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THE EASY 90-DAY PLAN

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Hey there, my friends. Welcome back to the podcast. I'm Mel Savage, your host.

I am on a mission right now to make life easier everywhere I can. I don't know, it's probably some kind of pandemic hangover. Everything's been so intense. Recently, I just wanted life to be easier. I'm making all my systems work easier and making everything more streamlined. I hired more help. I'm just like, now, how can I do this in less time? That's sort of my mission right now.

It could also be spring has finally come to where I live. We're finally getting spring weather. And maybe I've got that spring-cleaning mentality. I don't know, I don't really care. I just found that right now I am and so many other people are making things way more complicated than they need to be. And I want it to stop. I just feel like shaking it all off.

Since helping people be successful in their careers is kind of my jam, I thought, okay, I'm going to start with that. I'm going to start there. It's also the end of a quarter. It's the end of March and I thought, okay, well, we're starting up a new quarter. Maybe it's a good time to talk about 90-day plans. Most people think of 90-day plans in the context of starting a new job or starting a new role. Maybe when you first get promoted, you think about writing a 90-day plan.

I want to offer you that having a 90-day plan all the time is going to help you get successful faster, reach your goals faster, and waste less time on useless things in general. You're going to totally avoid shiny object syndrome. And you're going to be laser-focused on how to continuously be showing up focused on your goal, like in everything that you do every day. But most people don't do it. Because they feel like it's a lot of work. It's like, *Seriously, Mel. Do you honestly think that I'm going to be writing a 90-day plan every quarter for myself? Dude, how much work that is? I already am working a ridiculous amount of hours.*

But that's because most people overcomplicate what a 90-day plan is supposed to be. It doesn't have to be overcomplicated. It can be super, super simple. And the reason people overcomplicate it is because they think they think of it as this really big deal like this big thing and they want to do it right. But I want to offer you that there is no right. There's just quick and dirty, do what you can, and you can make it really simple. You can hone it as you go. It doesn't have to be right. But it's totally worth doing because you save so much time on the back end.

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If you could find a way to make it really simple up front and save time on the back end, think about all of the extra energy you're going to have to put into focusing on what you want to do every day showing up at your best doing great work. It totally makes sense to do it. We just need to get past all of that heavy stuff at the beginning. But having a plan is important. And a 90-day plan can be really simple. It's like GPS.

I always say that having a plan is like GPS. You know you want to get somewhere and if you don't know how to get there, you're going to make a ton of wrong turns and waste a bunch of time in weird places that you don't need to be. But if you have a GPS guiding you there, which is what a 90-day plan is, then you can keep checking if you're on the right track, keep making adjustments as you go, and waste a lot less time. It just makes sense to have one. But if it's not easy, then we're not going to do it.

So today we're talking about the easy 90-day plan because I got you. I want you to have one and I want it to be easy for you. Because we save so much time. I had a boss who used to always say to me, *We never have time to do things right. But we always have time to do things twice.* I used to love that saying. I still kinda love it, but I would change it. Because the key part about it was we never have time to do things right. In this case, doing things right to me means having a plan. But it doesn't have to be the perfect plan.

That's the part where I want you to be careful that you don't take that saying to the dark side, where you focus so hard on trying to make things right and make it the best plan ever that you don't actually ever finish writing it or do anything with it. So we never have time to do things right. It's just about having a plan. Because then you can avoid doing things twice on the back end, which is what we end up doing anyway. I want you to think about it that way. It's not so much about doing it right, but doing it easy. Having it is the most important thing.

Because when you have the plan and you are focused on it, and you're enjoying your time, and you're not wasting your energy on stupid, useless shiny objects, you like your job more, you are less burnt out, and you are having a good time. And that's the important thing. I want you to love your job, and I want you to be great at it. That's my focus for you.

My goal here is to help you transform from someone who is all over the place or wasting a lot of time like you're burnt out jumping from one fire to another, maybe not doing the best work you could do, you know that and you're not having a good time. I want to transform you from that to someone who basically has their shit together, knows what they're doing, is super focused systematically and consistently achieving their goals, and getting what they want from their career. And you do that with a 90-day plan.

So we're going to talk about a few things today. We're going to talk about when you write one, how you use it, and what it means to write a 90-day plan. I want you to really get a scope of what we're talking about. What is the scope of what a 90-day plan is? I'm going to give you three simple questions that you need to answer that make up your entire plan. You just need to answer these questions. You can do it on a scrap piece of paper. You do not need a special format and all of the things. You can if you like, but you don't need to have it. You can make this as dead simple as you want.

