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SERIOUS GOAL SETTING

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Hello there. Welcome back. Welcome back to the Career Reset podcast. I'm your host, Mel Savage. Today, we are going to continue the theme that we've been talking about for the last few weeks, which is all-around job searching. I would say it's loosely based on job searching. We've talked about some more functional things around the job search, which are resume-building, and interviewing skills for interviewers and for interviewees.

We talked to Ty Giuliani, who is an expert on creating authority for your brand persona on LinkedIn. If you haven't heard that episode, you definitely need to go check that out. Those are some of the more functional pieces around the job search process. But then there are also some topics we talked about, which are more, I'd say the softer decision-making thought processes around whether or not you want to go forward with the job search. One of them being is it even time for a career change. How do you make that decision in your career?

Today, I want to talk about serious goal setting. Because those are the kinds of things that help you determine what the right next step for you is and what the next career move for you should be. A lot of the time, we find ourselves struggling to make that decision because we don't have a plan in place. We don't have clear career goals.

I just want to start by saying that if you don't have a career plan – a plan that's all yours, that's macro all about you, not about the company that you work in, and you want to talk about how to set that up, then you need to set up a free strategy session with me at melsavage.com/chat because we all need to have a serious goal and a serious career plan.

What do I mean by serious goal? Because I think there's a difference between just regular goals and serious goals. I think of regular goals more like a dream, a hope that one day, I want to be able to do this. But we don't really go after it. We think about it from time to time. I would love to work at Apple or at Google or insert your dream company. I would love to work at this place. I'd love to be CEO of my own company one day, or I'd love to work abroad one day.

We throw these things as dreams or goals but they sound so huge and impossible. We don't actually take any action. We actually don't get serious about them. We don't make them serious goals. We make them just quasi-regular goals, or what I call dreams.

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Let's talk about it for a second. Because when I talk about career goals with people, a lot of them just say, *I know where I'm going. I know that I want to be at this level in this timeframe.* And they have these loose goals in their brains about where they're going and where they want to be. But let's get really granular with this. I want to ask you a question. Would you run a project in your company that way?

Let's say that you were working on something at work, whether it was launching a new product, developing a partnership with a new vendor, providing a service to clients, or whatever it is in your business. Let's say that you are putting that together. Wouldn't you have some goals? I remember when I worked at McDonald's, I wouldn't do anything. We would spend a lot of time just on the goal. What's the objective of what we're trying to do here? It could be a financial objective. It could be a brand positioning objective. It could be a loyalty objective.

How are we setting these goals and how are we measuring our success? We spent a lot of time just coming up with the right solution was there. We had a whole department dedicated to helping us come up with the right goals that made the most sense for us, whether that was quantitatively or qualitatively. Because when you have a goal on a project, then you know how to make decisions. Sometimes you can work back from that goal, and sometimes you need to work. Work forward to that goal and come up with a bunch of different things. That sort of thing can add up to that goal or set you in the right direction toward that goal.

But regardless, you need the goal. A goal is the starting place and that is a serious goal. We do that all the time on the things that we work on in our business. And we even do it to some extent in our personal lives. We're going to go on holiday in a given week. I have to plan the holiday, I want it to be this kind of holiday, and this is what I'm hoping to achieve with this holiday. Here's why I need my child is have a birthday party. We talked about what the goals are for the birthday party, how many people are going to be there, what kind of fun we're going to have, and what are they looking to achieve with their birthday party.

Maybe not in those words, but you do that in your life. But when it comes to your career, we don't. A lot of the time, when we get a job working for someone else, we think we're off the hook. We don't really need to put a plan together for ourselves because the company is going to make me write a plan for myself within that company. When I was at McDonald's, I had my development plan that was focused entirely on how I would develop at McDonald's. It has nothing to do with me in totality. It's really more about how I would grow and help the organization, obviously. That's their vested interest. I totally get that. It serves both both them and me.

