

Redefining Health & Wellness

#26

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi

Shohreh Davoodi: I have Episode 26 of the Redefining Health & Wellness podcast coming right up. It is a short and sweet solo episode with yours truly. Since this is the time of New Year's resolutions and goal setting, today I want to give y'all some of my favorite tips for setting effective goals, whether in the new year, or any time at all. To access the show notes and a full transcript of this episode, head to shohrehdavoodi.com/26. That's shohrehdavoodi.com/26.

[Music plays]

Hey y'all, welcome to the Redefining Health & Wellness podcast. I'm your host, Shohreh Davoodi. I'm a certified intuitive eating counselor, and a certified personal trainer. I help people improve their relationships with exercise, food, and their bodies, so they can ditch diet culture for good, and do what feels right for them.

Through this podcast I want to give you the tools to redefine what health and wellness mean to you. By exposing myths and misconceptions, delving into all the areas of health that often get ignored, and reminding you that health and wellness are not moral obligations. Are you ready? Let's fuck some shit up.

We have officially made it to the final Redefining Health & Wellness podcast episode of the year 2019, and also the decade. Even though that feels really weird to say when I only started this podcast five months ago, but technically it's true. So, we're going with it and if you are listening to this episode on the day it drops, it also New Year's Eve, so the very last day of the year, which means that now is the time of year for reflecting, and goal setting, and of course, new year's resolutions.

The reality is that most people are making some kinds of goals, or adjustments, or plans for the new year. And I see people make so many mistakes when they're doing this, but I thought I would address that topic in this episode.

For the most part I am actually not going to dedicate much time in this episode to talking about diet culture in the new year. If you're listening to

Redefining Health & Wellness

#26

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my podcast, you are probably well aware of the pressures of diet culture, and dieting, and weight loss that come around in the new year. It's like the summer body campaigns start six months early and the expectation is that this is the year you'll finally lose the weight.

And what I wish for you is that instead of this being the year that you finally lose the weight, or being the year that you finally get in shape, that maybe this could be the year that you focus on treating your body with the respect and care that it deserves.

That maybe this could be the year that you figure out how to redefine health and wellness for yourself and decide how that translates into the actions that you take. Since we're not going to be delving into the perils of diet culture in this episode, let me at least give you two resources that you can find in the show notes to help you if that is what you're looking for.

Number one, if you haven't listened to episode number 16 of this podcast, titled *The Damaging Effects of Diet Culture*, you should definitely go and do that because I talk all about what the hell diet culture is, why it matters, and some steps you can take to remove yourself from it for good.

Number two, on my blog I just released a *Ditch Diet Culture Resource Guide* that I have been working on for the last several months. The list is gigantic and it's broken down into several helpful categories and it includes like podcasts, books, TEDx talks, blogs, different databases, so I highly recommend that you go and check that out. Again, I will link it in the show notes, but if you want to get to it right now, it's shohrehdavoodi.com/resourceguide. That's shohrehdavoodi.com/resourceguide.

And the guide is intended to be a living document, so you can email me if I am missing any of your favorites, and I will check them out and be sure to add them if I think they're a great fit for the guide. So whether you're planning to have a completely diet culture-free 2020, or if you are actually planning to dive head first into a new diet and exercise plan when the calendar year turns over, the information in this podcast will still be helpful for you.

Redefining Health & Wellness

#26

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And I just want to say that I hold so much compassion and empathy for anyone out there who is gearing up to start a diet or weight loss plan on January 1st, or soon after. I get it. There is so much pressure to do so. There is something that feels very sparkly, and new, and wonderful about the new year. It kind of makes you feel like perhaps you could be a new person. Motivation is always running really high at the beginning of the new year.

So, I don't blame anybody who is about to embark on that journey. And I think the information that I'm going to give you in this podcast episode is still helpful even if you've decided that you want to diet and focus on weight loss going into the new year.

