#90: 10 Minute Goals

Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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Hey, you all, I'm Marissa McKool, and you're listening to the Redefining Rest Podcast for public health professionals. Here we believe rest is your right. You don't have to earn it, you just have to learn how to take it and I'm going to teach you. Ready? Come along.

Hello everyone. What is going on? What are you doing right now as you're listening to this episode? Are you driving? Are you doing the dishes? Are you working out? Are you walking your dog? I love to think about that. I listen to podcasts a lot when I'm walking my dog, when I'm at the gym and I'm always curious when other people listen to podcasts. I'm so glad you're here. If you're new here, if this is the first episode you've ever listened to I think this is one of the best ones to start with so I'm so glad you're here. If you've been listening for a little bit or for a while, welcome back.

Before we dive in today, I want to share a review of the podcast that I got that really touched me. And when you all review I read them, and they make a huge difference not just for me to know the podcast is helping you and what episodes. So I can really focus on creating more tools and teachings around the things you need most help with. But also for other people searching for help, other people in public health, but also other helping professions.

I have heard from so many of you who listen who are in veterinary medicine, and social work, and other fields related or similar to public health. And you by reviewing help others see that this podcast might be able to help them too. So this person wrote, "As a public health professional of 10 plus years, I often feel like I can't say no, can't rest because there is always something to do. This podcast is so helpful to put things in perspective, you need to listen."

Thank you so much for sharing that. I think that is such a helpful review for folks when they're reading this and see someone who's been in the field for

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10 years, finds this helpful. If I'm a recent grad it will probably help me too. So I really, really appreciate you sharing.

Here is another one that is a good example of when you all review you let me know what helps you the most so I can create more episodes around those topics. This person said, "I'm learning so much from the podcast. I have actually listened to 'Chasing Productivity' multiple times." Which is an episode I did many, many months ago that so many people have told me has been the standout episode for them. And this person said, "It's helping me see that my ideas about 'being productive' have been totally wearing me out. I'm also enjoying learning what it means to rest.

I'm not in public health and these messages still apply." So thank you all for reviewing, everyone who's reviewed before, who I didn't read today, it means so much to me and to others who are searching for help, searching for ways to feel better, to have more time, to get more done, and to really create the life that they want. So if you haven't reviewed yet but you've found the podcast helpful, you tune in weekly or a couple of times a month, please consider sharing.

It takes a few minutes to just write a couple of your thoughts, what you found useful, why you listen so others can really see that and click play and get the help they need too. It really goes a long way to helping the field change because that's the goal here. We're doing a rest revolution in the field of public health, so thank you all so much.

Also I want to say, I really hope I might get lucky here. As some of you know who have been listening for while there is construction in the apartment above me which drives me nuts and my podcast producers nuts. And it seems like a quiet time, that they're not here. I wasn't going to record right now but I figured I should take this opportunity. Jared, my partner is also at the gym so it's very quiet, so knock on wood, it stays that way.

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So today, we're talking about goals. It's mid-January, I think a lot of people are still on the goal train from the new year. I certainly am. Now, if you work in public health you are a goal oriented person whether you know it or not, even if it doesn't feel like you are, even if you think you're someone who doesn't follow through on goals or are terrible at achieving them, you are a goal oriented person. You got a job in public health, you most likely got a degree. You know how to achieve goals, to finish that manuscript, to work on that analysis, whatever it is.

You're just not giving yourself credit. On top of that, public health as a field, the work we do, the methods we use, the approach to our work is a 100% goal oriented. Remember in grad school when all those smart objectives you had to write, until you almost were like, "I'm done with smart objectives," public health is very goal oriented. So even if you think you're not a goals person you are. It might just be in a different way and that's totally okay.

There are a million and one ways to set goals. You do just a quick Google search you'll see thousands of articles, books, TED Talks about it. There are thousands of TikToks of people talking about how they achieved their personal goals of buying a house, or paying off their student loans, or getting a job. There is no right or wrong way to set and achieve goals no matter what anyone says to you. For every person who finds setting a goal with a deadline helpful, there are equal amount of people who have better success achieving a goal if they don't set a deadline.

