

# GAME PLAN

ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS IN LIFE, CAREER, AND BUSINESS

*Ciara Prescoter*

**IT'S GAME TIME.**

# **G A M E P L A N**

**ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS IN LIFE, CAREER, AND BUSINESS**

*Ciara Prescley*

Copyright © 2015 by Ciara Pressler. All rights reserved.

All of these ideas have been expressed somewhere before. What's specific to this book is the unique culmination of my experience and my goal-setting approach. I created this book because I believe that the world's a better place when we're pursuing what we truly want and supporting each other along the way. So I encourage you to share it with your partner, family, friends, teammates, colleagues, club, elected officials, and anyone else who could use a swift kick in the strategy. However, if you want to use it as teaching material or in any way that is tied to profit, get approval first by emailing [Ciara@CiaraPressler.com](mailto:Ciara@CiaraPressler.com). Use your judgment, common sense, and integrity.

The material in this book is intended for educational purposes only. No expressed or implied guarantee as to the effects of the use of the recommendations can be given nor liability taken.

Published by Press LER New York City

First Printing, 2015

ISBN 978-0-9885135-2-5

**Get more at [CiaraPressler.com](http://CiaraPressler.com)**

**DEDICATED TO YOUR FUTURE SELF.**

# CONTENTS

PREGAME

STRATEGY

RESOLUTION

REALITY

ENDURANCE

CLARITY

HONESTY

HAPPINESS

CATEGORIES

MEASUREABLE

CONTROL

MANIFESTING

ACCOUNTABILITY

KINDNESS

VULNERABILITY

LOVE

100%

COMMUNITY

JEALOUSY

ADVISORY

EXCUSES

DISCIPLINE

OBSTACLES

ACTION

PERFECTION

SERVICE

**PERSONAL GOALS**

**CAREER GOALS**

**PROJECT GOALS**

**AFTERPARTY**

**SUCCESS PRINCIPLES**

**TIME OUT**

**MOTIVATION**

**HUDDLE**

**INFLUENCES**

**BOOKS ETC.**

**SUPPORT**

**OVERTIME**

**MEET THE PRESSLER**

**CHEER SQUAD**

**PREGAME**

**S**everal years ago, I invited a few friends out to brunch on New Year's Eve with a radical caveat: instead of the usual brunch agenda – divulge the latest gossip, vent about work, overanalyze our love lives, order one more round of cocktails – why not make it a productive encounter and attack those ever-dreaded New Year's resolutions?

To sweeten the deal, I even offered to bring a goal-setting worksheet.

To my surprise, people showed up. Eight of us enthusiastically dove into a different kind of resolution: not just thinking about what we wanted to accomplish in the upcoming year, but also celebrating the big and small things that had happened in the recent year and affirming each other's intentions for growth. A group of ambitious, in-demand, overscheduled New Yorkers took time to appreciate our own accomplishments, to consciously plan for what we wanted next, and to support each other.

And yes, we even wrote it all down on the worksheet.

While the worksheets were made with a sense of humor, I knew the power that writing things down carried when it came to making a commitment. Not just throwing some goals on a sheet of paper, but strategizing an actual process to go from zero to complete. In fact, I had created a career out of it, advising creators of businesses, creative projects, and even coaching services on how to transform their ideas into their reality.

That year, New Year's resolutions went from nice intentions to actual accomplishments.

Thus, the New Year's Goal Brunch was born. Attendance doubled each year. I continued expanding the worksheets as new success principles became apparent, delivering a new edition at each event. Realizing that these principles might work for more people, I published the worksheets on my website. It quickly became the most-visited page of my site, shared across social media and in person with friends, family, colleagues, clients, students, and anyone with an interest in finally going from thinking to *doing*.

It's proof of what we already instinctively know: there's something profoundly inspiring – and contagious – about locking in on your truest goals and making your own success happen.

We don't need new ideas. We need someone to sit alongside us and help us shape our ideas into a tangible goal and a corresponding action plan that is realistic, exciting, motivating, and perfectly tailored to who we are.

We need a Game Plan.



