

Goal-Setting for Couples

Yours, Mine and Ours:
Achieve ALL Your Dreams Together



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to Long-Lasting Relationship

Goal-Setting For Couples, Yours, Mine and Ours: Achieve ALL Your Dreams Together



Dr. Jan Hoistad Partners

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Goal-Setting For Couples, Yours, Mine and Ours: Achieve ALL Your Dreams Together is an updated and expanded version of Module 8, especially for dual-career couples and any couple facing a new stage in their relationship or work lives, or choice point where re-visioning the future is necessary.

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Please note that much of this publication is based on experiences and observational evidence of numerous coaching clients. Although the author has made every reasonable attempt to achieve complete accuracy of the content in this eBook, she assumes no responsibility for errors or omissions.

Also, you should use this information as you see fit, and at your own risk. Your particular situation may not be exactly suited to the examples illustrated here; in fact, it's likely that they won't be the same, and you should adjust your use of the information and recommendations accordingly. Finally, use your own wisdom as guidance. Nothing in this book is intended to replace common sense, legal, medical or other professional advice, and is meant to inform and entertain the reader. So have fun with your guide as you design your successful work and life!

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Choice Points in Business, Career, Relationship and Life

Over the course of business, career and personal life we all come to stages when we are dissatisfied, want growth or desire change. Decisions made at these times can have a profound effect on the course of one's life.

Occasionally we may find that we're thrust into these circumstances by outside events such as a layoff, a merger, new leadership or company reorganization. A divorce, unexpected illness or disability may also elicit change that impacts your work-life. More often it's an inner need for greater challenge, typically in a role with increased responsibility, recognition and compensation that motivates us. Any of these external drivers may be paired with a developmental readiness for a mate, family, home or new personal circumstance that makes us seek change.

We call these "Choice Points" because you have a choice in how you respond or capitalize on them. Awareness of how decisions in one area of your life affects all other areas can be complex. At a Choice Point you can move forward fully aligned, with confidence, or you can be reactive and become sidelined, resulting in a lifetime of consequences you may not want. You can settle for less, never knowing "what if," or you can take control and strategically plan how you respond to the choice point so you build toward a better outcome.

Whether these changes are brought about for one or both of you, they impact your entire relationship, current, and future, life. Therefore, working together in partnership-I call it Big Picture Partnering-helps you stay connected, make decisions together, and keep your relationship strong. When you work toward goals together, and re-vision at each stage of your career, business, and personal lives, you have more energy, more creativity. Mutual support lends even greater clarity to your entire life. You navigate with confidence. You are able to go further, faster, in all areas of your life-because you are doing it together.

To successfully meet the pressures of today requires you, your life, and career to be seamlessly interconnected.

May this guide assist you to envision your future together, establish and achieve your goals, so you confidently land on the best possible outcome that connects your immediate choices with the whole-life future you envision. So you achieve more, with greater ease. So you move further and faster than ever before.

Speed up with clarity and confidence.

- Know where you want to go or grow.
- Get clarity on how to get there.
- Develop a realistic strategic plan for the results you want.
- Smoothly bridge to your longer-term career goals and personal desires.

Create the Life of Your Dreams

Turn Problems and Dreams Into Goals You Achieve Together

In this module you are going to learn how to turn your problems—and any dreams you are not actively pursuing—into goals you can reach for together. You are going to turn what has been negative into a positive; future dreams put to the side into action. I’m going to show you how to be more creative about your dreams together!

You’ll practice goal setting in two aspects of your life to:

- Turn your “issues and problems” into “daily details” you resolve together. Resolving everyday conflicts, or smoothing out your daily details is essential to free up time and energy for bigger dreams, future desires—the fun and exciting stuff—that can so easily get lost in the everyday details of running a household, raising kids, going to work, and so on.

These are typically the everyday things that couples often bicker about or push under the rug and continuously trip over (such as child care or parenting differences, household chores, who plans the dates or social calendar, frequency of sex, how finances are handled, and so on). Because you encounter these differences,

disagreements, or issues frequently, they can easily erode the good feelings between you. Addressing each one together will make your daily life run much more smoothly, freeing more time and energy for the next type of goal.

Revitalize your “Big Picture Dreams” and reach for them together. These goals include bigger dreams and future desires. You may want to achieve some of these in three months and others in three, ten, or fifteen years. We’ll call these Big Picture Dreams. These include goals that may feel a bit out of your reach and may take a bit longer to accomplish. So it is important to begin taking action toward achieving them gradually over time. Some of you are more ready to tackle your Big Picture goals than others. It doesn’t matter. I want each of you to begin practicing envisioning your Big Picture goals and taking small steps toward achieving them together using your Big Picture Partnering tools.

As you practice visioning your goals and working toward them together, you accomplish so much more, have so much more fun and feel proud, excited and connected because it’s the life you most desired—and you can make this happen!

So let’s get started!

Part I: Do You Have Experience with Goal-Setting?

You may already be an active goal-setter. Or maybe you are one of those people who doesn't like or know how to set goals. The facts are:

- People who set goals achieve more in life.
- When two people try to accomplish something together, they need to choose the same target and synchronize their efforts.
- Those who clarify what they want and decide how they will work to achieve their dreams will do just that.