For every person who says you have to set a measurable goal, it has to be very specific, there are people who set goals that are very vague and then achieve them. Goals are not one size fits all. It's about figuring out what works for you and what works for you for setting and achieving goals, whether it be in work, or with hobbies or anything else, might be different. It might not be the same in every area of your life and that's okay. Goals

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themselves are neutral meaning a goal is not 'good or bad' inherently. Goals have no meaning until you give it meaning with your thoughts.

Goals are not a measure of you personally or an indicator of your success. Goals are not judgments. People make judgements about goals with their thoughts but goals themselves are not measures or not judgements. Goals are neutral meaning they are meaningless until you give them meaning. No goal is better than another. The goal of buying a house is not a better goal than travelling to South America. The goal of reading one book a month is not a better goal than learning how to bake bread.

Why am I pointing this out? Because what I find with most people including myself, I'm in this too because I'm human, the problem is really with goal setting or going after your goals is actually not the goal itself, it's our judgment of the goal, our judgment of ourselves in relation to the goal. Judging if the goal itself is good enough, valuable, lame, too easy. Judging ourselves if we don't achieve it, making it mean we're a failure, something's wrong with me. Your internal judgment is what makes setting and achieving goals stressful, overwhelming, and not fun.

It's not the goal itself, it's not the process of achieving the goal, it's what you make the goal mean. It's what you make the outcome of going after the goal mean. And all of that drama is optional. You can decide that having a goal of watching TV every night is awesome. You can decide that the goal of baking sweets every week is amazing. You can decide the goal of stretching every day is powerful. If you want to spend more time playing videogames than working out, go for it.

If you want to spend more time knitting than hanging out with friends, go for it. There is absolutely no right or wrong goal. It's what's right for you right now. And that might change in a month, three months, in a year and that's okay. The same thing with going after your goals. If you set the goal of getting a partner, being in a serious relationship in the next year, and that

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doesn't happen it doesn't mean you aren't deserving of love. If you set the goal of getting a new job and you get six rejections it doesn't mean you won't get a new job.

If you set the goal of running a marathon and you don't qualify because of your race time, it doesn't mean you're a failure. Goals are not meant to be used as an arbiter of your value as a human, or your worth, or who you are as a contributor, or your potential as a professional, or any other determination of who you are as a person, or your abilities, or your future success. Goals are not to be used to put yourself down, to shame yourself, to stop yourself from trying again. Now, listen, I do this too. I use goals against myself all the time, all the time. I'm a human just like you.

And I have to remind myself just like I'm telling you that that is not what goals are for. That is not the purpose of goals. When we view goals as a measure of ourselves we put so much pressure on ourselves. And then the goal becomes more of a tedious task than something for us. And then we feel shame the whole time we go after the goal and it's not fun at all, or we quit before we even start. Goals are for you to enrich your life, not for you to judge your life or yourself.

When you stop judging your goals and yourself for what happens when you go after your goal, you get to give yourself permission, permission to try something new, to change your mind, to have fun, to enjoy it. And you get to feel proud, and excited, and optimistic, and empowered, and fulfilled, and purposeful which is the whole point of goals. You've had the unconscious mindset of using goals against yourself for a long time, we all have. It makes sense, especially if you grew up in America.

Because in the US the structure of a lot of the way we have our workplaces, our schools set up and so many other things is on the basis of individual winning, of being the best, of being the first, of being the fastest. No participation trophies, the amount of debate over if kids should get

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participation trophies, just shows you that our whole orientation is about always getting it right, always been the fastest, always being the best.

And we discourage the purpose of just participating, of enjoying it, of trying something new, of celebrating even if you weren't the first or the fastest, of being proud of trying, of being happy with the experience. School is set up this way, our reality shows, our movies, so of course you think this way about goals, but you don't have to. And when you change it, goals are so much more fun. So here is one way you can help yourself start to switch to a different way of thinking about setting goals and going after goals. I call it the 10 minute goal.

Now, again, there's no right or wrong way to approach goals. If you try this and it's not for you, that's totally okay. I'm not saying this is the only way to set and achieve goals. I'm just offering this as an option. And what I have found, especially if you tend to use goals against yourself like I do. This is a good way to start to change that so you can actually enjoy your goals, and have fun, and be proud of yourself. One of the ways we set ourselves up for pressure and shame with goals is setting goals that are too big of a jump for where we are right now.