Now, I also think it's important that you go into something like dieting having all of the information, so that you can make an informed choice. So even though I'm not going to harp on this in the actual content of this episode, in the show notes I'm going to put a link to one of my blog posts that's titled, 10 Reasons to Stop Dieting Forever. There's tons of great information in there about some of the negative effects of dieting.

And I just want you to have that information at your fingertips, in case you haven't heard it before. So if you are thinking of doing a new diet, or a juice cleanse, or whatever in the new year, and you have not heard this information before about why dieting may not be the best choice, then definitely head to the show notes and check out that blog.

Okay, so, we're heading into the new year. We have surges of motivation, and excitement, and changes in the air. And what the fuck are we going to do with all of that new year energy? I can tell you what we're not going to do, team. What we're not going to do is waste all of that beautiful energy on goals that we didn't really think through. That we're probably not going to achieve, because that's for amateurs. And I know y'all, you are not amateurs, you are professionals, so let's do this.

First of all, your goals and resolutions are nothing if you don't have a strong why behind them. And this has absolutely bitten me in the ass in the past, so it's really important. Because remember, motivation is super high. As I said before, you've got that new year energy, which is a play off

Redefining Health & Wellness

#26

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi

of New Relationship Energy, or NRE. But motivation and that energy ebbs and flows, and it can disappear altogether after not much time has passed.

And I know that if you've done new year's goal setting before that you have experienced this. Something that sounded fucking awesome on January 1st may not seem so rosy when you reach the end of January or February or March. It's one of the many reasons that people give up on their new year's resolutions quite quickly. So, we need a legitimate why when we're setting goals.

And it's probably not going to be the first why that why that pops into your brain. Let me give you an example from a past new year's resolution of mine that I did not end up reaching, which is that I wanted to be able to do the splits. So, when I'm setting this goal for myself I'm going to ask myself, well, why do you want to be able to do the splits?

And the first answer that pops into my head is, well, because I want to be more flexible. And so I need to pick this apart further, and so I may ask myself okay, well why do you want to be more flexible? The answer to that is, because I want to have more range in my aerial performances and have more options that I can use.

Okay, then the next question is, well, why do you want to have more range in your aerial performances, and the answer to that is probably because I think it will make my performances more impressive. Why do I want to make my performances more impressive? Well, because people will take me more seriously as an aerialist. Ding-ding-ding-ding, there's the real answer. There is the real why, but it took a lot of digging and being honest with myself to get to that real why.

And, of course, I'm doing this why inquiry after the fact, in hindsight. Had I done it at the time, perhaps I would not have made that goal and I wouldn't have wasted as much time as I did trying to achieve it, even though it wasn't a great goal for me. So, the main takeaway here is, when you're thinking about your why for the goals or resolutions that you're setting, don't bullshit yourself.

Really take some time to dig deeper into the layers of those why's and figure out what your true motivation is and if that's worth pursuing.

Redefining Health & Wellness

#26

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi

Because otherwise you are going to find yourself a couple of weeks or months down the line, not giving a shit about this goal anymore and not really understanding why that's the case.

Whereas if you have a strong why, you can return to it over and over again, especially when things get hard, and it can be your guiding force through those difficult times. And speaking of difficult times, there is a Mark Manson article; it came out back in 2013, that really put a lot of things into perspective for me when it comes to creating goals for my life.

The article is titled, The Most Important Question of Your Life, and I will link it in the show notes. And what it talks about is how for every decision that we make, for everything that we want, we have to decide what consequences we are willing to live with in order to get that thing. And one of the examples he gives is how he's always wanted to be a rock star. But he's not willing to put in the sacrifices, and the work required to become a rock star because the tradeoffs aren't worth it to him.

And it's just this very practical way to think about setting goals that I think a lot of us don't think about enough. We think about the end. We think about, ah, it's going to feel so good when I get to this place and we ignore how much pain and struggle we're going to have to experience to get to that point, and we don't really think and consider, is it worth it?

