

EPISODE 039 - 5 THINGS TO INCLUDE IN YOUR ANNUAL GOAL SETTING ROUTINE

WITH NANCY RAY

Intro

Well, Happy New Year! It is the first episode of the year—of the decade, in fact—and we're about seven days into 2020 and I'm full of expectation for what's ahead. I hope you are, too. I don't know about you, but I've found such inspiration through the years from listening to how other people prepare for a new year or set your New Year's resolutions and set their goals. So I thought it'd be fun to share a little bit of my goal setting routine with you in five things I love to incorporate in that annual goal setting routine that has really benefited me, and I hope that it does you as well.

So, whether you've already set all your goals or maybe if goals are annoying to you and you never set them, I hope that maybe you'll be able to take one little piece from this episode, something that I share today, and that it will be helpful for your life as you look ahead to the brand new year in front of you.

You're listening to Work and Play with Nancy Ray, Episode 39.

Much of our daily lives can be divided into two categories: work and play. Simply put, that is where our life and our legacy takes place. This is a podcast all about learning to work and play well, which leads to a healthy soul and a fulfilling life.

Content

In a shallow, surface-deep world, let's approach life differently, me and you, okay? Let's grow our roots deep. Let's take authority over our days by setting our alarm clock, waking up a little earlier so we can re-center and listen to Jesus before the voices of Instagram and emails and family and toddlers and just life takeover. Let's put our phones down to look into the eyes of whoever is in front of us and really listen. Let's go outside and feel the sun on our skin way more than we did last year.

I know you might have amazing goals set out for this year. It might include growing your reach or your business or your platform, or maybe you want to get healthy or strong. I know that's on my list, or maybe you want to take hold of your finances, get out of debt, invest in

your marriage. Well today I want to encourage you to just pause and grow deep first. That's my prayer for this year. That I would live in step with Jesus, that I would dive deep with him, that I would learn all over again what it looks like to take care of my soul first and my body so that I can actually do this life with joy. So that I can actually serve others and be a better wife and mom so that I can give from a well that is full, not a well that's dry.

Now there are some things I'm dreaming about doing in 2020, but it hasn't quite made it on my list of goals yet. They're not quite fleshed out and I need some more guidance and some more direction from the Lord and some more direction from others much wiser than myself. I really want to take time to reach down deep before I reach out to share those things or make them official goals. And I'm the kind of person, I like to jump in. I like to know what I'm doing and I like to get things moving immediately. But in the season of my life, I'm learning patience and humility.

Have you ever felt like this? Like, I don't know, your goals aren't totally crystal clear yet or maybe you know some of them, but not all of them. Well, when we lack clarity, sometimes we freeze and we don't set any goals. At least that's how I feel. I don't have a perfect plan yet or I don't know the full picture so maybe I just shouldn't waste my time. But here's what I want to share with you about the way I approach goal setting while I'm still waiting and listening. I set goals anyway and that's what I want to do for you today and for us.

I want to just kind of take the pressure off. Goals are good, but don't take them so seriously. Just get to writing, take the pressure off, start writing, grant yourself permission to pivot this year if you need to. Because here's what I know, if I don't make a plan, if I don't write anything down, life is going to keep happening to me, but no progress on me or on the hard things that I want to do or change are really going to be made. The things that are really important to me, if I don't write something down or set some sort of goal, it's just going to stay the same. And I don't know about you, but I don't want to stay the same as last year. I want to keep growing.

So let's just go with the things we do have clarity on and let's write them down. Whether or not you've already written out your goals, maybe you're like, "Hey, I've got clarity, I'm good." That's awesome. Keep going in that direction, but maybe you're a week into 2020 or maybe you're listening to this and it's ... maybe you're a few months in, maybe it's later and you still don't feel like you have clarity. I just want to take the pressure off and say just write some things down that you want to do. That's it.

So kind of a quick update on my own life and where I am. Back in episode four I shared all about seasons of business and how for the last 12 years of my life, I have poured myself into Nancy Ray Photography, and 2019 was the last year of my photography business and 2020 is the start of a new chapter or a new season in my life. And I'm going to be honest, it feels weird. It feels really good, but it feels weird because it's not what I'm used to. I don't know what it's like to not have several weekends already called for. I mean this has been my life for 12 years. As a wedding photographer, you book weddings a year to two years in advance.

I was used to just having my weekends, my Saturday's called for. It's kind of new and different and I have clarity on some things about this year, but I don't have clarity on everything in my work. I'm still trying to figure out how to turn this new podcasts and educational content type business, I'm figuring it out, I'm trying to monetize it so that it will actually be a business and not just a hobby, which is what has it been for a little while. I'm prayerfully moving forward. I'm leaving it open. I want God to write the rest of the story.

So I don't have all the answers. I'm going to try some things this year, but I'm just leaving the margin there for God to write the rest of it and I'm focusing on the things I haven't focused on in a while. Like myself, strengthening my body, exercising, really being intentional about going on dates with my husband and going on a marriage retreat. Just being an intentional mom at home, reading more about parenting, playing more with my kids.

