



Co-Hosts: Dr. Daphne Scott and Dr. Katie Hendricks
Episode 63: The Big "O" in Goals
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Daphne Scott: Welcome to the Super Fantastic Leadership Show podcast with Daphne Scott and...

Katie Hendricks: Katie Hendricks!

Daphne: This is *the* podcast devoted to supporting you in leading at the highest levels of effectiveness with the greatest levels of fun.

Katie: I was just thinking about the dimensionality of that. We have the vertical, letting yourself be as energetic as possible, and then also the wideness, the effectiveness, so that you can ripple out into expansion.

Daphne: I like thinking of effectiveness as rippling out. I like that visual. That's how I'm thinking of it from now on. I normally would think about checking the boxes.

Katie: I think everybody wants to connect and wants to be able to have a positive impact on the people they care about and the people they're working with, and I think that's what we're up to.

Daphne: I totally agree. All right, well, here's what we're up to for today. We're talking about what I call the "Big O" in goal setting, also known as *obstructions*.

Katie: Oh.

Daphne: Hold on. And what you can do about it.

Katie: Oh, great. So we're not just going to say, "Here's a problem."

Daphne: No, not at all. This comes from the work of Dr. Gabriele Oettingen.

Katie: Whose name begins with an *O*.

Daphne: How ironic. I didn't even put that together. She came up with this idea of what she calls *mental contrasting with implementation intentions*. What? What the hell does that mean? Well, don't worry. We're going to explain it.

Katie: That sounds very fancy.

Daphne: It's very fancy. MCII is the acronym. Mental contrasting with implementation intentions. I think there's a critical part of her work that I was just so taken in by, which is this obstruction idea to allowing us to reach our goals, which I don't think anybody is really talking about.

Katie: No, I think this is new stuff. I've read about this, so I'm really happy that we're talking about it, because it fits with our transformational model that we call FACT, *facing, accepting, choosing,* and *taking action*, and it incorporates some very cool stuff. So stay tuned. We have some very wonderful stuff to talk about today.

Daphne: Well, okay. We'll get on with it right after we do our appreciation. There is a very special person in my life I want to appreciate: my wife Kathy. I have just returned from a very much-needed vacation a couple of weeks ago.

Katie: Yes, and I'm so glad you did that for yourself and for Kathy.

Daphne: Yes, thank you. As many of you know, I graduated from the Masters of Applied Positive Psychology program at the University of Pennsylvania, and I've returned. I really want to appreciate Kathy for all of the support, just unwavering support, that she has given me over the past 10 or 11 months, taking care of so many details in our home, just being one of my unsung heroes, who I'm going to sing about right now. So I'm just really wanting to appreciate her for all the nurturing and caring and support she brings into my life.

Katie: Wonderful. Well, I'm going to appreciate Kathy too, because I had the chance to meet her last fall when I came to teach a seminar and got to stay with you two, and one of the things I so appreciate about Kathy is that she combines fun and effectiveness. Her way of being opens up the possibility for discovery and connection. They say in all of the theories that if you want to have a good life, you want to pick people around whom you feel good. Kathy is one of those people around whom I feel really good, so I really appreciate everything she does and who she is.

Daphne: Well, thank you. I know she's going to love hearing this. So Kathy, both of us love you. There you go. Well, let's get on to talking about these goals. We've talked about goals quite a bit on our shows.

Katie: Well, yeah, because they're important to people. Things like, "Where am I going?"

Daphne: "What am I doing here?"

Katie: "Why am I going there?"

Daphne: Right. So here's the part of this work that I really liked from Dr. Gabriele Oettingen, the part of goal setting that isn't talked about. It's like, "Hey, what could possibly go wrong here?"

Katie: We will often say that. There will be this big audacious goal, and Gay and I will turn to each other and say, "What could possibly go wrong?"

Daphne: Exactly. Nothing. So I'm really excited to talk about this. Some of you may be familiar with the SMART goal format. SMART is an acronym for *specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely*. That's from the work of Locke. You can look up his stuff. It's amazing. He researched goals specifically in organizations. He just would start going up to people and be like, "What are you trying to accomplish?" trying to understand what made some people more effective than others.