But let's be honest, those career plans that you have when you work at a company, you're not in 100% control of those plans. A lot of people have a lot of say on whether you actually achieve those goals; be they growth goals, training, mentors, or projects you get to work on. You're not the only one making those decisions. People feed into that. So there is value, obviously, in having a career plan within the organization that you work in.

But most people like to think they have that plan. *Why do I need another plan? I'm working for this big company or whatever company, and now it's my company's job and my boss's job to help me get to the goal that I've set for myself.* They disassociate themselves from the responsibility of it. We don't think about it, except twice a year, and we have to update our plan. That sort of thing.

When we do that, what ends up happening is we wake up one day, and we realize, *Wait a minute, my career is not the most important thing in my boss's life. How can that be? My company has other objectives versus what I need in my career. How was that possible?* And you start thinking about, *Wait a minute, I don't have as many options as I*

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thought I did. Because if my company is not going to give me these things, or my boss isn't fighting for me over here, what do I do about it?

This happens to so many people. It's absolutely happened to me in my career. We think we're in it together with our company for our careers. I think to a large extent, the company and the boss do want to help. They do want to be there, but we're not their number one priority. Let's be honest, we are not their number one priority. So here's what happens. You're a smart person, you get the job, you get this great job, you show up, you're doing great at it, and everyone loves you. You're like, *Look at me, I'm so great. Everyone loves me and I'm great at my job. I'm so smart.* You're happy and everything's going great.

Then something happens. It could be small, little things over time. It could be a big thing, like a boss change or whatever. But slowly, things started to change. Ultimately, you're not totally enamored with the job anymore. Maybe you're bored, or your boss has changed and they're not focused on you like the other boss was, or they don't think that you're as great as everyone else thinks you are, or the company direction changes or it's just like little things over time.

Maybe mistakes were made or someone took something the wrong way or something happened with a relationship at work. All of a sudden, boom, the world doesn't revolve around you anymore. And you're like, *What the, how did I get here?* That is always the question. We're asking ourselves, *How did I get here? I'm a smart person. How did I allow this to happen to myself?* And you start thinking, *I'm here. Maybe I'm not as smart as I thought I was right. Maybe I'm not as special as I thought I was, after all.*

All those new thoughts start coming into your brain, and you start spiraling. And you're not only asking, *How did I get here? But now, what do I do?* And I want to say this to you. If you're ever asking yourself, *Now, what do I do?* It's because you don't have a plan for a career with a clear goal in it. Because when you have a clear goal, and you have a plan, these are your North Stars. You know where you're going. Even if things have shifted, like you're on a plan of some kind, or you had some next steps sorted out, and then something goes sideways, you'll always have that goal.

You can always re-calibrate yourself based on that clear goal you have. That serious goal that you've set for yourself that's going to help you decide, *Is it time for change? Am I achieving the things I need to achieve in my plan?* It's not like, *Now, what do I do? I feel lost.* It's like, *Okay, let's recalibrate. What's the next step now?* It's that more empowered way of looking at it versus now what do I do, which is a much more disempowered way of asking yourself the same question. So having a clear, serious goal for your career is everything. It's everything. But so many of us don't do it. We don't do it. Why don't we do it?

Let's just think about it for a second. Things that you set goals for in your life, you'll set goals for every little thing, except your career. But let's think about this. Isn't your career important? Don't you spend at least eight hours a day in some way, shape, or form on your career? Isn't it the thing that pays for the food, that pays for the shelter? And if you're in the US, it pays for the health care. These are critical things for survival, food, shelter, and health care. Your career plays a really big role in that. At a minimum, your career enables your life.

Ideally, it's a purposeful, meaningful thing that actually adds value to your life and also pays the bills, but makes you feel like you have a purpose. It gives you meaning. So it's a pretty big deal. And you spend like two-thirds of your adult life doing it. Don't you think it's worth spending the time and maybe even a little bit of money if you

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need to, to have a really solid career plan? I don't see how the answer can be no, to be honest. Because this is not a revelation.