Yeah, so it's good. This year is going to be good. I feel like it's fresh. It's new. I don't know. It feels open. If you're one of those people who have a word for the year.

My word is freedom.

I feel like it's just freedom for me to experiment and do and try new things and have a little bit more of an open plan. And it feels good it feels, it feels free. So I'm excited.

That's kind of where I am today as I'm recording this. So I have clarity on a few things. I have clarity on a few important things, but I don't have clarity about the big picture. This is one of the first times in a really long time that almost all of my goals I've set for this year are personal. They don't have anything to do with work or career development or advancement. And I am a goal driven person and it just kind of feels weird but it feels really, really good.

If you want to read all my goals for 2020, you can go read them on my blog, nancyray.com/blog, search for 2020 goals or something like that. And I just go through, what are my goals and what's next? But anyway, while it feels weird, it feels good and I just want to encourage you. If you find yourself in similar shoes as mine, don't think about it so much. Don't put pressure on yourself. Goals are just writing down the things that you want to do and things you want to try and giving yourself permission to pivot later if you need to. So just go do that. If you haven't set goals for 2020, if you're feeling stuck, just sit down, write out the things that you want to do this year and then go from there.

Okay, so going back to my annual goal setting routine, now that I've gotten some of my heart out of the way, I want to talk practically about what it looks like for me to set goals every year. This is a really special thing for me. I love it. The week between Christmas and my birthday is ... it just feels almost like the flipping of a page or the turning of a page into a new chapter. It's the time where I really give myself a ton of permission just to dream and to get away and really focus on the next year and what I want it to look like. So there are five things that I include in my annual goal setting routine that have been incredibly helpful in clarifying for me, and I hope that they are for you too. So I'm going to share with you these five things.

Number one, go back to neutral. One of the things I talk about in episode four, that seasons of business episode, is going back to neutral with the Lord. I learned about this idea at a marriage retreat. And what that means is simply to put everything on the table, ask God what he wants from you? In this season of my life, God, what do you want from me? Everything's on the table. Go back to neutral. I liken it to a car that's kind of moving and this was my life before I closed Nancy Ray Photography. I was in drive, I was going. I was going in a direction and I would just say, "God, bless my work, bless my efforts. This is the direction I'm going." And that wasn't bad or wrong, but the powerful thing about going back to neutral is you do, you put your car in neutral and you say, "Lord, you get to determine which way I'm going. Am I where you want me in this season of my life? Am I doing the assignment that you have for me right now?"

I recently heard a pastor say something similar and he said every January, he and his wife get on their knees and go before God and say, "Do you still want me to pastor this church? Do you still want us to be here? Is this the assignment that you have given us?" Almost like a renewal. Like, "Do you want me to re-up? Do you want me to keep going the direction I'm going or do I need to stop and do something different?"

I think it's really cool that he said he does it every January and after hearing that I said, "You know what? I think it's good to ask God." I can go back to neutral several times throughout the year. It doesn't have to only be in January, but while you're setting your annual goals, I think it's really important to just go back to that place with the Lord and say, "Am I headed in the direction you want me to be headed?" Just go back to neutral with him. Make this a priority every year when you set your yearly goals.

Number two, block off some extended time. I have learned through the years that I can't quickly assess last year and everything that was going well and everything that wasn't going well and I can't move on to next year's goals and I can't do that quickly. It's not something that's just going to come easy. It takes some digging. It takes thought and thinking and writing and spending time with the Lord. So for the last few years, I've just asked my husband for an afternoon or a day for him to watch the kids so I can get quiet. I can spend time listening to Jesus, sitting with him. I can catch a fresh vision for what's to come. I can dream with him, and sometimes the Lord can download something to me really quick, and other times it takes hours. So don't rush it, block off some time as a priority.

If you use power sheets from the company, Cultivate What Matters, there is a whole front section that takes hours and it's very in depth and lots of digging and very introspective. So if you don't really know how to do this, it's a great resource to figure out who you are and where you're headed. So just all that to say, it takes time. It takes time to look back. It takes time to really formulate some meaningful goals and look forward. So make sure you block off some extended time.

Number three is take a life audit. I talk about this in Episode 37, three things to do the week af-

ter Christmas. And one of those things is to take a life audit, and I actually walk you through some questions in that episode. So if you haven't listened, you can go back and do that, but basically this is a life audit in a nutshell. Just take the major areas of your life and ask yourself the hard questions. Look at the areas of finances, marriage, family, health, spirituality, personal growth, fun and leisure, your career work. Ask yourself, "What's working or where am I struggling? What's not working? What do I want to change?"

I'll leave a download in the show notes if you want to take my life audit that I've created. It's just a helpful starting point for asking those questions and then creating your goals becomes easy because it just comes out of that. You immediately see the places in your life where you need growth and improvement.

