

WOOP!

WOOP is the nickname for a tool called *mental contrasting with implementation intentions*. It's a 4-step process for thinking through how to achieve the goals that matter to us. And science has shown that WOOP can help us be much more successful with accomplishing our goals and keeping up our motivation along the way. ([CITE]) **Here's how to do it:**

W – Wish: What do you want to do / change / achieve?

In step 1, we clarify and write down our goal. Some tips to consider:

- Make it specific (“I’ll exercise 3 time a week,” not “I’ll exercise more”)
- Make it realistic in a pretty short time-frame, so you can have a “win” to build upon later (“I’ll write 4 songs this month,” not “I’ll record a Grammy-winning album”)
- Make your goal something to do vs. something NOT to do. (“I’ll talk to my kids in a calm and quiet tone of voice,” not “I won’t yell at my kids”). You might ask yourself: “Would a houseplant be able to do this goal?” If so, you’ve probably set a goal for what NOT to do... after all, a houseplant will never feel anxious, overeat, or yell at their children!

My wish is: _____

O – Outcome: What is the best outcome if you succeed?

In step 2, we motivate ourselves by remembering why this is important to us. Why bother doing this work? How will your life, or others’ lives, be improved?

The outcome I hope for is: _____

O – Obstacles: What hurdles will you need to overcome?

In step 3, we get real about the challenges we’re going to face. What might get in our way? Some of these might be external issues, like money or time. Some of these might be internal issues, like anxiety, doubt, or procrastination. WOOP is designed mostly for internal issues, so be sure to write those down!

The obstacles are: _____

P – Plans: How can you jump over those hurdles?

In step 4, we come up with really specific plans for how to overcome the obstacles we just listed. A few tips:

- Consider an “if/then” plan – *if* this hurdle comes up, *then* I will do this to get past it.
- Consider listing small steps that you could take to get started... in the next 1 week, 1 day, 1 hour, or even 1 minute.

My plans are: _____

Want to learn more? Check out the research and tools at www.woopmylife.org or the book *Rethinking Positive Thinking: Inside the New Science of Motivation* by Gabriele Oettingen.