

Goals

Exercise

n/a

Client

No

Facing the Effect of Fear-Based Beliefs on Goal Achievement

Inarguably, fear is one of the most common emotions that prevent people from living in line with their values and pursuing meaningful goals. Fear is about the unknown. When setting goals, we may experience fear because we know that we may fail to reach our goals. This fear is illustrated by thoughts like, “What if I fail?” “I failed in the past. Why should I succeed now?” and “There is no point in trying.”

However, goal setting is about what is possible, not what is inevitable. There is minimal certainty in this world, and we can never be one hundred percent certain that we will reach our goals, as too many factors beyond our control influence goal achievement. Only one thing exists that we can be sure of: If we do not try to reach a goal, failure is guaranteed.

To live in line with personal values, it is important to set goals and to pursue them, despite fear. The present tool was designed to introduce clients to the consequences of fear-based beliefs on goal achievement and personal growth.



Goal

The goal of this tool is to confront clients with the consequences of fear-based beliefs for goal achievement and personal growth. It was designed to make clients aware of the negative consequences of fear-based avoidance of goals.



Advice

- Clients must choose a meaningful goal. That is a goal that helps them realize important values.



References

- Eccles, J. S., & Wigfield, A. (2002). Motivational beliefs, values, and goals. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 53, 109-132.
- Hayes, S. C., K. D. Strosahl, and K. G. Wilson. (1999). *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: An Experiential Approach to Behavior Change*. Guilford Press.

Facing the Effect of Fear-Based Beliefs on Goal Achievement

Instructions

Step 1: Identify a goal

Think of a goal that you would like to reach but are currently not pursuing because you are afraid that you will not successfully reach this goal.

Step 2: Consider the possible outcomes

Look at Table 1 below. As you can see, two dimensions are worth considering when evaluating the possible outcomes of your thoughts and actions.

	Success is realized	Success is not realized
You believe: "I can achieve this goal," and you try to reach it.	<p><i>Outcome 1</i></p> <p>An exciting journey as you move in the direction of your goal. Along the way, you develop new skills and experience personal growth. You achieve your goal and feel great.</p>	<p><i>Outcome 2</i></p> <p>A rewarding journey as you move in the direction of your goal. Along the way, you develop new skills and experience personal growth. Although you feel disappointed that you did not achieve your goal, you do have the satisfaction of knowing you gave it your best shot.</p>
You believe: "I cannot achieve this goal," and you do not even start trying to reach the goal.	<p><i>Outcome 3</i></p> <p>There is no exciting journey, no new skills learned, and no personal growth. No goal is achieved, and you will always wonder whether you were ever able to reach the goal.</p>	<p><i>Outcomes 4</i></p> <p>There is no exciting journey, no new skills learned, and no personal growth. No goal is achieved. The only price you win is that you saved yourself from the disappointment of failure.</p>



The first dimension is your beliefs and your actions. You may either believe that you can achieve this goal and try to reach it or believe that you will not achieve this goal do not even start trying to achieve it.

The second dimension is reality. Either you can reach your goal successfully, or it is not possible to do so.

Combining these two dimensions results in four different outcomes displayed in the four quadrants of the table. Take some time to study the table and then proceed to Step 3.

Step 3: Reflect on the possible outcomes

Consider the four outcomes listed in the table. Which appeals most to you?

Why does it appeal most to you?

Consider the following scenario. Your life is almost over. Someone asks about the goal you listed in Step 1. Which of these two possible answers appeals most to you?

Option 1: "I wanted to reach this goal, but I was too afraid to try."

Option 2: "I dared to try to achieve this goal, but I did not reach it."



Why did you choose this option?

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What did you learn from this exercise?

A large, empty rectangular box with a light gray background, intended for the user to write their answer to the question above.