If you are not in the habit of setting goals, try the exercises in this chapter and experiment so you can measure the positive changes you create together as you go forward using the Big Picture approach. If you already have experience with goal setting, your focus will be learning to synchronize your goals and achieving them together as partners. Synchronizing your goals and accomplishing them together will make you feel competent and successful as partners. You will become masters at achieving your own destiny—staying connected, having more fun, and being creative—far beyond the last pages of this book.

Your Goals: Are they Basic Needs, Desires, or Dreams?

As you grow, you each have the opportunity to provide for yourself and others at two levels. The first is a basic survival level. These are needs for food, clothing, shelter, and medical attention, as well as the money to attain these necessities. You also have sexual needs. The second level involves things you want. You do not need that red dress or new Prius, but you may want it! Unlike survival needs, which, if unmet, can result in illness or even death, wants can be modified. You may want a feast, but a steak sandwich may do. You may want a two-week vacation, but a day by the lake may better fit your schedule and budget—and give you the downtime you want.

Then there are the “wants” that some people think of as “abundance” or “havingness.” Achieving a sense of “simplicity,” living a “sustainable” lifestyle falls into this category for some. For others it is multiple homes and cars and vacations. For yet others abundance includes feeling at peace, being healthy, and having time for family and friends. Allowing yourself this kind of wealth may or may not involve money. Such abundance may relate to your wealth of knowledge, wisdom, friends, or laughter, or your connection to God, a Higher Being, nature, or beauty. This is where your dreams and desires come into play.

Harry and Sue and Hans and Olivia are examples of couples who learned how to turn their problems and dreams into goals they accomplished together. Harry and Sue's daily details constantly tripped them up. By turning these hassles into goals, they were able to save their marriage. Once Hans and Olivia's daily details were smoothed out, they were ready to focus on a Big Picture Dream they'd had since early in their marriage.

Harry and Sue were desperate when they began to learn Big Picture Partnering. Married for five years with a sixteen-month-old baby a three-year-old toddler, and a budget stretched thin in spite of two full-time jobs, they were constantly overwhelmed and stressed. They blamed one another and their bond was frayed. Sue said:

If it weren't for the kids, we probably would have divorced a while back even though we love each other deeply.

Harry added:

That's for sure! We were totally unprepared for the demands of adulthood when we married in our early twenties and started having babies. Keeping house, buying groceries, cooking, cleaning, and

paying the bills seemed like a cake-walk before Josie and Andy came along. I guess we both missed the role modeling of how to juggle all aspects of family life while going to work full-time.

Eager to get out of their crisis, Harry and Sue worked hard to stop blaming one another. They turned their complaints into mutual goals they worked toward together—smoothing out their household organization, coming together on parenting styles, reworking home and office schedules, and creating a realistic budget they both honored. As Sue explained:

It was so hard at first to think of a problem as a positive goal we could work for, but once we figured out how to do it, it was almost a pleasure. We were no longer rageful or silent or hurting because we put our smarts toward saying what we wanted instead of saying what was wrong.

Harry piped in:

What a relief that lesson was! Instead of saying to Sue as I barged in the door after work, “Why the hell did you have to use the credit

card again and don't you know that the checking account is also overdrawn?!" and Sue shooting back, "Well if you had to buy the groceries and feed this family, and if you'd only get that raise..." and our entire evening being destroyed, we practiced biting our tongues. Then we took the scary, painful step of sitting down—often at first, then less frequently as things got better—to listen to what each other "really" wanted.

Sue added:

Yeah. It was pretty basic. At first we learned to say "I need your help with the grocery shopping and the dishes." Or, "Could you pick up the kids from daycare one day a week so I could go workout before coming home to make dinner?" Or, "I'm worried about our debts and really want us to get our finances under control. Let's figure out a way to do this."

Harry built on Sue's thought:

Those basic needs turned into goals like "We agree to develop a

clear budget and stick to it.” Then we identified what we needed to do to accomplish that goal. Our action items included downloading QuickBooks, hiring someone to help set it up, and inputting six months of data from our financial accounts. Then we had a clear picture of our spending habits.

Sue added with a laugh:

Yeah, both good and bad! Seeing it so clearly helped us talk about next action steps including where to cut back and where to save. It was hard, but I think we both felt very mature as we gradually got our finances under control and found new ways to have fun that don't cost as much. Being home in the evenings is also more pleasant so spending doesn't have to fill that void.

Harry finished their story by saying:

Now that we completed that financial goal we have made new ones for this year: to look into the kids' college fund, buy more life insurance and redo our will, and put more money toward retirement.

We've done this same goal setting/goal accomplishing process with each and every one of our issues over the past three years. It saved our marriage and there is no way I'm stopping this partnering now!

Hans and Olivia are an example of a couple with some experience in goal setting in their work lives, who sought to apply these skills to becoming Big Picture Partners. Like Harry and Sue, they initially applied their goal setting to daily details, especially sharing household chores and coordinating many extended family activities. Married a second time, for six years, Olivia was a nurse who preferred to spend her free time spinning wool and making the weavings she took to craft fairs and sold at local gift stores. Hans would tell you he was “a techie nerd” who had worked for the same large corporation for many years. Nothing made him more content than having spare time to play computer games. Olivia would weave in the same room. But the housekeeping and the finances went neglected!

As they focused their new partnering skill on rectifying their most problematic areas, Hans and Olivia quickly became ready to dream their bigger goals. Already in their mid-forties, they decided to simplify their cleaning and financial routines and until they were under control. Then they joined a Big Picture couple's workshop where they shared their larger dream. They wanted to move to the country and

purchase a small hobby farm where Olivia could raise the sheep for her wool and grow the herbs and flowers she enjoyed.