Let me rewind for a moment: I'm Ciara Pressler, and I work with idea people to create their strategic plans. They are entrepreneurs, corporate trainers, career coaches, film producers, fashion designers, music producers, authors, academics, real estate developers, tech innovators, fitness instructors, and lifestyle gurus. Since I've built a company dedicated to strategy, my commitment is to continually discover how success really happens – not just in theory, but in tangible reality.

Throughout my career, I've been fortunate to encounter a wide range of very accomplished people: risk takers, business starters, award winners, record holders, ultra athletes, coaches, consultants, producers, creators. I pay close attention to their actions and how they approach their own goals so I can figure out what makes them successful. I devour every book, article, class, video, conversation, and resource I can find on how to do things better. I'm continually developing my goal-achieving process: identifying better ways to move forward and surrounding myself with equally motivated, curious, tireless doers. Discover, adopt, attempt, rework, improve, evolve.

Meanwhile, in my personal life, I take on projects: running nine marathons and over 100 races, producing events and fundraisers, writing books, traveling the world, and campaigning for World's Best Aunt, with a whole lot of personal development practice along the way. I'm hungry for new experiences and reaching my full potential. In other words, I'm a bit of an overachiever and a big goal evangelist.

Many years ago I realized that my life mission, the place where I feel most myself and in flow, is helping other people identify what they want to do and how to get on the path to making that desire a reality.

Strategy + Action: this means helping you discover your true goals *and* create a realistic system for success.

But this is not a standardized test. This is your older sister sitting you down after graduation to tell you everything she's learned thus far in an effort to make your life easier and more fulfilling, and to help you reach your dreams faster. Grab a beer and listen up.

This book is a combination of everything I've created, consulted, taught, learned, or otherwise absorbed to date. It combines all of my goal worksheets, as well as the best advice from my business and career articles, webseries, and book.

Let's get graduate-level on goal setting. Here is the process that has worked for me and for those I consider a success, both in work and in life. I'll keep revising it as I learn, try, succeed, fail, and get your feedback, because the best celebration of success is sharing it. Why hold onto something that can help someone else?



Full disclosure: I do not accomplish every goal I set. But I do make sure to learn just as much from my failures as I do from my successes. Instead of giving up or ignoring what's uncomfortable, I try to take note of what works, what doesn't, and why.

I've begun to notice that the foundation of goals that get accomplished, that are the most fun, and that are most central to making me who I am, have these three things in common:

1. Being honest about what I really want.
2. Being honest about where I get stuck.
3. Knowing myself well enough to use my strengths and plan around my weaknesses.

The common thread? Telling the truth about what I want and creating a realistic process to move forward. Honesty is the foundation.

The thing that makes my approach different is that I encourage acknowledgement of challenges, obstacles, and failures. This is where honesty gets difficult, but really earns its value.

It's natural to resist this. But ignoring the truth has a funny way of derailing your progress until you finally deal with it. So the logical, healthy thing to do is to deal with it now so you can discover what lies beyond.



Unlike most goal-oriented guides, this book doesn't stop at presenting best practices for goal setting. It also acknowledges that obstacles appear and encourages you to deal with them proactively, then develop a process that is tailored to your life, habits, relationships, strengths, weaknesses, and incentives. I do my best to keep it simple and straightforward, and to provide specific examples where it makes sense.

This is not "Dream it and do it!" I'm a skeptic. It's comforting to have a "ten steps to" doing/being/having whatever, but the only thing that matters is what works in reality. Second-guess trends. Keep what works and throw out the rest. This is the more difficult path, but it is the one that will actually move you forward.

Which means you might get uncomfortable. You might not like some of what I have to say. Pay attention to those moments: they can be opportunities to identify your blocks and expand your possibilities.

I invite you to dive into this guide, improved and expanded with new ways to set, analyze, adjust, and achieve your goals in work and in life.

Be honest. Be realistic. Be ambitious. Move forward.

Honor the opportunity you have to create your life by committing to your process and telling your fears that they're not invited to the party. You'll inspire others with your courage – and inspire yourself with the new things you learn and the experiences you create.

The point? We are more fully ourselves when we are in touch with what we really want and realizing our unique ambitions. We are kinder, more generous, inspired, and connected, both to ourselves and to others.

