

CAREER & AMBITION GUIDE

The WOOP Method

The 4-step upgrade that turns your vision board
into an actual results system.

BASED ON 20+ YEARS OF RESEARCH BY PSYCHOLOGIST DR. GABRIELE OETTINGEN

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Why your vision board isn't working

You've made one every January. It felt amazing for about a week. By March, you couldn't tell me where it even is. Sound familiar?

Here's the part nobody tells you: that's not a discipline problem. It's a brain problem.

Psychologist Dr. Gabriele Oettingen spent over 20 years studying how mental imagery affects motivation — and found that when you vividly picture your ideal future without acknowledging the obstacles in your way, your brain can reward you for the fantasy alone. It creates a sense of premature accomplishment. Your body actually relaxes, as if you've already achieved the goal — which quietly kills the urgency to take action.

This showed up again and again in her research:

- Students who fantasised about top grades studied less, and scored lower.
- Job seekers who vividly imagined landing their dream role sent fewer applications and got fewer offers.
- People who visualised their ideal weight lost less over time.

The good news? Your vision board isn't the problem — it's just incomplete. It nails the first two steps of one of the most evidence-based goal frameworks in psychology. You just need the other two to turn it into something that actually moves you forward.

Meet WOOP

Wish. Outcome. Obstacle. Plan. Four steps, in order — each one building on the last.



Wish

Something meaningful, and genuinely challenging — but realistic. Get specific.

e.g. "Get promoted to Senior Manager this year."



Outcome

The best possible result if you achieve it. How would it feel? What would change?

e.g. "I'd finally feel like my work matches my ambition — more confidence, more control over my time."



Obstacle

The real one. Not external circumstances — the internal pattern that actually gets in your way.

e.g. "I avoid putting myself forward because I'm scared of being told I'm not ready."



Plan

A specific if-then for that exact obstacle. This is the step that turns a dreamer into a doer.

e.g. "If I catch myself staying quiet in a meeting, then I'll speak up with one idea before it ends."

Wish + Outcome is the dream. Obstacle + Plan is what actually gets you there.

Your turn: WOOP one goal

Pick one goal from your vision board (or one that's just been sitting in your head). Work through it below — be honest, especially on the Obstacle. That's where the real work is.

W — WISH

What do you want? Be specific.

O — OUTCOME

What's the best-case result? How will it feel?

O — OBSTACLE

What's the internal thing that gets in your way? Be honest.

P — PLAN

If [obstacle happens], then I will _____.

Come back to this weekly. WOOP works best as a check-in, not a one-time exercise.

Keep building this with me

This guide is one small piece of how I think about building an ambitious career without sacrificing your health, energy, or peace of mind.

Follow along for more real, no-fluff tools on career growth, productivity, and staying well while you're in it — not after you burn out.

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