When you have a goal, and you're serious about it, you make it happen. Why don't people set career goals? Of course, it makes sense. But we still don't do it. And we have all the reasons. We say all the reasons like, *I don't have time, I don't know where to start. I don't need one right now. I'm fine in my job right now.* And we just coast along. But the real reason that people don't put career plans in place and don't have a goal is because they're afraid of failing. That's really the bottom line. It's afraid of failing.

If I don't plan it, I won't fail at it. If I don't write it down, if I'm not serious about it, then I can't fail. If I just say to myself, Look, I got a job right now. I'm going to get promoted in any year, I think. If I don't, I'll worry about it then. It's a very passive way to handle your career, which is totally fine if that's what you want to do. And then if the promotion doesn't come and all that stuff, you can take care of it then.

But a lot of the time, that's where people get stuck. They don't know if they should leave. They don't know if they should stay. They don't know what to do because they don't have a goal and they don't have a plan. And they don't write all that stuff down because really, they're afraid of failing.

But let me tell you, not having a goal is simply choosing to fail ahead of time. And when we don't write it down, we don't have to face it. Because then we can say, *I didn't really take it seriously.* Ultimately, the end result is exactly the same, whether you took it seriously or not, or whether you secretly took it seriously in your head. But nobody else knows that it was a real goal for you. Either way, the end result is the same. You didn't go after it so you didn't get it. You didn't plan the roadmap to get there so you didn't get it.

But if you have something that you really want to achieve in your career, whatever it is, no matter how huge it sounds, make a serious goal out of it. So if you're interested in making a serious goal, the question becomes *how do I make a serious goal and what does a serious goal look like?* A serious goal is the very first step to building your career plan. So I'm going to give you three steps right now to creating a serious career goal for yourself.

The very first thing you need to do is write it down. It doesn't matter what it is. If you have no idea what your career goals should be, that's a whole different topic. But if you have a sense, but you've just been afraid to be clear about it, just start brainstorming what it could be, and ultimately pick something and write it down. Write down what the goal is, be really specific about it, and write down when you want to achieve this goal.

I know this sounds very simplistic, but believe me, this is really tough for people. I talked to them about this all the time. We spend the most time whenever we're starting to write a career plan. We will spend a lot of time just on this part because there's a lot of stress, anxiety, and discomfort with putting something down on paper because it opens us up for failure. And when you write something down, it forces you to be specific. It forces you to explore what it is that you really want.

The first thing is to spend some time brainstorming what it could be and write it down. When you're brainstorming what it could be and you're going to write down what it is and why when give yourself a date, my little suggestion to you is to measure your own discomfort level with this goal. My challenge to you is to try to

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make it a nine or a 10 on the level of discomfort. 10 being like, totally, this is impossible. *I'm totally uncomfortable with this, I'm never going to achieve this, I don't know how to do this.* That's a 10.

Try to make it a nine or 10. Push yourself. There's no rush. You want to do this in two years, you want to do this in five years, that's great. A lot of the time we set goals for ourselves, we set goals that we know we can achieve because we don't want to deal with the failure of it. When it comes to career goals, the intention is to stretch. Think about stretch goals. I don't know if you have stretch goals in the company that you have right now but we used to talk about stretch goals all the time.

The purpose of a stretch goal is that it makes you put strategies in place and do things that you wouldn't normally do if your goal was smaller. It makes you think differently. It makes you take chances and risks and put tactics in place and strategies in place to try to achieve the stretch goal. The purpose is not necessarily to achieve the stretch goal. The purpose is to do everything you possibly can to achieve the stretch goal. Ultimately, what happens is you achieve more than you would have achieved if you'd set that nice, comfortable, achievable goal.

