

# THIS IS **LIVING WITH CANCER**<sup>™</sup>

## *Making changes—a step-by-step guide to setting healthy goals*

This guide may help you take a closer look at how you can make certain changes you want in your life—step by step.

Remember, you can only change what you can control.



### **HERE ARE SOME TIPS FOR USING THIS GUIDE**

- It works best to go through the steps in order
- Take your time
- Don't just skim the activities

### **TAKE IT STEP BY STEP**

If we could easily make the changes we want in our lives without a plan, we'd likely do it in the blink of an eye. But it's not usually that easy. That's why this guide is designed to help teach you a process for creating a step-by-step plan that may work for you. When you want to make a change, seeing where you want to go and doing small things to get there can help.

Each activity will guide you to choose the answers that best fit you and your goals. It's OK if some activities are quick for you to complete and some take longer—this is your time and your plan. You can even write down your answers in a journal or notepad, if you'd like. Keep in mind that you can go through the activities in this guide any time you want to make a change.

**Now, get started!** Remember, take each step at your own pace. This is your plan, and you can create it in the way that feels right for you.

# Create a case for change

Start strong! Take a look at the tips below to help you stay positive as you work toward change.



## **FOCUS FIRST**

You're more likely to succeed if you focus on one simple, specific goal at a time.



## **GO YOUR OWN WAY**

Goals you set for yourself or that you work with others to set—like loved ones or your healthcare team—are more likely to help you make changes than goals that someone else sets for you.



## **BOOST YOUR MOOD**

Feeling good about yourself and your personal values helps when it comes to working toward goals.



## **SET UP FOR SUCCESS**

People who tie their habit to a cue in their daily surroundings form stronger habits than those who rely on goals alone to make changes.



## **FREE YOUR MIND**

When a goal becomes a habit, or part of your normal routine, you'll have more time to think about other things you care about—like new goals.



## **DON'T GIVE UP**

It takes time to form a habit. In one small study, researchers found that on average it took 66 days to form a single habit.



## **CELEBRATE YOU**

It can feel good to see success, no matter how small. Working toward your goal can feel better if you take time to celebrate success along the way.

**Trust the process.** You may wonder why you should go through the activities, spend time on the questions and write down your answers. But this process is designed to help you make the changes you want.

# See your strengths

Before you start making changes, think about all of your great qualities—the ones you don't want to change. Start seeing your strengths by writing down all the positive qualities you have.

Eg, affectionate, brave, creative, dedicated or funny

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
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_____	_____

### ONCE YOU HAVE YOUR LIST STARTED, USE THESE QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU ADD EVEN MORE:

- Can you identify 5 more positive qualities?
- Think of something you've accomplished that you're proud of. What qualities helped you achieve it?
- How would the people who love you most describe you?

**You're off to a strong start.** Move to the next page when you feel like you've listed your good qualities.



## ***Build on your strengths***

Now let's focus on some of your key strengths. Look back at your list of positive qualities and see what stands out to you.

Choose the 3 qualities that best describe who you are as a person. Spend at least 1 minute thinking about each quality and what it means to you. Then, choose 1 and write in detail about a time in your life when you demonstrated it.

The quality I would like to write about is \_\_\_\_\_.

The time I demonstrated this quality...

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**Remember your strengths.** Come back to this list and try the activity again any time you need to be reminded of the qualities that make you who you are.

# Set your starting point

Now that you know your strengths, let's decide which change you'd like to start with. We know it helps to focus on one change at a time.

Use your responses to help pick the type of change you would like to make.

**Note:** If you already know the change you want to make, skip ahead to **page 7**.

For each section, mark how satisfied you are with that area of your life—1 being the least satisfied and 10 being the most satisfied.

	Least satisfied					Most satisfied				
Example	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Emotional Health	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Eating Habits	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Physical Activity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Relationships	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Hobbies and Interests	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Home and Surroundings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Now write down the part of your life where you'd like to make a change. It may or may not be the area that you are the least satisfied with—and that's OK.