I like to call it now SMART-O, because her work has put the *O* in goals. The whole process she uses is called *mental contrasting with implementation intentions*, MCII, but this *O* part, the implementation intentions, is really what I think differentiates her process from positive thinking or visualization, from the original goal construction format, if you will.

Katie: Which is pretty much marching along.

Daphne: Yeah, which is pretty much marching along. When we're marching along, there's one thing we're not prepared for, and it's that...

Katie: The unexpected, which we can pretty much count on.

Daphne: Exactly, and how this really takes us away from being able to accomplish our goals. Probably what I would say, Katie, is more easefully. It doesn't mean we won't.

Katie: Right. I think it also can create a lot of inner turmoil, because so many people expect that that should not happen, and it means there's something wrong with them or something wrong with their strategy rather than, "Of course there are going to be obstacles." We call it the drift and shift model. Drifts are going to happen.

Daphne: Yes, absolutely. Things will come along that can get us off course. I really want to make sure we come back to that drift piece, because a lot of times, and even when I was first reading about this... A lot of times what people talk about with the obstructions that show up is that it's a thing.

This is a real simple one. This is probably not an overly achieving goal, but nevertheless, I said I was going to go to the store tonight, and I came out, and my car had a flat tire. We think of obstructions as sort of that thing, but what you're also talking about, Katie, which I think is so valuable, is this internal drifting that happens. It's not necessarily a physical thing in the world that creates the obstruction. I think that's really a key point here.

Katie: I think it's an incredibly important point, especially for leaders, because it's those internal obstacles that are often invisible. We call them the invisibles. They may not be obvious to others but really do create an obstacle to accomplishing your goal.

Daphne: Totally. So the mental contrasting part is how we sort of come to our decisions about what we want to achieve. We're sort of taking an inventory of, "Here's where I am now, and then here's where I want to be later." One of the key questions she says is to ask ourselves, "How will I feel once I achieve this newly desired state?" It's that feeling part of us that really...

Katie: I'm so glad she adds that, because then that opens the body intelligence aspect of moving toward your goals, which gives you the juice. It's like trying to drive your car, if it's not a hybrid, with no gas.

Daphne: Exactly. Really she makes the point to get us in touch with the emotional part of our choices, our decision making. You know, we did that show a couple of weeks ago about not really knowing what makes us happy, which I think is a good point. I think this at least can get us a little bit closer. "Oh, here's the feeling, and here's what I might experience in terms of my feelings about myself and my situation and that sort of thing."

Katie: It also brings in much more of your sensory experience, which activates many more parts of your brain, makes it more real to you, and might actually bring up other ways to implement and other things you hadn't thought about.

Daphne: Yeah, totally. So I like this mental contrasting part, but the part that got me excited was when I understood what the I-I part meant, the implementation intentions. This is what I really was interested in talking about today, which was how are we going to handle the potential roadblocks that might get in the way of us achieving our goal?

Katie: Right. There are roadblocks. There are speed bumps. There is where the road has caved in.

Daphne: Exactly. The road doesn't seem to exist anymore, and I'm on a dirt road. So this *O* part, this roadblock part, is the if/then planning process.

Katie: That is so valuable, because it also speaks to that stuff is going to happen. It addresses that perfectionist part that almost everybody has lurking inside. I set out toward my goal, and if something goes wrong, then my perfectionist gets all huffy.

Daphne: That's so interesting.

Katie: If I plan for that, like, "Hey, stuff *is* going to go wrong, and if this happens, then..." It's what some people call plan B.

Daphne: I'll speak for myself, Katie. I'm often not prepared for plan B. I think this is one of the reasons this sang to me so strongly. I realized I set these goals for myself, and I don't do a lot of the if/then planning. I don't think about, "Oh, well, this could happen or that could happen. If this

comes up while you're trying to accomplish this goal, what's your plan?" I'm getting so excited right now about talking about the drift part of this.