So my little challenge to you is to write down a goal, by when, and make it a stretch goal. That's the first step of a serious goal. Write it down, by when, and make it a stretch goal. Your goal could be anything. It can be achieving a certain title or a salary. Maybe you want to make $500,000 a year or $100,000 a year. Maybe you want to meet certain people. Maybe you want to get a job interview at the top five companies in a certain field. Maybe you want to get a new job and you're going to give yourself a deadline by when. Maybe your goal is just to build a career plan, a really solid career plan. If you don't have one, I am totally down for that, whatever goal you write down.

Here's the other thing. As you're writing it down, you need to be as committed to it as you would be to your marriage or relationship. That's the level of commitment to this goal. So get really serious. Serious goals require serious commitment. So write it down, by when, and make it a stretch. Be as committed as you would be if you were marrying this goal. Those are the kinds of things that you need to think about when you choose this goal. That's step one. That honestly is the hardest step.

That's the hardest step that takes the most coaching when I'm coaching people because I want to challenge them. Get them out of their comfort zone, understand what's keeping them small, and what's stopping them from thinking big. The number one thing always is, but *what if I don't achieve it? What does that mean about me?* Guess what folks, it gets to mean whatever you want it to mean.

At the end of the day, if you achieve it, like three months after the date that you achieved it, that you meant to achieve it. Is that really a bad thing? No, not if you're achieving a stretch goal. It's an amazing thing. So you're never going to change the goal. You might have to tweak the timeframe and add a little bit if you'd like to, but the goal is the goal. You're committing to it like a marriage. It would be that hard for you to get out of it once you've committed to it. That's number one.

The second part of a serious goal is understanding how will you know you've achieved it. What is your measurement for this goal? That's so important. You need to be able to know how you measure it. And it can be very simple. It can say, I look at my pay stub, I look at my business card, I have a to-do list and everything's

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checked off of it. All the interviews are checked off. I got a new job. And I know that because I'm looking at my business card or whatever it is.

I've met all these new people that I wanted to meet. And I know that because they're now connections on my LinkedIn. Whatever it is that you're setting as your measurement, you have to be clear about how are you going to measure that you actually achieved this. That's so important. That makes your goals serious. That one's easy.

Now you stated your goal, you talked about when you're going to achieve it by, you've made it a nine or 10 on the stretch goal scale, you're committing to it like a marriage, you're clearly articulating how you're going to measure whether or not you've achieved this goal. Now, the third thing you need to do is ask yourself why you want this goal. Why do you want this goal? Why do you love having this goal? It's all about *why*. The *why* is so important. Having a *why* is critical.

I always say the harder the goal, the more important the *why*. Starting a business was the hardest thing I've ever done. And I've done some pretty tough things. Because starting a business is a whole different animal. And if I didn't have a *why,* it would have been way harder to stay on track. So what is your why?

My *why* for starting my business was freedom. I want to be able to work from anywhere. The work-from-anywhere thing was keeping me going. I really wanted to build this business. I wanted to help people because I saw so many people suffering in their cubes and not having their careers be a part of their lives that was actually adding value to them, which was my situation, too, a lot of my career. I thought, *Enough. We don't have to live like this.* I want to help those people. That was my why.

Another one I hear a lot from entrepreneurs specifically is, *Every penny I make, I want it to be for me. I don't want to make money for Big Brother or whatever it is anymore. I want to make the money for me. I want control of my destiny.* That's another thing I hear about entrepreneurs, but it could be anything. It could be, *I want to prove to myself that I can do it.*

Now I'm a marketer by training. A lot of marketers have read the book, *Start with Why* by Simon Sinek. He talks about the fact that the reason why you do anything is because it's your purpose. He has this great quote that I want to share with you and he says, *Working hard for something you don't care about is called stress. But working hard for something you love is called passion.* You love something because of the purpose behind it, the why behind it. So why do you love this goal?

I want to give you a little bit of a heads up on this, Because a lot of the time, people will say to me, *I want to achieve this goal, whatever it is, because I want to feel something. I want to feel more confident, I want to feel like a success. I want to be happy.* I want to remind you that you can feel those things now. I also want to caution you by saying, that if you're having a problem with your self-confidence now; if you're having a problem with your happiness now or your feeling of success now, it's not going to go away once you achieve this goal.