Olivia chimed in:

We had looked at property earlier in our marriage, when this dream was alive and fresh. Over the years nothing seemed within our price range or close enough to family, and our dream faded. But partnering opened up creativity we had forgotten about.

Hans and Olivia developed a solid Big Picture partnership. They started by working on their daily details. Once their “house was in order,” their creative juices flowed right into planning the life they had once dreamed of—before the dream was buried. This can happen for you, too. I have seen couples make monumental creative leaps in their lives, doing things they at first thought almost impossible. Olivia and Hans are one couple with a creative story to tell.

Says Hans:

I was totally unconvinced that we would ever move from the city,

just because I work for a big technical company and couldn't imagine what I would do living on a farm. But as we talked and listened and explored and experimented with ideas and plans, and looked at property, and talked to other people, it all started to seem more possible—all except my work!

Olivia recalls:

I remember all of our friends had to almost force you to talk to your boss about telecommuting. And he agreed almost immediately! You were so surprised!

Replies Hans:

It's true. My boss said yes on the condition I'd come in to the office two days a week—and again, that seemed like an obstacle to me. But working as a team and exploring options kept us open to possibilities, and wouldn't you know, this farm came available three months later and we moved shortly after that.

Olivia says:

I love living in the country. We are close to Hans' parents, who are getting older, and he stays in the city one night a week and works from home the remaining time. It's as close to our ultimate dream as anyone can get!

Through their mutual efforts—learning to partner well, then applying their skills to daily details that bogged them down—Hans and Olivia unleashed their creative energy and resurfaced a dream from their early years. Hans and Olivia now share the life of their dreams, living in the country, creating art, and telecommuting. You can envision your goals and achieve your dreams as well.

Turn Your Problems + Dreams into Goals You Achieve Together

Module 7 showed you how to put any important topic on your partnering table, rather than between you, using the On The Table Formula. You made a list of topics to practice this four-part formula to arrive at Win/Win mutually satisfying decisions that you've been taking action on.

In this module you will practice more comprehensive mutual goal setting that will focus your efforts on achieving desired goals consistently. Each goal you state together will become a target toward which you aim your joint efforts. These joint efforts will help you find mutually satisfying, creative, win/win solutions. As you work toward these goals together, you create the life of your dreams!

The goal setting and activities you will do in this module help resolve your everyday issues—the daily details that bog any couple down. You will also explore some Big Picture Dreams and put those back on your partnering table to envision and work toward. As you continue to partner and become masters of achieving your goals in the years to come, you will have fewer daily details that need to be smoothed out and more Big Picture Dreams on your goal list.

For every problem or obstacle there are at least twenty solutions.
That is creativity.

There are many times in life when we have a desire and we talk ourselves out of it:

“Oh, I’ll never find the time.”

“I could never do that!”

“Other people are able to do it, not me.”

“I don’t have the money or the resources or the support or the _____.”

“We’ll never resolve that issue or problem.”

And on it goes. Some people have an inner censor so powerful they don’t even know they have dreams or desires. Or they feel like a failure so they don’t deserve to have a dream, even a little one.

Take a moment and read the below paragraph. Then close your eyes and visualize the scenario it describes.

You are walking contentedly along a path. Off in the distance is a beautiful mountain peak surrounded by a sunny glow. Imagine that this peak is your greatest vision of what your life could become. Then as you walk step by step along your path, you suddenly come across a deep chasm, so deep it almost frightens you. Let’s call this chasm “fear” or “obstacle” or “self-doubt” or “lack of deserving” or “too busy” or “too little money” or anything else that comes to your mind.

Know in your heart-of-hearts that here you are in danger of forgetting. You could forget that you have set your sight on the mountain peak, and this is simply a chasm. It is simply an obstacle. It needn't stop you. What you truly seek is ahead.

Now is the time to become creative in your visualization. Don't allow your fears and doubts to take center stage. Maybe you can build a bridge across the chasm, or take a donkey, ride a zipcord, or fly an airplane across the divide. Or perhaps some other idea may come to you.

Then breathe quietly as you reflect on how you sometimes forget that your dreams are at the top of the mountain peak and that the chasm is merely an obstacle to be gone around. Be like water and move around the problem, the obstacle, or the impediment. Don't let it stop you from moving step-by-step toward your dreams.

Part II: Put Your Doubts Aside

Doubts are simply obstacles. For example, a potential obstacle to a short term Daily Detail might be your disbelief that your husband would ever agree to cook twice a week or plan an entire date night for the two of you—including hiring the babysitter—so you dismiss your desire without writing it on your list. Your Big

Picture Dream may be traveling to China at the end of next year, but you have no idea if your partner would like to go, how you will pay for it, or how to navigate this foreign country and language. However, if you put this goal on your list it becomes a target toward which you will be pulled—you'll become aware of action items you can do to prepare yourself for such a trip. You will talk about your desire with your partner. Both of you may start to explore the local Chinese markets, buy maps and travel books about China, create a savings account for your trip, talk to travel agents or explore online, and so on. Before you know it, what once seemed impossibility might be a reality!