So let me give an example. Here's my commitment: to exercise every day. That's my commitment, even when I'm traveling, and I travel quite a bit. Katie, you travel too, so you can appreciate it gets kind of weird. You get out of your routine.

Katie: The meeting might go late, and you have to move to a new hotel. I was recently traveling, and I was staying with a friend, but she had mold in her house. That was an obstacle. I had to move to a hotel.

Daphne: Right. What I thought was, "Oh, this traveling is what's really stopping me from exercising."

Katie: That's a good one.

Daphne: That's a really good one, isn't it? But what I realized was, "No, here's the deal. What's the obstruction? What's the thing that's getting in the way?" Well, the thing that gets in the way is whether I will have workout space available. Sometimes you stay in a hotel... I was in Houston. First of all, it was like 110 degrees, but there were just no good places to go for a walk.

Katie: And you wouldn't want to.

Daphne: And I wouldn't want to, exactly. And unfortunately, this place where I was staying had this workout facility that was like five by five.

Katie: With one bicycle that went ka-ching, ka-ching.

Daphne: Exactly. It wasn't a nice setup. What I realized was it isn't about the traveling. If the workout space is becoming... You know, will I have good access? There are obviously things I could do to plan for that. You know, don't choose a place that doesn't have a good workout space. But more so, was there a way I could set things up so I could work out no matter where I was?

Katie: That's a wonderful creative way of responding to a potential obstacle.

Daphne: Yes. I love yoga when given the opportunity to do it, so I got a travel yoga mat. It goes with me in my suitcase, and now I could be anywhere, and I can take that thing out and do my yoga routine. Problem solved.

Katie: Problem solved. That's a great example. It's one that I have moved to over the years also. I have equipment I always travel with. Sometimes the workout space may be grotesque and I don't want to touch anything in it, so I bring things with me so I can have a really good workout no matter.

Daphne: Especially if something is grotesque.

Katie: I don't know where that one came from. That seems like decades old.

Daphne: I like it, though. I liked it a lot. I'm bringing that back. It's grotesque. Do not work out in a grotesque space. Okay, so we can think of these as sort of the physical world things that can show up, if you will. We were kind of giggling about that it was my traveling that was the issue with my exercising. Katie, I think this is a perfect time to bring up the...what did you call it?

Katie: The invisibles.

Daphne: The invisibles. These sort of psychic, for lack of a better word, things we have that go on in us. *Resistance* would be another way to talk about it. But these things that can go on inside of us internally that create obstruction. I think it's a perfect time to talk about drifting and what that whole thing is.

Katie: Yeah, drifting. I think one of the things I really like about her model is that you're making a space for the drifts. You're making a space for the obstacles, and you're actually rehearsing how to include obstacles rather than seeing them as something wrong. Drifts, those kinds of internal things that happen... I think there are a couple of really big ones that happen for leaders.

One is internal criticism. That comes in all kinds of varieties, but it's basically, "I'm not going to do it well enough." That one can come up for people at any place along the goal, and it's also part of what we consider the upper limit problem. You may be moving on track toward your goal, and then you're just being too successful for that inner critic, and the inner critic will bring up something.

Daphne: Totally.

Katie: Like, "Did you proofread that sufficiently?"

Daphne: How about this one? "You had two huge emails you needed to send out yesterday. You sent them out, but both of them had two pretty important mistakes in them."

Katie: Yes, two pretty important mistakes, and you had to send out that "Sorry, correction" email that's such a bummer.

Daphne: Totally my life. Yes, yesterday. It was fantastic. It was great. I was giggling at myself. But yeah, I think these are the places we can also look and kind of plan for. "Okay, when I start criticizing myself..."

Katie: Right. "When I start criticizing myself, or when I start looking for distractions..." I think that's one of the other very important ones for people to count on. You *are* going to distract yourself.

Daphne: Totally. "If I'm working on this and I find myself on Facebook, or I find myself watching two hours of television, then..."

Katie: Which you've already seen.