Going from never reading leisurely to setting a goal of reading for an hour three times a week, meaning you're trying to go from reading zero minutes a week to reading 180 minutes every single week overnight. That's not setting yourself up for success. Of course you're going to feel pressure. Of course you're going to give up. Of course you're going to shame yourself. Part of it is we think if we set a goal that's 'too easy' then it doesn't count, then it's not worth it.

When your brain does that, that's really the internalized toxic capitalistic stuff right there around you have to be the biggest, and the best, and the fastest, and win. To say reading 10 minutes a week doesn't count is straight from that hustle culture. The toxic 'not enough-ness' of the

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patriarchy and white supremacy. So we're tricked into believing it's better to set a 180 minute goal and feel shitty and pressured trying to achieve it and quit before you even start because we're disrupting our life. And then we feel shame.

We're tricked into believing that's better than setting a doable 10 minute goal that we can actually integrate into our life, and achieve, and then actually enjoy the activity we're doing which is the whole purpose of setting the goal. Goals are for you. Goals are not a competition. It's not for someone else. Even if your goal is to run a marathon, even if your goal is to ski in the Olympics, that's for you. It's for you to experience and you to enjoy. You don't enjoy your goal, the process of getting to your goal when you set it up in a way that's pressurey and shamey.

So the 10 minute goal is really simple. It's exactly what it sounds. Set a goal that only takes 10 minutes. Your goal is to start running, great, start with running for 10 minutes. Your goal is to start reading more, awesome, set a goal to read for 10 minutes. Your goal is to go to bed earlier, set a goal going to bed 10 minutes earlier than normal. Now, listen your brain's going to say, "That's not good enough." Even right now as I read those out, you might be thinking, that's easy. That doesn't count." Your brain's going to say this.

It's going to tell you it's lame, it's too easy, it doesn't count. If your brain's saying that, that means that it's the right goal to set because if it's easy you can do it, you can achieve it, meaning you can actually enjoy reading. You can actually get 10 minutes of extra sleep. You can start running. The purpose of your goal right now is not to achieve that long term goal right away. It's to move towards it, 10 minutes is a building block. You start reading 10 minutes, and you stick to that, and you follow through and you don't quit, over time you'll end up reading 30 minutes.

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And you start running for 10 minutes, you commit to that, you follow through, you integrate it into your life, you figure out how, you overcome any of the challenges, over time you will start running for 20 minutes. You start going to bed earlier by 10 minutes, you commit to it, you make it happen, eventually you can go to bed an hour earlier. Don't be in such a rush to get to the end. That's when you pressure yourself, that's when you give up, that's when you feel shame. That's when you set yourself up for failure.

The reason you aren't asleep an hour earlier than you go to bed now is because your mind, your body, your life isn't set up for it, not yet. And it won't be just because you want it to be overnight. You have to work towards it. You have to make changes, 10 minutes lets you do that, it lets you build that, it lets you achieve that, just like building a house. Rush jobs that try to build a house all at once, crumble. Jobs that take their time and build step by step are solid and they last so much longer, the same with your goals.

With 10 minute goals you actually get to follow through, you actually get to experience it, you actually get to enjoy it. and then you can build on it. Don't be in such a rush. When those thoughts come up about being in a rush, doing it faster, doing more, remind yourself, that's toxic capitalism, that's hustle culture, that's the whole narrative about being the best, being the fastest. That only counts, that participation trophies are stupid. That's not true at all.

Some of the best memories you have, some of the most character building experiences, some of the most pivotal moments you had growing up in college, in grad school had nothing to do with being the fastest, or the first, or the winner. They had to do with being there in the room experiencing it. Same with your personal goals. Now, one caveat, maybe for you depending on the goal, 10 minutes isn't the right amount. Maybe it's five, or three.

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If you never ran before and you want to, literally never ran, you don't work out at all, maybe 10 minutes is actually too long and starting with five is best. That's okay. I used to beat myself up all the time for not reading more. I enjoy reading. I am absolutely not the best at it. I have terrible reading comprehension. I would not be surprised if I have an undiagnosed learning disability.

When I was in fourth or fifth grade there was, I don't think it was Reading Rainbow, some reading, competition is a strong word to say, but it was the more you read the more you got to move your little tally on this journey. And at different points you won different prizes. And it was intended to encourage kids to read. But I'm not good at reading. Growing up I really struggled with it. And not one person noticed it or if they did, did anything about it which is a whole rant I could have for another day. But truly to the point that I didn't move my marker at all.

