

# EXPLORE YOUR ENTHUSIASM

## EPISODE 91: WHY YOU'RE AFRAID OF SETTING A GOAL

Choosing is hard. Hello and welcome to Explore Your Enthusiasm, episode 91. I'm Tara Swiger and I help makers feel awesome about their business. One way we do that is by setting and reaching goals, through making do-able plans and then focusing on what matters.

But what if you don't HAVE a goal? What if you can't seem to narrow it down and pick one? Last week Lynn asked me, on [Periscope](#), "What if you're afraid of setting a goal?"

I know Lynn's not alone, because last week I worked through the [Map-Making Guide](#) with my community, The Starship. The first step (spoiler alert!) is setting an endpoint for the map - the specific, measurable goal you want to reach in the next 3-6 months.

It was this step, the most obvious starting place, that caused the most distress.

"I have these 4 goals and I'm going to work on all of them..."

"I can't pick just one!"

"What should my goal BE?!"

I get it, it can be hard to choose. You want to do **EVERYTHING**.

You love your business.

You love its potential and all that it can become.

You want to honor all that it can be.

You want to keep it open and available.

You want to take it in every possible direction.

Let's be honest: In picking ONE goal, you're giving up, at least for a time, on all the other things you could be doing, all the other things you want. In choosing one, you let go of all other options.

(Just like in marriage.) When you choose just one thing to focus on, you acknowledge your own finiteness. You recognize all that you want to do that can't be done (all at the same time).

Choosing to focus on one goal means letting go of the other options and possibilities (for now).

This realization, this acknowledgement - well, it sucks. We're told we can do anything, we can BE anything. Our business can have great branding, a big social media following, lots of sales, AND still be fun and engaging.

Choosing just ONE goal, even for the next three months, can feel like giving up on that.

Often, when we talk about goals, we skip over this acknowledgement, we gloss over the inherent sorrow in all those lost chances. But it's ok. It's ok to mourn those other things. It's ok to be bummed you can't do it all. Choosing is hard. There's a sort of loss when you choose one opportunity over another.

If you're feeling really stuck at coming up with a goal or a focus, now or at any time in the future, take a minute to acknowledge this loss. Take a minute to look at all the OTHER goals you could set, and then just *CHOOSE* one. Just *PICK ONE*, knowing that it means you won't do other things. Acknowledge that this is just part of being a human, of having finite time, space, resources and energy. But then, **CHOOSE**. Because choosing is necessary. In order to do anyone ONE thing really well, you need to focus on it. You need to give it your attention, at least for a period of time.

Now, another reason you might be afraid to set a goal is the **OUTCOME**.

There's a risk associated with setting a measurable goal. One of the Starshippers put it beautifully when she said, "I don't want to verbalize my goal, because then I have to acknowledge my failure if I don't reach it. It's scary!"

Yep. That's actually why we make measurable goals, so you know **FOR SURE**, if you got there or not.

But guess what? If you "fail" to reach your goal, after giving it your focus and attention? You still haven't failed. You haven't failed at business and you haven't failed at life. You simply got a different outcome.

See, that's all we're going for. We're experimenting, trying things, and then looking at WHATEVER the outcome is. Perhaps the outcome is what you hoped for, perhaps it's something different. But either way, you've learned something about what works and what doesn't. You've gathered data, to apply to your next experiment.

This is the way that absolutely everything new is learned. This is how scientists work. This is how chefs work. And this is how artists and entrepreneurs work. You try something, you measure the results, and then that data becomes knowledge that impacts your next steps.

So yes, you may not reach your desired outcome, but you will reach SOME outcome, and that outcome is useful data!

Consider the risk of NOT choosing a goal and continuing to spread your energy out over several projects, questions, and unknowns. The result at the end of three months, if you haven't measured anything, if you haven't been AIMING at anything, is likely... exactly what you have now. When people email me to tell me they don't know what works, I ask them the same thing: What have you tried? What was the result? THAT is how you know what works. I don't know what will definitely work for you. No one does. Yes, there are foundations, and that's what I teach, but the implementation - only you will know what works. Maybe it won't work because your buyers are different. Maybe it won't work because YOU won't actually stick with it. Maybe it won't work because of what you sell, or where you live, or what you're willing to do. I don't know and you don't either unless you try something. You can make excuses about your business forever, but until you try something, you won't know.

So - CHOOSE. Pick one measurable goal and work towards it, with focus and commitment. Then, assess. What were the results? What does that teach you? What else can you try?

Remember:

I'm not asking you to choose one thing for all time.

I'm not asking you to choose one thing for the next year.

In the [Map-Making Guide](#), I am asking you to focus on one thing: one beautiful, magical endpoint for your map for the next month (or three).

In focusing like a laser, you are so much more likely to reach that place. You are so much more likely to think creatively, overcome obstacles and just keep swimming until you get there. It doesn't mean no other part of your business (or life) will get movement. In fact, you'll see crazy changes

all over the place. When you choose one focus and work on it mindfully, everything in the periphery will transform and grow, because everything is connected.

When you choose, you're not choosing ONE success, you're choosing a ripple of successes; but you are focusing all your energy on the center of that ripple, to make it as big as possible. Instead of throwing many tiny pebbles into a lake and creating mini-ripples everywhere, you're throwing a boulder into the lake, and creating giant waves. These waves result in momentum and energy for the next project and they move your business forward faster.

I hope this episode has helped you get some bravery to choose your next goal and focus on it. Thanks for listening and remember that you can get full podcast transcripts for signing up at [TaraSwiger.com/list](https://TaraSwiger.com/list), and you can connect with other listeners by using the hashtag #exploreyourenthusiasm on Instagram. I love seeing what you're making while you listen! Thanks and have an enthusiastic day!