In the following exercises you will turn your problems or issues, your dreams and desires into realistic, practical goals. You will start by setting goals you can accomplish within a three-to-twelve-month period of time. This is the beginning of a lifetime process if you are Big Picture partners. Throughout this program, you have learned and practiced many skills and tools to turn your conflicts into creative solutions and help you reach for your dreams together. As you continue to apply them in your everyday life along with working toward mutual goals, you'll become much more satisfied and empowered to build the life you've always envisioned—and you'll be doing it together! Together you are better!

Big Picture partners schedule time to revisit their goals, give progress reports, or brainstorm and problem solve together. Whenever a goal is accomplished couples celebrate and cross it off their list and then add a new one. Other couples revisit their goals together on a quarterly or annual basis, for example near the New Year or a wedding anniversary.

Exercises: Develop Your One-Year Goals

Using your journal, each of you will privately spend time writing your lists of Individual, Couple, and if applicable, Family goals. These are the things you wish for and want to accomplish in the coming year. Do not share your goals until instructed later in these exercises. This first articulation of your goals is just for you. It may take you a few sittings to complete, so work on it a few hours at a time and then return to it after you have had time to reflect. There are separate spaces on the charts to include both daily details that need to be addressed and also desires or Big Picture Dreams.

Remember to write your goals in positive terms: Say what you want instead of saying what is wrong. For example, instead of saying “I want us to stop fighting and arguing every night when we get home from work,” you might say, “I’d like our evenings to be peaceful. I’d like some time to decompress and play with the kids when I get home. I’d like to reconnect with Sarah and I’d like to find out how she feels about meal preparation and putting the kids to bed, so we can work together to have a nice home life.”

Another suggestion is to start with your global intention or desire and then become more specific. For example, you may state your global intention as a de-

sire to be healthy. Then you would expand your intention into a goal: “My goal is to continue to be healthy by remaining active, eating more healthy foods, getting back into exercise, and losing some weight. Becoming more specific you would flesh out action items and a timetable for accomplishing your goal by saying, “Starting in February, I will go back to the gym three times each week. I’ll work out a schedule with Pam so I can come home an hour later on those days, and I’ll offer to trade other times so she can also workout while I watch the kids. I’d like to lose ten pound in the next six months and I know Pam would, too. I’d like to work out a shopping/meal plan with her that will help us both to reach this goal if she’s willing.” For some intentions you may not be able to write a specific goal at first. And for some stated goals you may not know any action steps you might take today. Put them on your list of desires anyway. Over time you will add to your list on a regular basis—expanding your goals and accomplishing action items.

Your Individual Goals are what you’d like to accomplish personally this year: these goals may involve your work, your health, etc. Then, think about how you want your relationship to be one year from now. These are Couple or Relationship Goals. Finally, what do you desire for your entire family? If you have children, these are your Family Goals. (This might include vacations and activities together, spending time learning something new as a family, and so on.)

Personal and Home Life Goals

To help you write these one-year goals, think about the goals you'd like to set in every area of your life:

- Your partnership
- Parenting
- Extended family
- Friendships
- Social life and activities
- Work life
- Spiritual life
- Creative pursuits
- Physical health, exercise
- Sex life
- Finances and investments—short-term and long-term
- Everyday household upkeep and maintenance
- Household projects, renovation, or remodeling
- Intellectual or learning activities
- Fun and leisure
- Travel
- Other

Career and Business Goals

Consider the stage of your career and/or business life and identify both short-term needs and long-term visions.

- Short-Term 30-60-90 days needs building to 1 year goals:
- Desired Growth or Stability
- My Role
- Financial
- People
- Products
- Systems
- New Learning
- Other
- Long-term 3, 5, 10+ year to Exit
- Desired Growth or Stability
- Changes in My Role over time
- Financial
- People
- Products
- Systems
- Exit / Success Strategy
- Support / Advisors for Exit Strategy
- Re-Visioning Future With Mate and Family

Give yourself some time, in a particularly nice setting, to consider these aspects of your life. Go somewhere overlooking a lake, curl up in your favorite chair, or take yourself out to your favorite coffee shop for a few hours. Take a written list of the above categories and any others that fit your circumstances.

Then start to write about what you need or want, fleshing out each of the categories on your list. Include:

- Things you already do and want to continue (“I like how we are parenting. I want to continue being a good father.”)
- Things you wish to resolve or change between you (“I want to improve our sex life and become more affectionate once again.”)
- Things you want to add or create (“We’ve never talked about our future dreams, twenty years from now. We need to start planning for retirement. I want to figure out a way to dream and make it financially feasible together.” Or, “We need more couple time. I’d like us to have three short vacations this year, without the kids.”)

Some people write a few paragraphs describing their overall goals, or what they project their lives will feel and look like in one year. Others make lists.

Be sure to include all the little and big things that you desire to manifest in

the coming year. You may wish to group these into short-term goals (one to three months) and longer-term goals (four to twelve months) For example:

“I want a weekend vacation, alone with my husband, without the kids, next summer. We need some time on our own.”

“I want to start looking for a new job in six months, once I have learned what I set out to learn at this company. I need to talk to my partner about this.”

“I want us to continue practicing being more emotionally mature. I want us to continue becoming better communicators. I want us to feel more connected to each other by this time next year.”

“I want us to find a way to resolve disagreements about the children’s bedtime and discipline. I’d rather spend our evenings relaxing and talking together.”

