



# 115 | HELPING CLIENTS SET GOALS

**“When setting goals, The client designs the direction. The coach holds the structure for clarity, insight, and accountability.”**

## DESCRIPTION

Goal setting is not about producing a checklist. It's about creating clarity, agency, and direction in a client's life. Done well, goals are invitations for courage and commitment. Done poorly, goals become pressure, guilt, and avoidance. As coaches, our role is not to give clients goals, or even to shape their goals for them. Our role is to hold space for clients to define what matters, why it matters, and how they want to move toward it.

## WHAT'S INVOLVED IN SETTING GOALS

Goal-setting in coaching is client-directed. A strong coaching goal includes:

1. Meaning – rooted in personal values or identity.
2. Direction – pointing toward what the client wants, not what they should do.
3. Focus – not everything at once, but one step forward.
4. Choice – owned fully by the client.

### ***A helpful coaching stance is:***

- Curious, not prescriptive; slow-paced, not rushed; motivational, not demanding.
- Clients don't need goals that impress others. They need goals that connect them to who they are becoming.

## HOW COACHES SUPPORT GOAL SETTING

1. Help Clients Clarify What They Want
  - “What feels meaningful or energizing for you right now?”
  - “What outcome would feel like progress?”
2. Explore Motivation
  - “Why does this matter to you?”
  - “What becomes possible if you do this?”
  - “What becomes at risk if you don't?”
3. Identify the First Step, Not the Whole Plan
  - Micro-steps outperform master plans.
  - “You do not rise to the level of your goals. You fall to the level of your systems.” - J. Clear
4. Anticipate Obstacles with Compassion
  - We are not planning to avoid difficulty; we are planning to meet it.
5. Co-Design Accountability
  - “How do you want to track this?”
  - “What form of support would feel encouraging?”

***“Accountability must be empowering, not monitoring.”***