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I want to give you some thought starters. I want to give you some examples that you can use to get back on track to make it easy. I want to help you think about doing this differently. Here's what we're going to cover here in this podcast today.

First thing, what is a 90-day plan? When do you write it? Like I said before, I think most people think of a 90-day plan as a document, first of all. They just think of it as a document. They think of it as a document that you write when you're starting something new. And it can be like a new job or a new role. I think both of those things don't go far enough. I want you to think about a 90-day plan. I want to offer you to think about a 90-day plan as something that is much more than a document. It's a tool.

In fact, it's not a document at all, I would say. I don't even care if it's on a piece of paper. It can be on your laptop, it can be on your iPad, it can be taken out on a piece of paper. It's just like a tool that you use to help you stay on track. And it's not just for when something's new, it's all the time. I want you to sort of shift that perspective. It's not a document and something you use when it's new, it's a tool. And it's something that you can use all the time.

I want to share a story with you about a client I have. I don't want to share my clients' names because when you have a career coach, sometimes people think of it and are very judgy about it. And people get really nervous about sharing their names and letting people know they have career coaches. But I have this great, fantastic client. She's a superstar. Her goal when she came to me to write her plans and get the coaching that she needed was to basically be ready to be promoted in six months.

She wanted to be able to do all the things that she needed to do so that she could be considered for promotion six months from the day that she started working with me. After three months of putting her plan together, we did something down and dirty. We got her going right after three months of working together. Not only was she in a position to be promoted, but she actually was promoted. So amazing. She cut her time in more than half because she wasn't just ready, she actually got promoted.

Then she decided, *let's work together again*. And then she did one for her new role. So she did it for both. And for the 90-day plan for her new role, she did it for not only what she needed to achieve in that new role, and how she needed to set herself up, but where she also needed to grow. What was interesting was, we started doing this plan, and then she discovered she was pregnant. And then we revised the plan based on what she wanted to achieve, or for her mat leave and where she wanted the team to be before she went on my leave.

The woman is a machine. I love her because she's like the ideal client when we talk about stuff, she puts it into action. She doesn't fuss around with, *Oh, I can't,* and now she's like, *Okay, this is my problem. How do I need to address it? I'm doing it. It's brilliant.*

If you can do that, you can achieve so much. I want you to know that this client is not a unicorn. I have three clients like this, who are machines like this. I think the key thing with all of them is they just focus on doing it. And they realize that once they start having success, they want more of it. They're not unicorns, they're regular people just working it. So I love that. And it's a great testament to how 90-day plans can help you. The bottom line is what I'm saying here is these two should definitely have one on the go.

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But the key thing with a 90-day plan is not like, a lot of people, what they do is that they write it and then they put it on their desks. That can't be how you use this. If you're going to do a 90-day plan, you can totally see the benefit of writing a 90-day plan. But if you're going to do it, it needs to be more than just writing it. It has to be something that you understand as a tool that you need to use every day. If you're not prepared to spend five minutes every day on it, then don't bother doing it. Otherwise, it's just going to be a waste of your time putting it together. It's nice to have it on paper. But if you don't follow it, what's the point?

I'm going to give you the three questions to actually write your 90-day plan and make that easy. I'm also giving you three questions to actually follow through with your 90-day plan to make it easy. And I'm giving this to you upfront because I want you to really think about this. Are you willing to ask yourself these three questions every day? And if you're not, then turn this off because you're not going to be doing yourself any favors by writing a plan that you don't follow. These three questions are really easy. The first couple of times you do it, it might take you 10 minutes, but honestly, literally I do this for five minutes every morning. I ask myself these three questions.

The first one is, ***what am I doing today that gets me closer to my goal?*** I just look at my to-do list. I look at my agenda, the meetings I have, and the things I'm trying to achieve. What am I doing today that gets me closer to my goal? I just make sure that there's some stuff there.

Second question, ***what's on my calendar or what's on my to-do list that doesn't get me closer?*** I think this is a really important question to ask yourself because when you look at all the things that people have booked in your calendar, or whatever, and you're like, *A bunch of these things, don't get me closer to my goal. I don't need to be at these things.* And if you have the choice to not be at some of those things, I suggest you back out of them and reinvest that time and things that get you closer to your goal.

If you don't have the chance, or the choice, let's say, the power to allow yourself to not do some of those things, then go to question three. ***What's on my calendar or to-do list that I can leverage to get me closer?*** Question one is what's getting me closer to my goal? Question two is what isn't getting me closer to my goal that I can get rid of basically, on my calendar to-do list? And then of those things that aren't? How can I leverage them to get me closer? Ask yourself.