“I want to continue sticking to my budget and even have money

saved by the end of the year. I would feel proud of myself if I accomplished that. It would contribute to our partnership.”

“I want to resolve our lack of sexual intimacy. We seem to be going through the motions these days.”

“This summer I want more time to golf or fish.”

“I want to feel closer to God. I’d like to talk more about our spiritual life.”

“I want to spend more time with my parents now that they are getting older and less active. I’m not sure how to balance this with my family, but I’d like my partner to support me in this.”

Then circle or star your top three to four priority goals in the individual, couple, and family categories. Here’s an example of a fully thought-through individual intention, stated as a positive goal, fleshed out in action steps with a thorough timetable:

During the coming year, my vision is to develop a better balance between personal, family, and work time. I am committed to experimenting with a few options toward accomplishing that goal. One is to go in to the office one hour earlier three days a week, close my door for that hour, and use that quiet time to get through my paperwork. This will enable me to leave work earlier and spend more time on the things that I enjoy, including being with my partner and my family. I also plan on delegating more of the detail work to my assistant and will set up one meeting with her each chapter to accomplish this. In order to ensure that I keep more reasonable hours, I will let my staff know I am leaving by five o'clock at least four nights a chapter, and I will ask my wife to join me downtown for an early dinner date one night each week.

Now you try it.

Acknowledge Your Obstacles, Doubts, and Self-Sabotage

Once you have clearly written down your goals, ask yourself about each goal, "What are the obstacles to accomplishing this goal? How might I sabotage myself or

get in my own way of accomplishing this goal?” Write your answers in your journal.

Share Your Goals with Your Partner

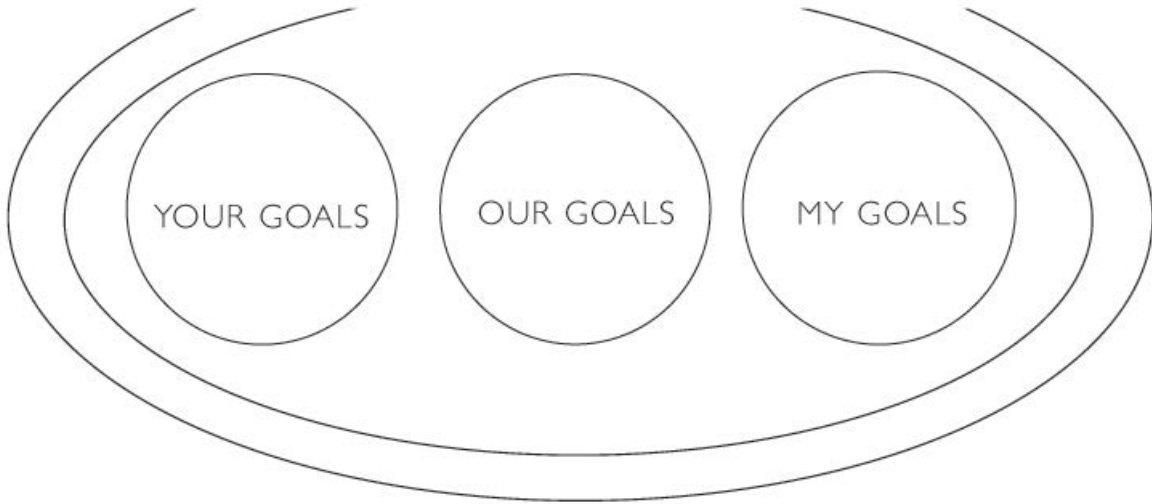
Come together and take turns reading your lists slowly out loud to one another. First read your list of Individual Goals, followed by your Couple Goals and concluding with your Family Goals. Do not discuss right now. Listen carefully.

Once you have shared all your goals, discuss your responses. Are your goals aligned? Talk about any surprises—not in a judgmental way, but by sharing your reactions. Talk about these lists in terms of your values and priorities, and desire to have a solid partnership.

Make a Combined Master List of One-Year Goals

Now you'll create a master list of couple and family goals for the coming year. Refer to the diagram on page 320 to use as a sample approach. Rewrite your couple and family goals by combining what each of you wrote. This is an opportunity to clarify your mutual goals in a common language. Make sure that the intentions, needs, and desires that each of you share are noted in your master list.

Our master list of goals



YOUR GOALS

PARTNERING GOALS

Couple Goals

Family Goals

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MY GOALS

One of you may have something on your list that the other person does not. Here is an opportunity to discuss if this goal is truly acceptable to both parties. For example, a husband may wish to take a cross-country family vacation or a wife may hope to spend money on an addition to the house within the next year. They may be willing to add these to their partnership goals, or it may be that finances prohibit these goals. In this event, they have two options. One is to postpone the addition until a later time—and perhaps put it on a three-year goal list. Another is to decide on a one-year goal that is a baby step toward the bigger goal, such as going on a weekend getaway or painting several rooms in the house.

Now that you have made a joint list of goals, set your lists of individual goals alongside this master list.

Talk about your willingness to support one another's individual goals during the coming year. Share your concerns and commitment to these individual goals. Talk about what will be required of each of you to support each other's goals. Referring back to a prior example, if one of you wants to exercise more regularly, the other may volunteer to watch the kids one or two evenings a week, or you may need to alter your car-pooling or mealtime. How can you support one another's individual needs? Some goals may be rewritten or altered in order to assure that the other partner supports an individual goal.