Because the problem isn't the goal, the problem is in your mind. It's what you think about yourself or think about those situations where you're not happy, when you're not successful, or when you're not confident. I was a senior director, very senior at McDonald's. I made multiple six figures a year and I did not feel confident all the time. Oftentimes, I had impostor syndrome. Job and money don't give you confidence. You give yourself confidence.

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That might be part of your career goal, that might be an overall goal for you to build your self-confidence in your career. See how it permeates within your career and build a plan around that. It doesn't always have to be getting this job, or making this money, it can be being my most confident self in my job. What does that look like in all parts of your job? What does that look like in how you interact with people? What does that look like in the kind of leader you are? What does that look like in the relationships you build, in the recommendations you make, in the presentations you do, and in how you negotiate? Think about it. Build benchmarks for yourself in those ways.

If your *why* behind what you want to do is because you want to feel a certain way, or think a certain way about yourself, I want you to check that because that's a separate thing. You can feel and think those things about you right now that are in your power. No job and no amount of money is going to give you that. There might be other things about the job that you're going after, or what you're trying to achieve that are beneficial to you.

It could be hours or proximity to where you live or environment or values or culture that are more aligned with who you are, or whatever it is. But if you're if you're trying to set a career goal to make yourself feel something, then you're solving the wrong problem. I just want to leave that with you as something to think about.

Again, if you want to talk about that, you know where to reach me. Just set up some time at melsavage.com/chat and we can chat about it.

Some of the goals that I've seen people have are things like, *I want to show myself what I can do. I want to make this money for *fill in the blank.* Why do you want the money? To have a really good college fund for my kids, to be able to buy this big honking house or a vacation home. Don't worry about any judgment. This is a judgment-free zone. If you want to make all the money because you want all the things, awesome. Just tell yourself that's what it is. There's nothing wrong with that.

I told you I wanted a work-from-anywhere lifestyle that's why I chose this business at first. But I also had a real passion for stopping people from suffering in their careers, to helping people have vision and make their careers; something that actually adds value and joy to their lives, like all the time, and puts them in control of that. I have a friend who wants to be a CEO because she wants to be an example for her little girl. That's awesome. I have another friend who wants to be a CEO because she wants to be a frequency. Because she wants to be in control of the direction of the organization. That's awesome. That's okay.

I have another client who just wants to believe in herself more. She wants less drama in her life and she wants to invest her energy in her family and getting the job done to the best of her ability. So setting a serious goal is basically a what, when, how, and why framework. What's the goal? Make it a nice juicy stretch goal nine out of 10 on the impossibility scale. Possibility, discomfort, whatever you want to call it.

So a nice juicy stretch goal, what is it? When are you planning to achieve this? How will you know that you've achieved this goal? What's your proof? What's your measurement? And why do you love this goal? Why do you want this goal? That's the framework. That's the starting place. That is like the cog in the wheel and your North Star for building your plan. When you have those three things really nailed down, things get serious really fast. You are able to get serious really fast about your career and the plan comes from that.

Next month, I'll be talking more about some of the things you need to consider putting into your plan. But start with the goal, take the time over the next little while, even if it's just like sitting down for an hour at a coffee shop

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and brainstorming what your goals could be. Let it sit for a few days and come back to it. This will be the best work you've ever done for yourself or for your career. Just going through this very simple process is going to inspire you to take the next step, which is, *Now I have this goal, how am I going to achieve it?* I love that question.

If you're interested in learning how to answer that question, you can sign up for a free session at melsavage.com/chat, or you can continue to listen to this podcast. I have lots of other tools and thought management processes that I talked about. No problem. You do what you need to do but just get that goal. Get that serious goal in place. Then you're going to start asking yourself, *How do I make it happen? What is next?* That, my friends, is a super exciting question to ask your brain.

Thank you for joining me today. I appreciate you so much. Bye for now.

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