Daphne: Yeah, reruns. Absolutely. I love that you're bringing in those drifts, because I think that's sort of the underlying part of all of this around these obstructions.

Katie: For me, it's been such a valuable way of befriending myself. You know, stuff is going to happen. Mistakes are going to happen. I *am* going to drift, and how can I plan for that so I can keep moving toward my goal in a way where I'm not killing myself?

Daphne: The other piece of this... The word that just popped up was *compassion*. I can be compassionate toward myself.

Katie: Yes. Also what we teach people is to notice the drift and make the shift. It's not notice the drift, beat up on yourself, then get really sorry for yourself and go raid the refrigerator, and then feel terrible, and then maybe make the shift. We call it closing the gap. The sooner you notice the drift and simply make the shift... You're recommitting, like, "Okay, what am I going to do now? What would be the best thing to do that's going to reconnect me to my goal?" Recommitting.

Daphne: Totally. I love that. Not criticizing yourself, and again, honoring that, yeah, these things are going to happen. I'm going to tell myself something. I'm going to criticize myself. I'm going to tell myself, you know, around my exercise goal that I'm not doing it good enough. All kinds of things like that come up. So I set an implementation intention for myself. (I just like saying it, I think.)

Katie: It sounds so important.

Daphne: Doesn't it sound really good, like I'm really super smart?

Katie: You're doing something really valuable.

Daphne: Really, really valuable. But I said if I say that to myself, which comes with sort of my impatience about things. That's one of my ways I drift. I become impatient. So I said, "If I find myself becoming impatient, then I will go back and look at what I have accomplished so far."

Katie: I love that, and I love the whole if/then, because that sets up the noticing the drift and making the shift. You actually plan for your shift. You plan for both of them. "If I do this, then I'm going to do this."

Daphne: Yep, and that's what I do, and so far so good. One of the other things I like about this particular researcher... She has just pristine research. They looked at 94 independent studies where they had implemented implementation planning and found that this step was really one of the keys to the goal attainment process, more so than even using the SMART goal format.

It shielded ongoing goal pursuits from (here's what they actually said) unwanted influences and prevented disengagement from failing courses of action. That's the key. Even when things

weren't going well for people in the moment, when they found out they had this if/then planning, they were able to shift and continue on and stay engaged with what it was they were going to do or change directions.

Katie: That's so beautiful. I love the pre-planning.

Daphne: Totally. So here are four places she says to look, where you can find these potential obstructions. One is *getting started*.

Katie: That used to be a big one for me. I had an inertia problem.

Daphne: Yeah, and that happens for people.

Katie: I would just keep going in the same direction, but actually getting started...ugh.

Daphne: We did our show last week about getting all your stuff written down, what you're committed to and what you're not. You might want to look at getting started. "If I do whatever that thing is I do that stops myself from getting started, then I will do such-and-such." Then, of course, once you get started, *staying on track*.

Katie: Right. Staying on track or getting back on the track when you fall off the track.

Daphne: Exactly. Now here's the third one I thought was so great. *Calling a halt to dead-end goals*, like knowing when to say, "Okay, this is enough." Isn't that great?

Katie: I love that.

Daphne: I think that's really powerful. So you can say, "If *X* occurs, then I will know it is time to let this one go."

Katie: That's so important, because people have stuff hanging off them like barnacles that they haven't let go of.

Daphne: Yes, exactly. I thought that one was so good. Again, a couple episodes ago we talked about, "How do you know when to quit?" I think this is one of the ways you can have a sense of, "If this starts to appear, then I will have a sense." Then last but not least, *overextending oneself*.

Katie: Ah yes.

Daphne: This is a good one, right? If this occurs, if I miss appointments or if so on and so forth, then...

Katie: It's the "so on and so forth" that I think is really... This is just so friendly. I'm really liking this, because I'm actually including those aspects of myself. I'm facing into, "You know, you do that." I've reigned it in some, but I have what I call an "Oh sure" problem. Someone will invite me, and I'll go, "Oh sure" before I even... It just comes out of my mouth. "Oh sure."

Daphne: That's so good. I told you about my approval arm, didn't I?