And I had sit in the library almost as a punishment and I couldn't participate in some of the activities. Now, why no one checked in and asked and tested me, who knows? But this is all just to share, I'm not the best reader. I don't have the highest reading comprehension. There are some books that I read that go way over my head. There's some podcasts I listen to that even my own coach uses words that I'm like, "I have no idea what that means."

And before I would put so much pressure on myself to read more. Part of that was because I wanted to. Part of it was also because I made it mean that I'm not smart, I'm a terrible person. I won't be successful if I don't read more. And when I put that pressure on myself to try to read more I actually never did. I felt more shame for not being a 'reader.' And I would set goals of reading for 30 minutes a day every day and never follow through. My brain would always find an excuse and then I wouldn't do it. I'd quit before I start, or I'd start a little bit and then quit and then felt shame for that.

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Once I started doing this 10 minute goal for reading it changed everything. I don't pressure myself to read 30 or 60 minutes at a time, just 10. I still do just 10. My brain still says, "It's too easy, it doesn't count. It'll take too long to finish a book." That's my brain's favorite things to say which I find hilarious because when I was pressuring myself, I wouldn't even follow through on my goal. I never read anything. So that actually took longer. But when I let myself read for just 10 minutes, I end up reading way more.

So last July, July 2022, I sent out an email to my email list. I said, "Hey, here are the books I've read this year so far." I think it had been, I don't know, how many months is that, six months, almost six months? And I remember looking at the list and I was shocked because I had read seven books by that point. That's a little over one book a month, by only reading 10 minutes at a time and not reading every day. I mean there were some weeks where I didn't read at all.

And I was shocked, not necessarily because I read that many books, just because I didn't feel pressure for those six months. I didn't have a goal to read seven books. My goal was only to read 10 minutes. I didn't put pressure on myself. I didn't shame myself if I didn't read one day. And I got to enjoy the reading so much more. I wasn't using the number of books I read or the number of minutes I read to measure if I was productive enough, or good enough. I wasn't comparing myself to others. I actually got to read and enjoy what I wanted.

And then the second six months of the year I only read, I think, two and a half books. That's less than a third of what I had read the prior six months. I didn't shame myself. I didn't make myself feel bad. I didn't make it mean I failed. I didn't make it a problem. I still read, I still enjoyed, I didn't stop. That is the power of 10 minute goals. You actually get to do the things you want to do and enjoy it without the drama, without the shame, without quitting.

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You don't have to be perfect, it helps design the goal so it can ebb and flow with the seasons of your life. So I want you to think of what goal you want right now, a personal goal. And turn it into a 10 minute goal, and just pick one. I see you, I see those of you listening, thinking about five different goals. No, just one because the same principle applies. If you start with just one goal you'll get way farther than if you try to go for five goals because you're going to quit right away. And I want you to try it because you're going to surprise yourself. Pick one goal and turn it into a 10 minute goal, I promise you can.

So before we go, before I close up, I want you to think of a friend, or a colleague, or a sibling, or a partner who shared recently with you about a goal they have. Maybe you were chatting over coffee about both of your hopes for 2023. Maybe you were at the office complaining about work and talking about what you want to be different in 2023. Maybe your friend shared that they don't do new year's resolutions because they feel so much pressure and shame.

Maybe you and your partner decided to be each other's accountability partners with going to the gym together, whatever it is. Think of someone in your life who you know wants to or is working towards a goal. And I want you to send them this podcast. And you can just say, "Hey, I listened to this, it's interesting, thought you might enjoy it based on what we talk about, based on your goal," whatever. You never know, sending them this podcast might be the starting domino effect for all the changes they've been waiting for.

That's what happened to me, truly. My roommate, I remember this picture vividly. I came home from walking my dog and my roommate said, "Hey, have you listened to this podcast?" And I took a listen, and it changed my life. It was a big turning point for me and that could be your friend and you could be that person who really helped them do that, who really offered

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them the change that they might need. So with that, I love you all, I hope that you have a great week and I'll talk to you next week.

If you found this episode helpful then you have to check out my coaching program where I provide you individualized support to create a life centered around rest. Head on over to mckoolcoaching.com, that's M-C-K-O-O-L coaching.com to learn more.