Identify Your Mutual Priorities

Working together, choose which three couple goals you want to start working on first. (Two of these goals should be daily details you want to smooth out. They should be former problems or hot topics you have not thoroughly discussed since signing the Do Not Fight Pact. While they may seem less problematic now that you have turned them into positive goals, they potentially still require deeper discussion which you will learn how to do in the next chapters.)

If you have a family, you will also choose one or two family goals from your master list. Then tell one another which two or three individual goals you will focus on.

Once you have mutually chosen your three partnering goals, brainstorm about each goal, one at a time, for ten minutes. For each goal, make a list—without judgment or edits—that includes all the possible ways you could work toward it individually and together. Write down all the specific things you can do as partners to make this goal a reality. Then, choose the three or four most practical steps. Circle those you could accomplish within the next few weeks.

Next, divide up the tasks: who will do what and by what date? Agree to be accountable. Agree on a weekly day and time at which you will report back to each other on your progress toward the first goal. These get-togethers will now become

your regular partnering meetings.

After you have a plan for this first partnership goal, follow the same steps for your two remaining goals. Then do the same for your individual goals, either together or separately.

Since you'll want to make progress and feel successful, choose some goals that are less difficult and a few more complex or challenging to start. For example, altering your meal planning and grocery shopping regimen may be a less complex goal than improving your sex life—although both may be on your individual or master goal lists. Finding a mutually satisfying way of handling money—from paying bills to establishing savings and investment plans—is often a loaded and difficult issue, but an important one to tackle in order to have a good partnering foundation and create smooth-functioning daily details. In fact, I suggest that you select “smoother handling of finances” as your complex goal. Especially for challenging goals, try to establish a series of specific action items you can accomplish in a short period of time. For example:

One year from now we would like to be in full agreement and well informed about all aspects of our money management. As a solid step toward this, we agree that in the next four weeks we will review

our current financial status and decide on a budget to implement for this year. We agree to go to Saturday morning coffee and review our financial progress, create new action steps to become better managers of our money. We will also get the names of three financial planners and make appointments with at least two of them within the next three months. We'll work with our favorite planner to work out more necessary details to our financial plan going forward.

At each partnering meeting, use the following formula for brief follow-up (unless more conversation is required):

- Each of you gives a brief report on the action steps taken to accomplish the identified goal.
- Then, each of you talks through how best to: 1) define your goal this week, 2) ask for help or support, 3) identify ways you might self-sabotage, and 4) describe the action steps you plan to take this week (for each goal).

After your partnering and family meetings, spend a few moments talking about what you appreciate about each other and do something fun or memorable together: popcorn and a video, a bike ride, a backyard water balloon fight, or a build-your-own pizza dinner.

Conclusion: Continue Your Big Picture Adventure

You have worked together consistently and creatively to strengthen your partnership. You have experienced the winning combination of the steps and tools plus and your mutual creativity. Now you know you can create most of what you want at every age and stage of your lives. This is the beginning of a life-long process.

As we conclude these modules, you are encouraged to create a partnering datebook that will help you continue working toward your Big Picture goals—from the satisfying daily details to the juicy big dreams. Customize your datebook together as you continue to create the partnership, and life, of your dreams.

Where Do We Go from Here?

You may be asking the question, “Where do we go from here? We still have more goals on our one-year lists that we want to accomplish.” You have daily details, maybe a few unresolved issues, and you may even be thinking about some future projects or dreams. Throughout the past 10 steps, you have spent time regularly talking and actively listening to one another. You have completed many exercises individually and then come together writing down your goals and taking action steps to accomplish them. This is the process you will continue. To do this you will:

- Regularly repeat the exercises in the modules as you continue to balance your individual, partnership, and family goals, as well as set new targets.
- Create a Big Picture datebook to reinforce the tools and to continue working on your goals.

Your Datebook

The aim of the datebook is to make the Big Picture partnering approach continuous and ongoing throughout your lives. It is an agreement you make together to continue building your Big Picture. If you have not yet finished smoothing out your daily details or settling unresolved issues, continue to make these your priority. Then, gradually, your datebook can help you work toward those bigger goals and future dreams.

Perhaps your datebook will include future plans for how you want to live when the kids are grown and away from home. Maybe it will include a schedule of dialogue about where you want to go for that long-awaited vacation or sabbatical you have talked about for so long. Maybe you'll need to schedule talking times to discuss major career changes, starting a family, remodeling your home, or ways to socialize with your neighbors or contribute to your church or community. Whatever

your vision might be, it is important to set new goals regularly in your life together. Your Big Picture partnering datebook will help you do so.

Customize your own partnering datebook. Here are some examples to help you imagine what will work best for the two of you.

Will Your Datebook Resemble Reba and Warren's?

Reba and Warren are a couple in their late forties. They have no children and are both professionals with active careers. When Warren and Reba sat down to create their datebook, they began by assessing how far they'd come since they began using the partnering approach.

Warren recalled:

There is no question, we are definitely committed to talking regularly—that is a given. It has improved our connection. Talking and making sure we do nice things for one another—both are a must! We've already become adept at getting these into our daily and weekly schedules.

Our household routines—errands and grocery shopping, yard and auto upkeep, and taking turns cooking each night have gone more smoothly. These used to be such a pain! We spent more time fighting about these things—and now, we just do them and spend time on our art projects or outdoor sports instead.