Katie: No.

Daphne: My approval arm. It would just pop up in meetings. Somebody would be like, "Oh, who wants to take...?" And my arm would be up in the air.

Katie: Oh, got it. It would be like a jack-in-the-box.

Daphne: It was just like it. I'd look up and be like, "Hand, arm, what are you doing?"

Katie: "Hey, get down, get down."

Daphne: Exactly. "Don't worry, we've got this." So you have your "Oh sure" and I have my approval arm. I love it.

Katie: It sounds like this one is an important one for both of us to get our signals when we're overextending.

Daphne: I think so.

Katie: When our spouses start complaining about, "Who are you? I don't recognize you."

Daphne: "Where have you been for 10 months?" "Oh, just reading." Yeah, exactly. I love what you said too, Katie, about this sort of includes all of us. We don't have to hide where we create these obstructions for ourselves, and when we plan for it, we're also taking care of ourselves in a really nurturing way.

Katie: This is what the research says, but even at an experiential level, the greater ease and letting go of vigilance about yourself and being your friend instead of your enemy. Like, "Hey, you know, you do that thing with your arm."

Daphne: And if that happens, then you will retract it very quickly. "Just kidding."

Katie: Or you can say, "Hey, you know, I realized I did my automatic arm thing again, and I want to take a moment to actually consider whether this is something I want to take on." You can be authentic about it.

Daphne: Exactly. That was the practice for many a year. All right, let's get to our invitations to mastery. What can *you* do? Well, first, establish your goal, what your wish is for the future. Go with what is your best outcome if you accomplish this goal. This is that feeling part, getting the body into it. Consider how accomplishing it might make you feel, and then that's when you do your "If *X*, then *Y*," and list one or two...one or two actions is plenty... that you can take to overcome that obstacle if it should show up.

Katie: I love that, because when you do the pre-planning... When you're in the obstacle, you won't know how to get out of it, but then you have your pre-planning, where it says, "If you do this," and you have your little menu. It's a menu for getting unstuck and for getting through the obstacle. You've already planned for it. I really love that.

Daphne: I love it too. I'm glad you like it too, Katie, because I thought, "Oh, we should really talk about this." So use the process, and reconstruct... Maybe there's a goal you're still committed to accomplishing, if you've been stuck on it, and try this process out. See what's been happening. See if this might work for you. That would be one way I'd really play with this. Or maybe you have a new goal you're wanting to accomplish. See if it would work for that, and give it a shot.

Katie: I love that. This just makes me very happy.

Daphne: I love it when you're happy. I'm feeling happy just listening to you. It's contagious. All right, we're going to wrap this show up, but, Katie, we'll do another show.

Katie: Oh yeah, I think this is just so valuable.

Daphne: I do too, and I love how you brought in the drift part of it. I think that's such a key piece of this to get us also understanding that sometimes the obstacles are happening within us, and we can love ourselves for them. All right, we hope you enjoyed this podcast and that you remain more inspired than ever now to go accomplish those goals.

Don't forget to connect with us on social media. Again, we love hearing from you. You can find us on Facebook, and you can find us on Twitter as well, @DaphneScott and @katiethendricks. Katie, do you have another training coming up, by the way? I wanted to make a little space for that.

Katie: Yes, we have our big summer training series coming up at the end of July, where we'll have a three-day, what we call the essentials. It's really based on the big leap and on our work with conscious loving and how to create a really great sense of well-being for yourself, and also how to connect with others effectively.

Then our five-day this summer... We have a five-day in the winter and we have a five-day in the summer, and our five-day is really about conscious loving skills, how to really use those for your own relationship, but also how to use those professionally and really in *any* kind of relationship. So you can go to our website to "Trainings" to find out all about it.

Daphne: Fantastic. And I will have my official online leadership course that will be rolled out at the beginning of August. We're both busy gals, Katie.

Katie: Well, of course. Busy and productive, but having effective fun.

Daphne: Totally effective fun. All right, well, that's it for the end of this show. Keep living a super fantastic leadership life.