# Transcript: IT Podcast - Ep 91 - Why You Should Write Down Goals

*The following transcript is a verbatim account of the video or audio file accompanying this transcript.*

Speaker #1 (Narrator):

WGU's IT Audio Series. Flexible, portable, profound.

Speaker #2 (Julianne Cook):

Hello and welcome to the IT Audio Series. I'm Julianne Cook and I've been a program mentor in the IT college since 2012.

Speaker #3 (Jessica Galterio):

I'm Jessica Galterio and I've been a program mentor in the IT college since 2015. Today we want to talk about a simple strategy that will help you reach your goals. It seems really simple but there's a lot behind it and it can really make a difference. Basically, in order to be more successful with your goals, you should write them down.

Speaker #2 (Julianne Cook):

Easy as that, there's some psychology behind it and we can actually start there before we really dive into how to do it. If you aren't sure how to format your goals, there's another episode of the IT Audio Series that's focused on setting smart goals. We won't go into a lot of detail here about how to format your goals but if you aren't sure what a smart goal is or how to structure it, then I highly recommend listening to that episode first. Neuropsychologists have found something called the generation effect which basically says that when you generate something, you're more likely to connect with it which makes it easier to focus on it just to remember it, to visualize it, it becomes part of yourself.

Speaker #3 (Jessica Galterio):

When you generate your goal by thinking about exactly what you want to accomplish, how you are going to do it, determining a time frame and visualizing what it will look like when you are done, you are helping your brain to really identify what you want and how to buy into it. Then you take another step by writing that goal down and you spend time with it, you slow down, think about the words you are writing, you think about the order of the words and if it makes sense or not, you have a physical and visual connection to the idea that you generated in your mind.

This forces you to really spend time with this idea, with this goal, with what you want and how you're going to get there. This also helps you define your goals. A lot of times when a goal is just bouncing around in our mind, it isn't completely clear to us when we generate that goal, we want to think about exactly what we want to do. If your goal is to start a podcast or to get your degree or to finish your novel, those things are really broad and don't have much definition and it can change over time. When we write it down, we have a snapshot of exactly what your goal is at that time.

We can see clearly how specific it is and if it needs to be refined and there is no way to weasel out of it or change it later and convince yourself that the lesser version was really your goal all along.

Speaker #2 (Julianne Cook):

Let's try it, right now, go ahead, pause this episode, think of a goal you want to accomplish. It can be short term, it can be long-term, just think of something that you want to accomplish.

I'm going go ahead and set a goal of writing three episodes at the IT Audio Series by the end of the month. Now grab a piece of paper and a pen, write down what you want to accomplish and when you want to have it done. Now when I first heard about this idea, I thought that if something is a really big goal and if you really want it, that there isn't a point, why would I write it down? If it's something that I'm thinking about all the time anyway, I don't need a reminder. Well, there's a few different things we're going to do with our written goal in order to be more successful with it. Again, all these ideas are rooted in research that's been done on how our brains work and how we can use that to help us be more successful with our goals and plans.

Speaker #3 (Jessica Galterio):

We have written our goal, now what do we do with it? We have options.

Speaker #2 (Julianne Cook):

Recently I've started using a strategy for organization and time management called the bullet journal. One of the ways I use this is to write down my goals and to break them down into smaller components. For my example I have a goal of write three episodes of the IT Audio Series on my monthly page and underneath of that, I have additional steps. I determine the topics, discuss with my recording partner, do research, put together an outline, write the scripts, schedule a time to record, etc all these things. This allows me to take that big goal and then generate the smaller steps that are necessary to reach it. By doing this, my brain only has to process the smaller aspects of it and then I can tackle each step without that feeling of being overwhelmed by it. Also, and there's research on this too, crossing something off that list, it's so satisfying and by doing that, it actually helps motivate you to continue working on your goals. The big goal is great but those little objectives that gives your brain would it needs to keep moving forward.

Speaker #3 (Jessica Galterio):

Another great way to use your written goal is to put it in places where you will see it. If you hide it away in a notebook somewhere and never revisit it then you will not remember it even with all the steps that we took before to get it into our brains, so put it somewhere. I've seen a few different ideas; use a whiteboard marker and write it on your bathroom mirror, put it on the fridge in your kitchen, put a sticky note on your monitor, make it the lock screen on your phone or the wallpaper on your desktop. Draw a picture of something silly and right along with it, make it what you doodle during meetings. If the goal is ever present and in your mind and in your field of vision, it will be a part of your daily life and you will have a reminder each time you see it to make progress on it.

Speaker #2 (Julianne Cook):

My goal’s written on a sticky note on my monitor right now, so when I sit at my computer to open up my video game, I can remind myself that I should make some progress on that goal before I do that.

Speaker #3 (Jessica Galterio):

Now there's also some research out there that shows that if you take that written goal and combine it with something else that is actually even more impactful, there are other things that you can do as well to engage more of your senses. I'm not saying that you have to go full on arts and crafts mode, especially since you should be spending time working on your goals but putting together some type of vision board with pictures and other visual cues is a great way to put your goal someplace that you can see on a regular basis. Additionally, if you play a certain kind of music while you are working towards your goal or if you chew the same flavor of gum every time you work on it, then it just gives a few more pieces for your brain to connect to.

Speaker #2 (Julianne Cook):

Exactly, so in my example, I have a little doodle of my headphones on a sticky note next to my goal and that visual cue helps my brain to connect that goal with my headphones, so every time I use my headphones, I also think about my goal.

Speaker #3 (Jessica Galterio):

Love that, and I recently did that myself too in my bullet journal. I wanted to redo my bedroom for years now. It's a goal but I didn't have any specifics steps, I didn't know what I wanted and one day I just started doodling and using different colors of my markers, the colors that I wanted. Next thing I knew, I was on the IKEA website, I had actually made a purchase, we put together a new bed, so it really does help to visualize these things whether it's a huge goal for school or even a small one just to redecorate your bedroom.

Speaker #2 (Julianne Cook):

Awesome.

Speaker #3 (Jessica Galterio):

Now, share your goals. This is really easy to do if you are putting them all over your house because everyone else is going to see them. But once you've written down your goal, it becomes really easy to share with people. Tell your program mentor, tell your partner, your colleagues, your friends, when you share this goal with others you're adding them to your support network and then those people who are in your life will also help to keep you accountable to yourself.

Speaker #2 (Julianne Cook):

I've told Jessica about my goal with the IT Audio Series as well as all of you. Part of her job with my goal is to check in with me and see how we're doing and knowing that she's going to do that helps motivate me to make progress on those goals. At the same time, I also keep her accountable to her goals that she has told me about. Teamwork.

Speaker #3 (Jessica Galterio):

Love it. To summarize, writing your goals is important. It helps you commit the goal to your memory but also helps you define and clarify your goal. It makes it easier to visualize what you want to accomplish, creates a way for you to give yourself regular reminders, creates a great opportunity to share with and utilize your support network, and my favorite, gives you a way to physically cross things off your list which I love, it feels great.

Speaker #2 (Julianne Cook):

Absolutely. We hope that you enjoyed this episode of the IT Audio Series. If you're interested in learning more about effective goal-setting strategies and tools to help keep you motivated. I highly recommend having a chat with your program mentor or checking out the Student Success Center. Thank you for listening.

Speaker #1 (Narrator):

Schedule time with your program mentor to explore more deeply. WGU, a new kind of you.