Something else that gets to this point is the difference between process-based goals, or action goals, and outcome-based goals. The vast majority of people set outcome-based goals and that is not the world's best idea. So, some examples of outcome-based goals are things like in 2020 I want to have a better marriage. Sounds great in theory, who doesn't want to have a better marriage, or partnership? But there are no concrete steps outlined to get you to your goal.

Not only that, but better marriage can be defined in so many different ways. Is your partner thinking that it has the same definition as you? Because that would be really important in this particular case. Another example would be, I want to be healthier. Well, unless you define that for yourself and figure out what steps that requires, it's not a very good goal.

Redefining Health & Wellness

#26

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi

The other problem with outcome-based goals is that so often they're actually out of our control. So let's look back at the two examples that I just gave. You want a better marriage? Awesome. Does your partner want a better marriage? Are they going to contribute to that? Because if not, your marriage may not get better.

If your goal is to get healthier, again, that sounds great in theory, but certainly there are many aspects of health that are out of your control, like what if you get cancer this year? Or you get the flu. So the best thing to do in this case is take that overarching goal and turn it into a process-based goal.

So let's keep the same examples. If I want a better marriage, I might commit to going to couples counseling with my partner at least twice a month, and maybe I'm going to read a new book about communication and effective relationships every quarter of the next year. These goals are specific. They're measurable. They're achievable, and that's what we're really looking for in process-based goals.

They also don't laser focus on the expected outcome of having a better marriage because again, that is outside of your control. But, there are steps that you can take within your control to hopefully improve your marriage, and if not your marriage, then improve your communication and relationship skills in general for any future relationships. And those things are important, and they're worth pursuing.

If you want to improve your health, you have to decide what parts of you feel unhealthy, and again, I'm not going to get into this here, but weight is not the answer, okay? I implore you not to focus on weight as part of health because they are not as interconnected as you might think, as we have talked about many times on this show before. So, instead let's say you realize that wow, you don't really eat very many fruits and vegetables, and you rarely exercise.

So, perhaps you set a goal to eat a certain amount of fruits and vegetables during the week, or a range of fruits and vegetables, and you set a goal for yourself that you want to start exercising once a week, or twice a week, or something like that.

Redefining Health & Wellness

#26

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi

Again, these are specific, they're very achievable, and you can track them quite easily. So if you already have some goals in mind for the year, after you have checked out your why on those goals, and if you have a strong why that makes sense, then go back to that goal and figure out if it's an outcome-based goal, which is not ideal, or a process-based goal, which is ideal. And as I just demonstrated, it's definitely possible to change an outcome-based goal into a process-based goal, just by doing a little bit of retooling.

Another thing you should consider when setting your goals is, what is the environment in which you're setting them? Because you can have the best, most perfect goal in the world for you, and if you're setting it in the wrong environment, it's not going to fucking matter. It's important to ask yourself if your life as it stands right now supports the new goals that you have for yourself.

Because if it doesn't, it's not as simple as working towards that goal, you're going to have to completely adjust your life, potentially the people in it, potentially your schedule. And that is a much bigger endeavor than just working towards that goal by itself. So if the environment is wrong, you either need to change the environment, or change your goals.

And it's totally okay if you need to adjust or further simplify your goals so that they make more sense in your life, especially if you're pretty happy with the structure of your life and you're not looking to do an all-out change.

As part of thinking about your environment, definitely think about your friends and family. Are they going to be supportive of whatever it is that you're trying to do? Are there boundaries that you need to set to make sure that you are getting the support and structure that you need in order to succeed? Those things are definitely worth considering because rarely are we going at anything alone. Our friends and family can play a huge role in whether we succeed or fail at different things in our life.

Lastly, I would take some time to think about any potential roadblocks in advance. What's your game plan going to be when you get bored, or when you get tired, or when your schedule gets really busy, or when something

Redefining Health & Wellness

#26

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi

unexpected happens in your life? The more prepared you can be in advance for those things, the better.