If your goal is to build stronger relationships with certain people and you're going to be in meetings with those people, how can you leverage those moments with them? If your goal is to be a stronger presenter or something, how can you leverage what's on your calendar today to get you there?

My client's goal was to get promoted, and she had some things that she was working on. How can you work on those things today and all the things that are on your calendar? Those are important questions to ask yourself. It's just about refocusing. You don't have to write it all out. Here's what I'm going to do in every meeting. Here's all the things right. It's just you spending five minutes refocusing on your day and asking yourself, what's getting me closer? What's not? How can I leverage what is? That's it and then getting your mind focused and starting.

If you're willing to do that, while looking at your plan, and looking at your calendar every morning, then you're ready to write the plan. Let's talk about that. Let's talk about writing the plan. There are millions of structures for 90-day plans out there. I have one, too that I give to my clients. If you haven't done one before, a lot of people will

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think, *I'm not sure if I'm doing it right*. Don't worry about it. Honestly, just get a piece of paper, put three columns down, and answer these three questions. It doesn't have to be any more complicated than that.

If you've never started with a 90-day plan before, just keep it really focused. Pick one thing that you want to achieve. Now, as I go through these three questions, I'm going to just pick a couple of examples to illustrate. One will be for someone who wants to be a better leader. And the other one would be for someone who is starting a new job. We'll do those two examples as we answer these questions.

Number one, what are your top two or three priorities? This is a really important question because you want to really be clear on what it is you want to achieve. And those 90 days, I really recommend not to have more than two or three things. If you can keep it to one thing, even better because you can put all your effort into going deep on one thing versus trying to spread your tail self too thin.

The more focused you can be, the easier it's going to be for you. Constraint is your friend. And having this question is important because this will be your North Star. This is like when you go through your agenda every day, you're like, *Okay, how am I going to do this thing today?* How easy would that be? Just do this one thing.

For instance, if your goal is to be overall a better leader, maybe you've decided in 90 days that you want everyone on your team to have a development plan. And in 90 days, you don't want to solve problems for anyone on your team. So you've decided you've already identified that as a leader, some of the things that you need to do to be a better leader. And you want you pick two of those things that you really want to achieve in 90 days. *So as a leader, I'm going to make sure that everyone on my team has a really strong development plan.* Maybe that means you're going to go through it with them and all that kind of stuff and make sure it's really tight.

As a leader, your goal is to teach people critical thinking skills in your role, and that is going to be *I'm not going to solve problems for my team. I'm going to teach myself how to help my team solve their own problems*. Maybe those are two priorities that you've identified for yourself. If you've got a new job, maybe you've got three priorities and the ones for the new job that I always talk about with my clients are establishing an informed vision of what you want.

An informed vision means being clear on what you want to achieve in this role for yourself, and informed means you've talked to some people in the job like your boss, and maybe some key stakeholders, and maybe some reports, who have given you some thoughts about what they think your role needs to achieve. At the end of 90 days, you just really want to have a very good informed vision of what you want to achieve.

The other thing you want to do is be clear on your own objectives. So you have a vision of what the role needs to achieve and what are your objectives specifically? Also, I would say, at the end of 90 days, maybe establishing a strong relationship with, say, the top three stakeholders. That would be ambitious. Who are your top three stakeholders? It could be your boss, your main client, or your main vendor partner that you work with. Maybe it's your key peer, a colleague, where you work really closely with them, maybe it's a key report that you really want to build sort of that partnership with.

Whoever they are, you might have met a lot of people in your first 90 days, but really establishing a strong relationship with two, maybe three people in 90 days is ambitious, especially because you're setting up a vision

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for what you want to achieve in this role overall, being clear on your own objectives, and then meeting those stakeholders. So what are your two or three priorities? Just list them in bullet points, boom, boom, boom. Just decide.

If you decide you want to do something different, like 10 days into your 90-day plan, and you realize, *I know as a leader, I said I want everyone on my team to have a development plan and I don't want to solve problems for them. But I want to change one of those into something else.* Okay, do it. Who cares? You're not laminating this thing. You can learn and get smarter as you go. Just write down three bullet points, boom. We spent more than five minutes on this first question. You're working too hard. If you have any questions, you know what you should do, email me.

