Appendix 4
GOAL SETTING

Effective goal setting is quite a skill and it does require a bit of practice to get the hang of it.

The method that follows is adapted with permission from 'The Weight Escape' workshops and e-course created by Ann Bailey, Joe Ciarrochi and Russ Harris, © 2010. (Their book, *The Weight Escape*, will also be published by Penguin Books (Australia) in June 2012.) You can download a free pdf of this worksheet from the Free Resources page on www.thehappinesstrap.com.

The Five-Step Plan for Goal Setting and Committed Action

Step 1. Identify Your Guiding Values

Identify the value or values that will underpin your course of action.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Step 2. Set a SMART goal

It's not effective to set any old goal that springs to mind. Ideally, you want to set a SMART goal. Here's what the acronym means:

S= specific (Do not set a vague, fuzzy, or poorly-defined goal like, 'I'll be more loving'. Instead, be specific: 'I'll give my partner a good, long hug when I get home from work'. In other words, *specify* what actions you will take.)

M = meaningful (Make sure this goal is aligned with important values.)

A = adaptive (Is this goal likely to improve your life in some way?)

R = realistic (Make sure the goal is realistic for the resources you have available. Resources you may need could include: time, money, physical health, social support, knowledge and skills. If these resources are necessary but unavailable, you will need to change your goal to a more realistic one. The new goal might actually be to find the missing resources: to save the money, or develop the skills, or build the social network, or improve health, etc.)

T = time-framed (Put a specific time frame on the goal: specify the day, date and time — as accurately as possible — that you will take the proposed actions.)

Write your SMART goal here:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Step 3. Identify Benefits

Clarify for yourself, what would be the most positive outcome(s) of achieving your goal? (However, *don't* start fantasising about how wonderful life will be after you achieve your goal; research shows that fantasising about the future actually reduces your chances of following through!) Write the benefits below:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Step 4. Identify Obstacles

Imagine the potential difficulties and obstacles that might stand in the way of you achieving your goals, and how you will deal with them if they arise. Consider:

a) what are the possible *internal* difficulties (difficult thoughts and feelings, such as low motivation, self-doubt, distress, anger, hopelessness, insecurity, anxiety, etc.)?

b) what are the possible *external* difficulties (things aside from thoughts and feelings that might stop you, e.g. lack of money, lack of time, lack of skills, personal conflicts with other people involved)?

If internal difficulties arise in the form of thoughts and feelings, such as:

_____

_____

_____ then I will use the following

mindfulness skills to unhook, make room and get present:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

If external difficulties arise, such as:

a)_____

_____

b)_____

_____

c)_____

_____

then I will take the following steps to deal with them:

a)_____

_____

b)_____

_____

c)_____

_____

Step 5. Make A Commitment

Research shows that if you make a public commitment to your goal (i.e. if you state your goal to at least one other person), then you are far more likely to follow through on it. If you're not willing to do this, then at the very least make a commitment to yourself. But if you really *do* want the best results, then be sure to make your commitment to somebody else.

I commit to *(write your values-guided SMART goal here)*:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Now say your commitment out loud — ideally to someone else, but if not, to yourself.

Other Helpful Tips For Goal Setting

- Make a step-by-step plan: break your goal down into concrete, measurable and time-based sub-goals.
- Tell other people about your goal and your ongoing progress: making a public declaration increases commitment.
- Reward yourself for making progress in your goal: small rewards help push you on to major success. (A reward might be as simple as saying to yourself, 'Well done! You made a start!')
- Record your progress: keep a journal, graph or drawing that plots your progress.