Strategy & Style,

*Ciara*

# HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book is designed to be like Law & Order: SVU – self-contained episodes you can skip between and repeat, but that make even more sense (and are more fulfilling) when you consume the whole series in order. Also, a tough-love female detective is leading the discovery process, but you can't sleep through it if you expect to solve your mysteries.

**The Strategy** outlines 24 Goal Principles that will help frame all your endeavors. Because different areas may call for different approaches, there are separate sections for your **Personal, Career, and Project Goals**. That last category applies to you if you are a creator of any kind, whether you're working on a business, creative project, or event.

Below are suggestions for how to adapt this book to your style and schedule. You'll also need a pencil, highlighter, snacks, and a can-do attitude. The first three are sold separately.

## WORKOUT

### *Interval Training*

This book is ideal for quick reading and reference, from subway rides to delayed doctor's appointments. One-page chapters and goal sections mean you can formulate your Game Plan on your time.

## GAME TIME

### *60 Minutes*

Allow about an hour to work through each individual goal section.

## CHAMPIONSHIP

### *2-3 Hours*

Create a mini Goal Retreat: give yourself an uninterrupted stretch to complete your Personal and Career Goals. Be sure to find a space where you can escape distractions and get into your zone.

## GOAL EVENT

### *3 Hours*

Gather a group of friends or colleagues to formulate your Game Plan as a group. You can download a free DIY Goal Event packet at [www.CiaraPressler.com](http://www.CiaraPressler.com).

## TIME OUT

### *30 minutes*

It's vital to check in with your goals regularly. Schedule a repeating 30-minute appointment on your calendar to give yourself time to refocus and realign.

## HUDDLE

### *45 minutes*

If you're working with a goal buddy or accountability partner, keep check-ins quick and efficient: take 20 minutes each for getting help with your goals, and five minutes for scheduling and next steps.

**BE RELENTLESS. THE MORE SPECIFIC AND HONEST YOU ARE ABOUT YOUR GOALS, THE MORE LIKELY YOU ARE TO TAKE TANGIBLE STEPS TO ACCOMPLISH THEM.**

**STRATEGY**

# RESOLUTION

## HYPER-AMBITION AS ANNUAL TRADITION

Every year, trillions of people set New Year's resolutions and only about ten of those people accomplish them. *Literally.*

So it would seem that *setting* goals is pretty easy. Why is it that most goals we set never get *accomplished*?

In my experience, the first problem is the goal itself, which usually has one of these flaws:

- **The goal isn't specific.** When a goal is too general, you can't assess or adjust your progress.
- **The goal is too big.** It's not broken into digestible steps, causing you to get overwhelmed and give up.
- **The goal is too small.** It doesn't inspire or motivate you, so you ignore it in favor of other things that captivate your attention.
- **The goal's timing is off.** The goal isn't realistic for right now or is in conflict with another goal.
- **You have too many goals.** It's impossible to manage and act on everything.
- **The goal isn't something you want badly enough.** You're doing it because it's what other people are doing or what you "should" do, but it doesn't really resonate with what you truly want right now. Something else is more important to you in this moment.

When you start with the right goal, you stand a much better chance of accomplishing it. From there, planning, motivation, tracking, and accountability, along with a healthy amount of self-awareness, take you the rest of the way.

# REALITY

## CHECK YOURSELF BEFORE YOU WRECK YOURSELF

Spoiler alert: there is no formula for success.

I'm sorry to break the news. But we all keep buying into this idea that if we just take the right class, hire the right guru, or read the right book, we will be showered with fame and riches and respect.

I'm guilty too. I repeatedly get seduced by the latest theory, program, article, or method that promises elite results. But the only time these things actually contribute to my success is when I selectively apply some (not all) of the concepts to some (not all) of my projects. No single book or guru or TED talk has ever laid out an approach that I could follow to the exclusion of other information in order to reach my goals.

The absence of ten-step plans, detailed timelines, and specific roadmaps may be frustrating, but a cookie-cutter guide that wants you to take the same approach as everyone else isn't going to serve you in the long run.

Instead, take responsibility for your own destiny and continue the development of your own unique approach to your life. It's more challenging terrain than simply following a map, but it will set you up for greater success and satisfaction.

Whether you are pursuing your goals alone or with outside support, it is up to you to think critically and make any process your own – to throw out what doesn't work through trial and error (to think that there won't be error is foolish) and keep what does. There is only one you, so there is only one unique path to your specific success.