Second, who do you want to become? This is the second question. So the first one is, what are the three priorities? And the second question is, who do you want to become? Why I ask this question is because I want you to actually paint a picture. This isn't like, *Oh, I want to become a better leader. I just said that.* No. I want you to actually describe who you are going to be in three months. Describe what success looks like. How are you acting? How are you feeling? What kind of thoughts do you have? That's what I want you to paint a picture of.

If I had a camera, and I was filming you, what would I see you doing in three months from now? How would you be acting? What would my impression of you be? So who do you become is the second question. I just want you to paint a picture. As a leader, you might say, *I'm calm. I'm poised. I'm patient. I'm someone who has weekly development meetings with my team. I'm focused on their agenda. I add value as a leader, but I'm not answering, putting all their fires for them. I'm not answering all their questions, I'm making them answer their own questions. I see myself as a guide, not a hero with my team.* That's it.

Just two or three sentences about how you feel, what are some of the key things you see yourself doing in relation to the objectives that you established, and how you think about yourself.

Like I said, with the leader, *it's calm and poised and patient.* Those are your feelings. What do you see yourself doing? *I have weekly development meetings with my team. I'm focused on their agenda. I add value versus solving their problems for them.* And then what do you think about yourself? *I'm the guy, not the hero.* That's it. If it's a new job, describe how you see yourself. The feelings might be things like, *I'm focused, I'm confident, I'm calm.*

What do you see yourself doing in terms of the actions? It could be whatever it is that is on your job. You could just say, *These are the kinds of things I'm doing every day.* In terms of how you think about yourself, it could simply be something like, *I'm confident in my role. I know what I'm doing. I'm clear on where I'm going.* It could be simply like that. It doesn't have to be more complicated than that.

So first question, what are your two or three priorities? Second question, who do you want to become? That's a little story like three sentences about how you feel in your job, the kinds of things you're doing, and how you think about yourself. The third question is, who will help you get there? This is really about what support you need. I'm going to tell you right now, you need help. I don't care how brilliant you are, you're not going to be able to do this alone.

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Think about what you need from a support network to help you stay focused. Is it a mentor? Someone who has done what you're doing before, or someone who has a different perspective on how you would do it to make sure that your perspective is well-rounded. There are lots of reasons to have a mentor. I'm going to suggest to you that a mentor is not your boss. A mentor is someone who's removed from the situation but has a perspective on what it is you're trying to achieve.

Maybe it's a mentor, maybe it's a coach. I got to tell you, whether you choose me or not have a coach, investing in a coach is invaluable because a coach really helps you first of all, is always on your side, and totally believes in you if you find that find a good coach, and will really help you see what you don't see, and help you see where you're getting in your own way. So you could get a coach. Your boss is going to play a role in this. How do you want to use your boss? And is there anyone else that you need? Maybe there's a key stakeholder. Maybe there's someone else who's going to help you get there. Maybe it's a friend. Maybe you just have a friend who is going to be a moral support as you go through this.

Who's going to help you get there is really important. Those are the three questions. It doesn't have to be more complicated than that. What are the two or three priorities? Who do you want to become? And who will help you get there? So if I was focusing on being a stronger leader, I would find a coach who knows how to do that, just how to help me be a stronger leader.

I would find a mentor who would be like someone who is a really great leader, has a style that I really appreciate, or is a role model. Maybe it's someone I used to work with as a mentor. That could be something as well. If it was for a new job, I might pick someone who's done this job before or someone who's really great at onboarding in a new role. I wouldn't pick my boss, though.

A mentor is someone that you want to be vulnerable with. And people often don't want to be vulnerable with their boss. That's another reason why having a coach is so great. You can just let out all your deep, dark insecurities. It's fine, just go anywhere. It's just with your coach, they're totally believing in you. It doesn't really matter. You can share all the things you wouldn't share with your boss.

I think your boss has a role to play in helping you navigate your organization when it's a new job. But I don't think that you want to be, especially when you're developing a new relationship with that boss. They may not be the person that you're comfortable sharing all your deep, dark secrets with. So be really clear on who you want to get to help you.

When you have this plan, you're focused, you have clarity, you have a really good understanding of how you're going to get a good return on all the effort you're putting in, you're reviewing your goals every day, and how you can leverage what you're doing every day to get closer to those goals and you're not getting burnt out.

If your goal, for instance, was to be a better leader, and you're looking at your agenda on a given day, and you're like, *Okay, where am I going to be focused on not solving problems for my team today? Where am I going to focus on being the guide, not the hero? What is on my agenda that is not going to put me in a position to help me be a great leader today? Do I need to be there? How can I leverage it better?* It's easy, you just ask yourself these questions. You don't have to write down the answers. You just have to have a plan.