Number four is the poster board and Sharpie exercise. Listen, I love this. This is the best. If you don't take anything else away from this, just go try this because it's really great. So what you do, you get a poster board and a Sharpie and you just go to town. Now this will literally cost you \$3 and it is so inspiring to me. So you write 2020 in big Sharpie marker, right in the center of the poster board. And then jot out the categories I just told you all over the poster board; finances, marriage, family, health, spirituality, personal growth, leisure work. And then you can circle them or underline them. And then around each of those words you just start writing, make a mess, cross things out, get everything out of your head.

This is like a snapshot of your life. And here's the big thing I want you to do with this exercise, while you're writing, if something scary pops into your head, write that thing down. Something scary that you want to do or try this year. Maybe that scary thing is run a half marathon because that freaks you out. Maybe you need to write that down. I remember I did this a few years ago and under the work I wrote down launch the Nancy Ray shop. And I was like, "What am I even doing? I'm a photographer. What is the Nancy Ray's shop all about?" And that's really what catapulted me into this whole online education thing. And I was scared to do it, but I wrote it down to any way and I really felt like the Lord was just speaking to me as I wrote it down. And I would cross things out and I wouldn't do all of it, but just getting it in really big black and white words in front of you, it's so helpful and so inspiring.

So afterwards you can write it all in your calendar or your journal or your power sheets or just take a picture of it. That's a really easy way to remember it. And then you can just fold it up and throw it away. I mean, it's a \$3 activity, you don't have to keep it or post it on your wall, but it's a really great way to gain some clarity and it's very helpful. And fun for me.

Okay. Number five, draft your next 12 months. What do I mean by that? Well, you're not going to gain traction on your goals if you don't plan it into your actual calendar. Now I say draft your next 12 months because it is a draft. Life is going to happen. It's like a rough draft, right? It's not the final copy or the final schedule, but it's really helpful to look at 12 months in an overview and planning out your whole year basically. And not planning out your entire year and all of your schedules and all your things, but just writing in the goals and how you want to accomplish them throughout the year.

This is where I get really pumped up because I write it in my calendar and think, “Oh, yeah. Yeah, we can actually go on a marriage retreat that weekend in April, or oh maybe I can’t clean up my photos in January like I thought but maybe I can do it in February because I’ll have enough time to do it then. And okay, I need to train for four months from a half marathon. So I’m going to choose to start training in the spring and then run one in the fall.” Your goals become clear and crystallized and you begin to feel like you can actually take hold of them, which is super exciting.

I wanted to leave just a little resource for you. My friend Ashley made this amazing giant 24 by 36 PDF that you can download for \$9 and then upload it to a major print store like FedEx or UPS or something like that. Get it printed for about \$4 and then you have this ginormous 12th month, 2020 calendar to hang on your wall. And it’s in paper and you can write on it and you can put post it notes on it and it’s really cool and I just love the visual. I have it hanging right outside the room I’m recording now. I love the giant visual of 2020. I love the one that’s three months across because that’s broken up into quarters. It’s just really helpful. So I’m going to leave that link in the show notes as well and hopefully if you grab it, it’ll be helpful for you too, but it’s just really encouraging to get your goals into your calendar.

So I encourage you to incorporate all of these five things into your annual goal setting: going back to neutral, blocking off some extended time, doing a life audit, doing the poster board and Sharpie thing and drafting your next 12 months.

Even if you just try one of them this year, I’m confident it will bring you a little bit more clarity.

Okay. It’s time for the Work and Play Cornerstore. This is where I have some fun and draw from my personal life experiences to bring you a book I’m loving and I think I’m loving. It can be random, helpful, funny, serious. All I know is that something that I use and I recommend. So I may get a commission from anything bought through these links, but it’s going to help me continue to bring this podcast to you every week.

Today I’ll be adding the book, *The Compound Effect*, as well as Ashley’s 2020 yearly calendar to the Cornerstore. So first I want to tell you about this book. Listen, I read this book several years ago and I need to go back and read it again because it’s like a little kick in the pants but I still remember the effect that it had on me. If you’re looking for a motivational, break your bad habits, go do the hard things kind of book to kickstart your year, this is it. It’s short, it’s small, it’s got to the point writing and it felt like having a little life coach or business coach on my coffee table in the mornings. It was really, really helpful.

Now I’ve already told you about Ashley’s 2020 calendar. Again, it’s super cheap, very easy and an amazing visual to get your 2020 up on the wall and printed out in front of you. So I’ll leave the links to both of those in the show notes.

Thanks for listening to episode 39 of *Work and Play with Nancy Ray*. Everything I’ve mentioned today can be found in the show notes at nancyray.com/podcast/39, and you can find me at

nancyray.com or follow me at @nancyray on Instagram or Facebook almost daily.

I'm going to close with some encouraging words from Les Brown:

*“If you set goals and go after them with all the determination you can muster,
your gifts will take you places that will amaze you.”*

I found that to be true in my own life, and I hope that you find it to be true for you this year.
See you next time, friend.