and keep it off, first you must be honest with yourself as to why you're unhappy. If you address that first, you can then change your point of view, and your goals will be easier to reach."

**Step 2: State your goals up front.**

On a sheet of paper, graph your "circle of life"—the five or six important areas of your life: family, career, home, health, and of course your primary relationship.

Says Greene: "When assessing each life area, be specific about what you're trying to accomplish in it. Whether you want to reconcile with a family member, or feel more fit about yourself, or get a promotion, if you write it down it will be easier to visualize—and to achieve."

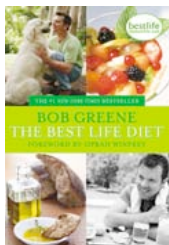
**Step 3: Establish a well-balanced game plan.**

"Fitness has many different components," explains Greene. "It's not true that either you're fit, or you are not. We've all heard the stories about the body builder who can't reach the back of his neck in order to scratch it, and the long distance runner who is too weak to pick up her own pocketbook. The key to a healthy life is always balance: between cardio work, aerobic exercises, strength training and stretching."

Of course, that goes for your dietary habits as well. "When our diets are out of balance, we see it on our bodies. Less sugar and carbs, more fruits and vegetables, can make a big difference in how we feel as well as how we look."

**Step 4: Take it one day, and one step at a time.**

Focus on each day individually. "Start out making small steps," says Greene. "The most important thing is to focus on where you are today. After a month of 'todays,' you will be in a totally different place in the process, and you can change direction accordingly."



**Step 5: Challenge yourself—but don't overextend.**

"Pushing yourself is good," explains Greene. "But if you push yourself too hard, you'll get discouraged. Worse yet you may even get hurt."

Once again, cautions Greene, moderation is the key. "As you get in better shape, set the bar a bit higher. Soon the new level will be easy for you, too."

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**Step 6: Whatever workout you choose, make sure it's fun for you.**

Says Greene: "if your workout feels as if you're punching a clock, you won't stick it out. That's true for anything you do in life: if you don't like the direction you're going, if you are not enjoying the journey, sooner or later you'll jump off the path—and that's okay. It's all about making corrections. Remember: It's the pursuit of your goal that is important, that will give you the happiness you want and deserve."

Bob Greene is a man with a plan—for you. Check out [Oprah and Bob's Million Viewer Challenge 2008](#) on his website: [thebestlife.com](http://thebestlife.com).

**FIT & FAST FOODS**

Carrots  
Apples  
Asparagus  
Broccoli  
Dried Cranberries  
Tasty protein, such as turkey, chicken, baked tofu, hardboiled eggwhites  
Fiber-rich carbs like whole grain breads

**FUN FITNESS****Aerobic**

Walking  
Jogging  
Spinning  
Salsa Dancing  
Kickboxing  
Swimming  
Cycling

**Stretching and Breathing**

Yoga

**Strength Training** (Twice weekly, six exercises minimum)

Lift weights. Start with a set of 3-pound dumb bells doing 10 repetitions for each arm, before moving up to 5- and 10- pound weights, doing 12 to 16 reps.

**Cardio** (Start with 15-minute sessions, three times weekly; increase by two minutes each week, up to an hour)

Walks  
Treadmill  
Rowing Machine  
Stationary Bike

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