I know this sounds like a lot of work and you're like, god dammit Shohreh, can I just make my goals in peace, and if I abandon them, who cares? And that's fine too. I did that for many years and if it doesn't bother you, then by all means just dive in and if you abandon your goals, so be it. But if perhaps you're looking to do something a little bit different, then I recommend following the steps that I just gave.

And I would also say that once you make the goals, obviously that's only step one. Of course then you have to execute and I really think the most important thing when executing is to continue to come back to your goals, and assess them, and see if they still even make sense for you. So many times we hang onto goals that don't really fit our life anymore, that aren't working for us, and that's just a waste of our time.

So you should definitely plan in advance how often you want to check in with yourself and see how things are going. This could be bi-weekly, it could be monthly, it could be bi-monthly, really, whatever works for you.

And you want to ask yourself things like, how are these changes making me feel physically? How are these changes making me feel mentally? How are they making me feel emotionally? Do I feel at ease about these goals that I'm working towards, or am I starting to feel obsessive? Am I experiencing guilt, shame, or negative self-talk associated with any of these goals and changes that I've been making? Does it still seem like the benefits outweigh the costs, or is it vice versa? What has been working well for you and what has been working well not so well for you? Are you enjoying the changes that you've made in your life, or are you struggling with them? Are the changes sustainable for the long term, or are you finding that it's not going so well in that department? And did the changes feel right for your unique life, or maybe did you not dig deep enough when you were thinking about the whys, and this isn't actually the best goal for you?

I also want to say, don't be afraid to completely ditch your goals, or make adjustments to them, or whatever it is that you ultimately need to do. You

Redefining Health & Wellness

#26

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi

do not have to keep doing shit that you hate and that makes you feel crappy. You really, really don't, I swear. I give you permission to take a graceful, or a not so graceful exit, and you don't need my permission, but sometimes people just need to hear that.

That it's okay, that no one is going to think less of you because you abandoned or adjusted a goal. These goals are for you. They're not for fucking anybody else. Just do your best to be kind to yourself, no matter what happens, and to be flexible. And I say this as a person who is notoriously inflexible and who hates unexpected changes. But this is something that I'm really working to change because I've experienced a lot of pain and disappointment in my life when I got too fixated on a specific outcome, and that outcome didn't come through, for whatever reason.

I mean shit happens right? Things very rarely go completely to plan, so it's important for us to realize that there are a wide range of potential outcomes that can happen, and to not get obsessed with having a certain one. And again, that doesn't mean that you can't have goals. It just means that you are a little bit more go-with-the-flow about what happens, and that you're not afraid to adjust as you go along.

Use these goal setting tips wisely. Obviously they don't only have to be used for the new year, they can be used any time of the year, whenever you are setting new goals for yourself. And I am wishing you and the wonderful people in your life a very Happy New Year, and I hope that when shit hits the fan, as it inevitably does for all of us at different points in our lives, that there are people in your corner to help you and support you through that, and that you can learn some wonderful lessons in this new year, as I'm sure you've learned in all the years past.

I so, so appreciate all of you being here in 2019 and supporting me in this podcast endeavor. Please, if you've been enjoying the podcast and you have not left a review yet, it would mean the world to me, as a little end of year, holiday present to leave a review.

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Redefining Health & Wellness

#26

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi

that's an iPhone, or an iPad or a MacBook, you can go to the Apple podcasts app, go to the ratings and reviews section and you can leave a star rating and review for the podcast, telling me what it is that you have enjoyed about it.

[Music plays]

Thank you so much for all of your support in 2019, and I am looking forward to continuing this podcast adventure with you, and hopefully some more of your friends and family in the year 2020.

And that's our show for today. I appreciate you listening to and supporting the Redefining Health & Wellness podcast. If you enjoyed this episode, it would mean so much to me if you would subscribe, and leave a review with your podcast provider of choice. It will really help other people who might benefit from the podcast to find it more easily.

I also love chatting with listeners, so feel free to screen shot from your podcast player. Post on social media and tag me. And if you're looking for more information on what I'm all about, and how to work with me, head on over to shohrehdavoodi.com. I hope to see you for the next episode.