



Working Out Loud Circle™ Goal Worksheet

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The first thing you do when you join a Working Out Loud Circle™ is to choose a goal. Yet for many people, that can be a challenge. *Should my goal be big or small? A work goal or a personal goal? Can I have more than one?*

Here are four simple questions that can guide you towards choosing a good goal for your circle. Before you look at them, take a moment to think about what goal you're considering for your circle and write it down here.

Now use the four questions to test and refine it.

1. “Do you care about it?”

Change can be difficult, so you want to tap into your intrinsic motivators as much as you can. They include autonomy, mastery, and purpose - your need for control, for a sense of getting better at something, and for connection to others or to something bigger than yourself.

When you think of your goal, pay attention to how you feel. If you don't care about it now, then you won't care enough to do the exercises and attend your circle meetings, so choose something else.

Choosing a goal you genuinely care about will make it easier to develop the habit and mindset of Working Out Loud. Then you can apply those to any goal.

2. “Can you make progress towards it in 12 weeks?”

Ambition can be good, though typically not when you’re trying to change your habits. (Consider how many New Year’s Resolutions are broken in January.)

If your goal is too ambitious, merely thinking of it can tend to paralyze you, and progress towards it will be too slow to notice during the time you’re in your peer support group. So, given the limited time you’ll be in a circle, try to pick something that feels more achievable.

3. “Is it something other people can help you with?”

Deepening relationships is at the heart of Working Out Loud. So you want to select a goal that depends on relationships giving you access to knowledge and opportunities you might not have otherwise.

If your goal seems like something you would accomplish on your own - “I will lose 20 pounds” or “I will get my MBA.” - choose something else or reframe it in a way such that relationships can help you. That brings us to the fourth question.

4. “Can you frame it as a learning or exploration goal?”

This, for me, is the best question. If you can frame what you’re trying to do in terms of learning and exploration, you’ll be more likely to adopt a growth mindset. [More likely to try new things.](#) More likely to be open to new people and possibilities.

Especially in your first circle, consider goals that start with one of these phrases:

“I would like to be better at...”

“I would like to learn more about...”

“I would like to know more people who...”

Framed this way, you’ll more readily tap into your need for mastery and purpose. That will be true whether you want to get better at your job or at a hobby, explore new roles or a new topic, connect with people who can help your career or who share a common interest with you.

In addition to making progress towards your goal, you’ll also be doing something else: developing your sense of self-efficacy. That’s the feeling that you have the ability to improve whatever situation you’re in - to get more out of work and life if you want to. The more you practice Working Out Loud, the stronger that feeling becomes.