As they continued to share their experiences, Reba and Warren noted a few daily details that were still on their goal lists. One important area was financial planning. Warren said:

We've agreed to continue getting our finances under control in the next three to six months, especially as it will impact the long-range planning we want to do. We're agreeing to meet every other week for an hour to discuss action steps, look at the bills, consolidate our expenses, and plan ways to save money for the future.

Reba noted:

Our desire is to have completed our daily details goals six months from now so that those aspects of our lives are no-brainers. Then

our goal is to look at what we like to create for fun in the coming ten-to-fifteen-years when we'll have more fun time and more free time.

Reba and Warren went on to describe the future goals they had established.

Warren explained:

At this stage, we want to give back to the world. In evaluating our values and priorities, we got clear—we have no kids, we have enough money, and we still have lots of energy and half our lives left to live. We started to discuss and re-evaluate how to integrate giving something back to humanity. Our discussions are new and our brainstorming list includes everything from volunteering to build Habitat houses to joining the Red Cross Disaster Relief Teams, either nationally or internationally. Our goal is to come up with activities we can do each year that may eventually become our next “career” together.

Reba and Warren then highlighted a list of topics to put in their datebook. Over the next few months, they would discuss one or two of these topics at each partnering meeting. As you'll note, most of these topics have to do with carving out

more free time and balancing home and work...and then there's that one final item:

- Have a date night out, just the two of us, every other week
- Socialize with mutual friends, every other week
- Create more alone time
- Go to the health club three times a week (Reba)
- Run most mornings before work (Warren)
- Have dinner together most nights/coordinate so work meetings don't take precedence
- Attend monthly book club (Reba)
- Play squash or golf three to four times a month (Warren)
- Spice up our sex life!

Reba and Warren laughed as they were reminded of how much they still needed to keep balancing their daily details.

Reba concluded:

Let's just say we are still in the brainstorming stage, until we come up with a few more options that we are ready to try. Since these are six-to-twelve-month goals, we have a little time to rework how we do all of this together.

Josh and Amanda's Datebook: A Family Affair

Josh and Amanda are in their mid-thirties with two children and a baby on the way. Erin is eight years old and Hannah is five. Here are Josh and Amanda's daily details goals, which they'll list in their partnering datebook. Note how these issues highlight their stage in life and how their children are included in the scheduling.

- Stick to our regular talking times
- Figure out how Amanda can quit work and stay home once the baby comes
- Work together better as parents
- Keep practicing the Intentional Dialogue, so it becomes second nature and we don't have to schedule such long talks
- Put love-making on our future list—after the baby comes

- Continue our Sunday-afternoon family meetings
- Reevaluate how we want our parents involved once the baby arrives

And now listen in as Amanda and Josh discuss how they came up with their list.

Amanda explains:

We're pretty good at talking, but it takes some effort to stick to our schedule. We both feel better when we stick to the regularly scheduled talking times. The girls notice the difference, too. We're more patient with each other and with them after we've had our talks—so they're calmer.

Also, we want to work harder on the basics, now, before the baby comes. Life will be more hectic in four months. We've made a lot of progress on communication skills, but they still need some work.

Josh added:

Amanda and I have a list of bigger things to keep working on, too—all are "in progress." A major issue is figuring out how

Amanda can quit work and stay home once the baby comes. Our initial discussions were a major feat! They included working out the finances, my workload, each of our ability to be with the kids, and so on. We celebrated after talking this through, that's for sure! I'm sure we will have to refine the plan when the baby is actually here.

The couple notes that their communication has improved as they have learned to partner, but they also recognize that there are a few things under the surface that could erupt with the added pressure of a new baby. They have agreed to do one Intentional Dialogue a week for the next month, “even if we have to hire a babysitter so that we can go sit in a coffee shop and have our talk.” Josh and Amanda are also committed to including the girls in family meetings. Says Amanda:

We talk about things we each like and need that week, and the girls really pitch in with their needs as well. They always like to vote on a video or activity. Josh and I then plan our schedules in front of the girls, so everyone is included and they are aware of what's happening. They get to hear us plan our couple time, as well as our individual time with each of them. It helps them understand that we need time together, but we'll give them their special time, too.

Creating Your Big Picture Datebook

Now it is your turn to create your datebook. Because you have been doing the exercises each week and actively working toward your goals together, creating your Big Picture datebook should be quite simple. Here are the steps.

Individually, each of you should review all the goals you set together in Module 7 and earlier in this module. Then review the progress you have made toward these goals.

Now, each of you should make three lists:

- Issues still unresolved
- Daily details not yet in progress
- Future goals you both have decided to work on within the year

Be sure to include everything on your individual, partnership, and family goal lists. Note the things you have integrated and plan to continue, such as regularly talking and listening and keeping a positive feeling between you.

Next, still working individually, prioritize your goals from most important to least

important in your life right now. Indicate which things you need to work on daily, weekly, monthly, every six months, and annually. Lastly, identify those things that involve your entire family.

Now, come together as partners as discuss your goals for the coming three to four months. Use mirroring and active listening to clarify what each of you desires. Then make a master list of mutually agreed upon partnership and family goals, and individual goals that are appropriate at this time. Put everything that you are not able to address during this time on a list for the future.

Once you have agreed upon the individual, partnership, and family goals you are going to work on in the coming three to four months, schedule conversations, dialogues, and meetings to accomplish your goals. Put these in your Big Picture datebook. As before, agree to be accountable and follow through.