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You could even make a notation in your calendar about how you want to show up for that meeting. It can be that simple. Leverage what you have. Don't create new things. This is going to allow you to be like the master of your domain. I don't know why I say that. And of course, I just had that Seinfeld episode. So not that kind of master of your domain. I'm talking about the master of your career domain. You're not going to get sucked into the weeds. You're not going to lose perspective. You're going to be super super focused the entire time.

And I want to just give you a final thought here about keeping it simple. Because even though I've talked to you about how to look at your plan every day and keep that part of it simple and how to answer three questions every quarter and keep that really simple, sometimes we want to make it complicated. And I always just say to myself, whenever I think something's going to be hard, whenever I'm overwhelmed, maybe it's my 90-day plan. Maybe it's something on my calendar this week that I'm really uncomfortable doing, like even recording these podcasts.

I'm like, okay, I need to be on when I do it. And so, I get a little uncomfortable at first. I'm like, no, just let it fucking be easy. I'm just going to let it be easy. And I want to share something that I always think about. It's from the movie, *Indiana Jones Raiders of the Lost Ark*, the original one.

There's that scene with Indiana Jones and he is in a market. I don't even know what country it is. It looks like Morocco or something like it's in the Middle East or somewhere. At big dude who's sort of a Middle Eastern warrior ninja-type guy. He's all in black and he's got that giant, nice, shiny sword. He comes in doing this fancy swinging sword action and the crowd parts and there's going to be this huge fight. Then what does Indiana Jones do? He pulls out a gun, and he just shoots the guy. And keeps it really simple.

First of all, I'm not for gun violence. I'm just going to throw my hand up. But this is a movie. And it's a really nice illustration of this whole big thing being set up. It's going to be this huge, hard thing to do and Indie's like, whatever. And he just shoots the guy. Now, some people might think that's cheating. They're like, no, you're supposed to do the fight. That's the honorable thing to do.

Maybe, Indiana Jones could have taken some time to find a really awesome sword, got some training on how to use that sword, fought a couple of smaller guys first, and then worked his way up to fighting this big dude. Or he could just take a shortcut and say, Okay, fine. My end game here is to win this fight. Boom! Pulls the gun and shoots them.

Your end game is to be a better leader. What's the easiest path to getting a plan to do that? Just be clear on your top priorities. Be clear on your goal. Answer those three questions. And to make it really super simple, give yourself a time limit. Get that Indiana Jones mentality. I have 30 minutes to do this. Less, if you want. Give yourself 20 minutes to do this. What do I need to have on this piece of paper? These are the three questions I'm going to answer. I have 20 minutes to do this. I'm going to get Indiana Jones all over this puppy. Do it on a scrap piece of paper, whatever. Don't make it perfect. And that's it. Whatever you have in 20 minutes, you've got it done.

I think the bottom line is don't worry about getting it right. A lot of the time we spend, we waste so much time trying to get it 'right.' It's a 10 out of 10 in terms of how it looks and how organized it is, and all that kind of stuff. But who cares? You know what, make it a seven out of 10. Make it a freakin five out of 10. I don't care. Start somewhere.

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Because if you wait until it's 10 out of 10, you may never take action on it. It's going to be so exhausting. You're never going to do it again. Just get it done on paper and start working on it. That in itself can be a plan. Tweak it as you go. Once you have that foundation of those three questions, you're going to tighten it up. You're going to tighten it up as you go.

If you ever want to get someone's help, you want to get a coach, you want to talk to a mentor, you can do that. If you want to coach with me, no problem. Go to my website. You can sign up for a free strategy session. That's how you put it together. That's how you make a plan really easy.

So this week, I just want you to ask yourself, what is your BS excuse for not having a 90-day plan? Do you like that reason for not having it? Is that a power-empowered reason? Or are you just coming from a place of scarcity and lack? *I don't have enough time, I don't know how to do it*, all that kind of stuff. Are those your reasons? Or do you have a better reason for not having one? If I gave you 20 minutes, and your entire job depended on you writing this plan, would you write one? Ask yourself this question.

If your entire job depended on you doing this, would you write it? Would you take 20 minutes to write it? Because guess what? I know you would. And your success depends on it because you're going to waste way more than 20 minutes, plus five minutes a day. You're going to waste more time than that on bullshit that you didn't need to do. I'm making so many more mistakes, not optimizing opportunities. You're going to waste so much more time than that by not having a plan. So look at this like your success depends on it because my friends, it does.

I'll talk to you next week. Bye for now.

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