I want to focus on (eg, I want to focus on my eating habits)

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**You know where to start.** Now, let's explore how you can make a change.

## *Find your focus*

You chose the type of change you'd like to make. Next, think about the area you selected and list as many ideas as possible about what you could change in that area to improve it. Try to list what you can control and what's realistic to change. Take your time. You can even ask your loved ones for ideas or include recommendations from others, like your doctor.

(Eg, Eat more fruits and veggies, drink more water, make healthy meals at home or eat less sugar...)

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**You have some clear ideas for change.** Next, let's get your goal nailed down.

# Go for your goal

You brainstormed some ways to make a change. Now let's really nail down your plan. What exactly will you do?

Write your goal out BIG!

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Why are you making this change? What are the good things that will come from making this change? List your reasons for making this change and all the potential benefits—nothing is too big or small.

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Let's remember your "why". Anytime you need a little extra motivation, look at this list and remember why making this change is important to you.

Before you start working toward your goal, think about how long you may be working on it. Pick a time during that period and set a reminder on your calendar or phone to come back to this guide. That way, you can see if you reached your goal or look at how it's going as you keep working toward your goal.

**You set your goal.** Next, let's see how confident you are about making a change.

## Consider your confidence

You've decided what your goal is. Before we create a plan to make this change, let's spend some time thinking about it. How confident are you that you can make this change?

Choose a number below to measure your confidence in making the change you've chosen—**1 being not confident** and **10 being very confident**.

Not confident

Very confident

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Why did you select the number you did?

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Did you consider a lower number? Why did you decide against it?

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What would help you feel more confident that you could make this change?

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**You've got this.** You're really making progress through this guide. Next, let's dive into creating your plan.



# Create your plan

You've thought about your goal and how confident you are about reaching it. Now, let's consider some small steps you can take toward the goal you've chosen. Look at the goal you wrote on **page 7**. Let's break it down.

<p>In the next month, I will _____ every _____ <i>(activity)</i> <i>(time period)</i></p> <p>so that _____.</p> <p>(Eg, In the next month, I will meal prep every Sunday so that I have healthy meals on hand.)</p>
<p>In the next week, I will _____ on _____ <i>(activity)</i> <i>(time period)</i></p> <p>(Eg, In the next week, I will make healthy meals for dinner on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.)</p>
<p>Today, I will _____ <i>(activity)</i></p> <p>(Eg, Today, I will look up healthy recipes and make a grocery list.)</p>



**You've got a plan.** Now let's think ahead about potential problems so we can come up with some solutions.

## *Pressure test your plan*

You've broken your goal down into smaller steps—that's taking a step already. Next, consider what could possibly get in the way. Let's think about it now so that you can consider ways around potential challenges that may pop up.

What are 5 problems that could get in the way of working toward your goal?

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**Take a look at your list.** What patterns do you notice? Do these 5 problems have anything in common? Next, let's find some ways to move forward.

## *Work it your way*

You know what might get in the way of achieving your goal. Now, let's decide what can help you move forward. If you're struggling, you're not alone.

Check to see if any of your potential challenges are listed below. Then, turn to the appropriate page for an activity that may help.

**I feel unmotivated or like I'm not ready.**

Go to **page 12**  
for a boost.

**I need help or encouragement.**

Go to **page 13**  
for some support.

**I don't feel confident in my ability to change because in the past it hasn't worked out.**

Go to **page 14**  
for some self-kindness.

**I need a way to deal with barriers that may get in my way.**

Go to **page 15**  
for a backup plan.

**Choose your next activity.** Feel free to check out all of the activities listed to help you overcome potential problems.

## *Mind your motivation*

Let's keep the momentum going. You may not feel totally motivated all the time. Motivation may change over time.