Construct your personal success formula. Then continue adapting it as your goals require.

# ENDURANCE

## RUN YOUR RACE AT YOUR PACE

If you want to run a marathon, no trainer will tell you to get super-motivated then leap out your door and try to run 26.2 miles all by yourself, and, if you can't do it, then beat up on yourself and give up altogether.

Yet that's what so many of us do with our Big Goals: the long-term goals, the stuff that really matters. The finish line seems so far away that we freak ourselves out and stall at the starting line, self-sabotaging our way off track.

If you want to run a marathon, the best way to start is by getting up to a base of around 25 miles per week, or 5 miles x 5 days each week. That alone could take a year. Then you start inching up your long run -- 8 miles, 10 miles, 13.1 miles -- but with weeks where you pull back so you don't injure yourself by going too far or too fast too quickly.

You get the metaphor. In order to accomplish a big goal, you have to divide it into smaller, more digestible steps. You need milestones in order to measure your progress, and, most importantly, so you don't get frustrated and quit because you're measuring yourself against a future you that hasn't yet been earned.

I want you to be aware of your big goals, but take care to focus on each goal's respective milestones, which are often remarkable standalone goals. The trick is that you must choose goals that aren't just about the destination, but a process you'll enjoy.

If you hate running, do us all a favor and take a marathon off your bucket list. But, if you will treasure each mile and you're open to what you'll learn along the way, by all means, lace up and get focused on that first mile.

# CLARITY

## GET SPECIFIC FOR GOALS TERRIFIC

Lack of clarity is the enemy of goal greatness. Don't be vague about what you want. Strong goals are:

1. **Simple.** One sentence, simply stated, and don't smash other tangential goals in with it.
2. **Specific.** Get to the core of what you want and define it.
3. **Realistic.** This can happen within one year and is mostly within your control to execute.
4. **Measurable.** Make it trackable and give it a deadline so you can measure your progress.
5. **Honest.** Go for the exact thing you really want right now. Avoid "shoulds" and comparison.

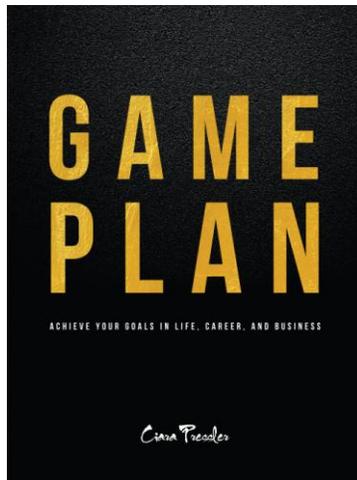
My goals have a funny way of manifesting when I'm not specific enough about them. Either they won't work at all, or they'll happen like I stated them, but not always how I intended them. For example, one year I set a goal of saving \$10,000. That amount did indeed get saved, but in my business account, not my personal one. Whoops, who cares, I had \$10,000 more than I did that time last year. Fuzzy goals are rarely financially beneficial, so I need to keep a sense of humor about missing the mark. But when it really matters, what I really need to be is clearer.

Say you set a goal of saving money, but you are in grad school full-time and paying for it yourself. Plus, the interest on your debt would far outweigh the interest earned in your savings account. All things considered, is the savings goal realistic? Be honest about your priorities, now, in your real world.

Here's an example:

<b>Original Goal:</b>	<b><i>Save money.</i></b>
Potential Problems:	This isn't specific or measurable. How much money? One penny? One million? Do you want a raise? How much? What's your motivation? How will you do it?
<b>Stronger Goal:</b>	<b><i>I have paid off my credit cards by April 15 and I have \$5,000 in my savings account by December 31 with a defined monthly savings plan in place for the New Year.</i></b>
Potential Obstacles:	Upcoming major purchases and expenses, bad spending habits, procrastination.
Action Steps:	Commit to saving a specific amount each week, set up a savings account, set up automatic transfers, use generic toothpaste, sell children to the highest bidder.

# THANK YOU!



Thanks for downloading an excerpt of Game Plan!  
For more info or to get the full workbook, visit [www.CiaraPressler.com](http://www.CiaraPressler.com).