Maintaining Your Progress

Every relationship is different, and every couple has different needs and concerns. The Big Picture approach is meant to be customized according to your unique needs. I encourage you to similarly customize your Big Picture datebook using the following suggestions. You will know which things you need to emphasize and those you already do well.

Daily

- Maintain ongoing, respectful communication.
- Maintain positive feelings between you.
- Take time to appreciate one another and recognize your mutual resources

During Each Week

- Schedule regular talking time every other day or four times a week; take turns talking and listening.
- Schedule social time together with others, depending on your needs that week.
- Schedule a weekly partnering meeting and/or family meeting followed by a fun activity or event.

Bi-Weekly and Monthly

- Schedule a partnering meeting to work on each goal established in Modules 7 and 8 (and each new goal that you establish as you continue forward). Incorporate dialogue to discuss big issues, plan a new project, or work toward future dreams. As you add new goals and create new action steps, keep track of your “to do” lists; report back on your accomplishments.

- Monthly Financial Meeting (to deal with finances—discuss bills, review financial needs and planning, maintain financial health).
- Schedule discussions of topics that you have agreed on, such as Warren and Reba’s need to “give back to the world” when they retire, or Amanda and Josh’s need to practice the Intentional Dialogue.

Every Three to Four Months

- Review your list of accomplishments and goals.
- Reevaluate and revise for the coming months.
- Celebrate your accomplishments!
- Review your daily details and goal-setting schedule. Delete those goals and action steps that have been completed and integrate new goals and action steps.

Every Six Months or Annually

- Revisit your commitment to one another and to partnering; acknowledge how far you have come.
- Reconsider your values and priorities; update them if necessary.

- Assess your short list of basic partnership needs and make sure you are addressing the ones that are relevant at the time. For example:
- Household
- Social
- Financial
- Sexual
- Parenting
- Spiritual
- Work
- Vacation, play
- Intellectual pursuits
- Others you agree on
- Introduce a longer-term goal and make it manageable by breaking it into smaller, doable action steps. Integrate these into your datebook for the coming months.

A Master Plan for Living the Partnership of Your Dreams

Big Picture partnership is a journey, and your Big Picture datebook represents your map. Scheduling your regular touchstones together will help you to clearly envision and evaluate where you are headed. It will also keep you on track so that neither of you loses your bearings.

Once these practices and routines become second nature, you'll be a well-seasoned traveler who no longer needs a map. And you'll discover that you and your partner have the energy and time to enjoy each other to the fullest—and to create the ideal life you have envisioned together.

Some Final Words of Encouragement and Joy

When you began this program, you took off on a bold, adventurous around-the-world cruise together. It's the trip of a lifetime, and if you were to ever stop, you'd have all kinds of wonderful stories to tell one another.

Only you're not going to stop. If you keep practicing what you've learned here, you'll be living stories of wonder and awe and delight together month after month, year after year, and decade after decade. I'm smiling because I'm filled with ex-

citement for you. Because you're one of those rare couples that genuinely want to achieve all the promise and joy that you are capable of bringing to each other. It makes me delighted to see two people committed to achieving great happiness and satisfaction together.

So, forget politeness and pallid good wishes. Here's my toast:

Dare to be great together, to fulfill your mission together, and to achieve your wildest dreams as a couple. Sail on together—each of you with one hand on the wheel, and one arm wrapped tightly around the other's waist. If you look closely, you can see me on my porch, waving and cheering you on.

MEET DR. JAN HOISTAD



We all come to stages, or Choice Points, when we are dissatisfied, want growth, desire change or change is required. Decisions made at these times can have a profound effect on the course of one's life.

As the Founder and CEO of DJHPartners, Dr. Jan Hoistad works with individual professionals, business partners, teams, and professional couples to help them achieve their career, business and relationship goals, at each Choice Point across their lives. She partners with her clients during these times so they confidently land on the best possible outcome that connects their immediate choices with the whole-life future they envision. They can then achieve more, with greater ease. They go further, faster, in business and in life.

Dr. Hoistad is an LP, with an MA and PhD from CSPP along with extensive post-doctoral training in leadership, organizational and systems development, collaboration, mediation, as well as negotiation from Harvard Law School's Project on Negotiation. Bringing expertise in human development, family and couple dynamics, entrepreneurship, business growth, partnering, communication and creativity, her clients become catalysts for change in their businesses, careers and lives.

Be sure to check out my other resources for couples, business partners/teams looking to achieve goals together.



One of the toughest things for us all to do is to get out of our own way to achieve our goals. Please let me help you with this by scheduling a complimentary phone session to customize a plan so you can achieve your desired results. [Schedule your complimentary telephone session here.](#)

For more information and resources please visit:

<http://drjanhoistadpartners.com>

<http://drjanhoistadpartners.com/relationships/professional-couples/>

<http://drjanhoistadpartners.com/relationships/professional-couples/big-picture-partnering/>

<http://drjanhoistadpartners.com/careers/career-relocation/>

<http://drjanhoistadpartners.com/business/business-exit-planning-and-succession-planning/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/drjanhoistad>

You may also contact Dr. Jan directly at janhoistad@drjanhoistad.com

Daily Details

Our Couple Goals

(Add another column for Family Goals if it applies)

Your Goals

My Goals

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Big Picture Dreams

My Goals

Your Goals

Our Goals

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