For example, some of the potential problems you listed on **page 10** may have included thoughts like

- **“I don't feel motivated at the right times.”**
- **“I get discouraged when I don't see results.”**
- **“I'm not feeling confident because it seems complicated.”**

So what do you do? You can adjust your goal on days you don't feel as motivated. This can help you move forward with your plan anyway. For example, instead of going for a jog, take a walk with a friend. Remember, small steps are still steps forward, and that means progress.

How can you adjust your goal on the days when you may not feel as motivated?

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**Stay motivated.** Come back to this page any time you feel stuck and need a new way to move forward.

# Spot your support

We all need a helping hand or words of encouragement at times, but sometimes it can be hard to know who to turn to.

For example, some of the potential problems you listed on **page 10** may have included thoughts like

- **“I don’t know if the people in my life will support me in making this change.”**
- **“I need someone to help encourage me and keep me on track.”**
- **“I think I need more information—I’m not sure where to start.”**

When you’re working toward a goal, try thinking ahead about who can be there for you if you need it.

Who in your life can be there to encourage you?

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Who can help you keep on track?

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Who can help you get more information?

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How can you expand your support circle?

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**You know who is in your corner.** You’ve identified some great ways to get support when you need it. Come back to this page when you need a reminder of how to find a little help from a friend.

## *Keep your kindness*

You're almost ready to get your goal! Let's see how you can plan ahead for potential problems that may pop up, based on past attempts that you feel were unsuccessful.

For example, some of the potential problems you listed on **page 10** may have included thoughts like

- **"I tried in the past and didn't see success. I don't know what would be different this time."**
- **"I have good intentions, but I always slip up."**
- **"I'm too critical of myself and give up if I get off track."**

So how can you find a little self-kindness when you feel discouraged? Start by considering some of the challenges you listed that make you feel doubtful about your ability to change.

How does the challenge you listed make you feel?

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What would you say to a friend or loved one in the same situation?

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**Go easy on yourself.** Remember, struggles we've faced in the past don't have to define us. We all face challenges, and changing isn't easy. Treat yourself with the kindness you'd show a friend or loved one. Come back to this page when you need some kind words. You deserve it.

## *Build your backup plan*

Let's face it: life happens. And sometimes, unplanned things get in the way of what we planned. Dealing with the unexpected can be especially important as we work toward goals.

For example, some of the potential problems you listed on **page 10** may have included thoughts like

- **“I just don't know if I have the time I need to make a change.”**
- **“I find that I simply forget to do the tasks to help me make a change.”**
- **“I am going through a lot and sometimes my emotions get in the way.”**

Planning ahead with solutions to potential problems—especially the unexpected—is one way to boost your confidence about moving forward. Consider one of the challenges you listed.

Start by listing possible solutions.

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What steps can you take to put these solutions into action?

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**You built your backup plan!** Now if you face a problem, you have solutions you can try. If one way doesn't work, you can always come back to this page and try another. It's your plan.

## *Celebrate your success*

You did it! You've completed the guide for the changes you've chosen. Now it's time to start working toward your goal. But first, let's decide how you'll celebrate your efforts and successes, and how you'll assess what worked and what didn't.

Keep in mind, success can mean you reached your goal, or it can mean you gave it your best effort. Consider goal-friendly rewards for yourself. For example, if you're trying to eat healthier foods, a nonfood reward may be best to help you stay on track.

How will you celebrate success?

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Do you feel like you didn't have success? That's OK. Just go back and complete the sections of this guide that may help you in the areas where you struggled. It may help to start again by creating a new plan on **page 9**.

And try not to be too hard on yourself. You gave it a try and you learned what works and what doesn't. That's important. Think about how you'd treat a friend or loved one if they told you they failed at a goal. You'd probably be kind and supportive. Treat yourself with the same compassion and start again with the knowledge you've gained.

**It's not "goodbye," it's "until you want to make another change!"** You've got this. And remember, you can come back to this guide any time you want to make a change in your life.

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