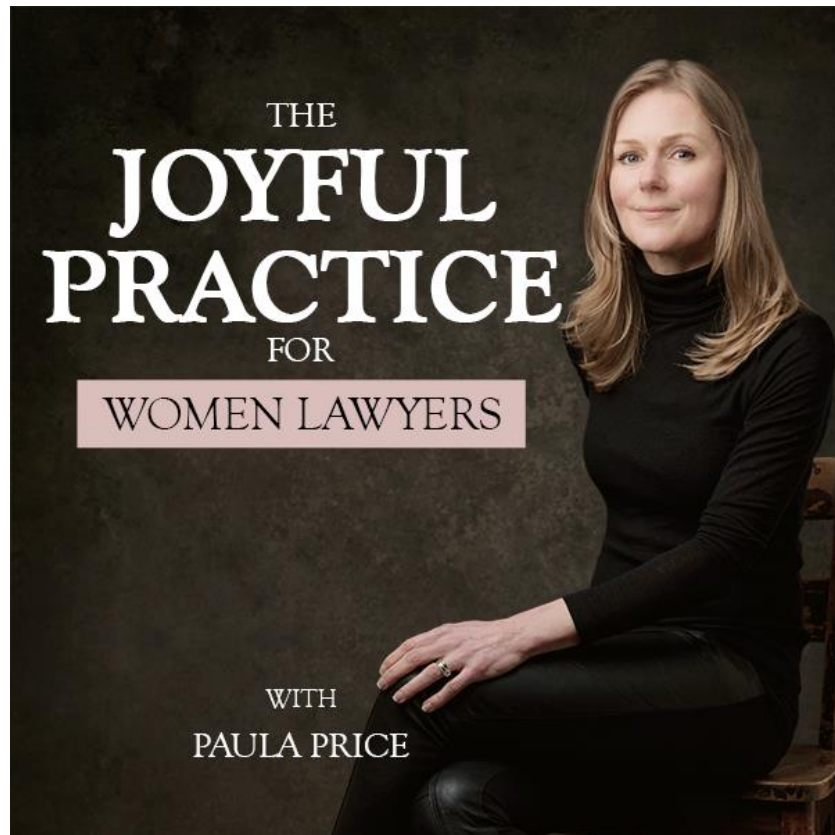


## Ep #6: A Goal Setting Formula to Create What You Want



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Paula Price**

[The Joyful Practice for Women Lawyers](#) with Paula Price

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You're listening to *The Joyful Practice for Women Lawyers* podcast, episode number six.

Welcome to *The Joyful Practice for Women Lawyers* Podcast. I'm your host Paula Price, litigator turned certified executive coach. This podcast was created to empower women lawyers just like you to create a life and practice you love. It's your time away from the daily hustle to focus on taking care of you. To see where you're stuck, figure out what you truly want, and learn coaching tools that will help you define and create success on your own terms.

If you're over the overwhelm, done with putting out fires, and ready to create a life and practice that brings you more joy, you're in the right place. Ready for today's episode? Let's dive in.

Hello, my friends, and welcome back to the podcast. For those of you who are joining for the first time, my name is Paula Price. I'm a lawyer turned certified executive coach and the host of this podcast. It has been such a pleasure recording these podcast episodes for you every week. I'm so glad that you are joining me today. So welcome. Let's get settled in for what I think will be a really useful episode for all of you.

Now before we begin, I just wanted to make a note that at the time of me recording this podcast, we are in sort of late spring. I'm in Vancouver. I just dropped my kids off at school. This is getting very close to the end of the school year. By the time this episode goes live, we will be in summer.

I just wanted to extend a little shoutout to all of you who are listening who are parents who have kids who are school aged. And give you a pat on the back for having gone through your first full academic school year with children during a pandemic. This has looked so different for parents depending on where you're located on this planet. I think for us here in

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Vancouver, we were very lucky. Our children were in school for the full school year physically.

But I know that for some of my colleagues and clients who are in other parts of Canada, you've had a long season of homeschooling and not being able to take your kids to a number of their normal activities. It's hard, I think, when you are trying to do all things under one roof. Maybe you're still at home. You're working at home. Your kids are at home. It's a really tough time.

So I just want to acknowledge all of you parents, all of you who are out there making this happen. I also want to acknowledge all the non-parents because you've had your own challenges as well. I think with this pandemic, and hopefully we're starting to see the end of it, each of us has had our own experiences of living through it, working through it. For each of us, that looks so different. So because it's the end of the school year, I just wanted to send a little shout out.

My children will be coming off school in I guess about a couple of weeks. Two weeks today really it will be our first day of freedom. For me, trying to come up with ideas to entertain them and provide a balance between camps that they will go to and entertaining them myself. So stay tuned to see what that sounds like. I'm not sure what that's going to look like.

Today I started thinking about getting a trampoline. That's something that I really enjoyed as a kid. I didn't have one myself, but I had friends who had trampolines. Getting the trampoline all set up with the sprinkler was a lot of fun. So anyhow, a little bit off topic. Just wanted to send that shout out to all you moms who are getting ready for what summer is going to look like this year.

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Today's topic is about goal setting. If you've been following the podcast, the last couple of episodes that I've talked about were fear last week, and the week before that perfectionism. These were two topics I thought were really important to really talk about early on in the podcast. I think these are foundational issues because they are things that we experience. Most of us experience them at some time or another, but we don't not necessarily have a culture, particularly as lawyers, of talking about these things.

One of the reasons that I am creating this podcast is because I'm trying to create a platform where we can talk about these things, where we can bring these experiences out into the forefront so that we can actually talk about them and find some productive ways to work through them. So these were topics that I really wanted to cover. I think that if you go back to those episodes, I talk about what they look like. I talk about how perfectionism and how fear can hold us back. I also offer some suggestions on how to move forward.

Now, in today's podcast episode, I'm going to offer a very simple formula that you can use that will help you to create your goals going forward. It is a tool that I use myself. It's a tool that I teach clients. What is effective about it is that it helps you to really focus in on what it is that you want, to focus your energy, and to focus on the outcome that you're trying to create. So really just going through this exercise already sets you up for success in terms of achieving what you really want.

So before we do that, I just want to mention that there is a companion worksheet that goes along with this episode. So by the time this episode goes live, you'll be able to go onto the website. So [www.thejoyfulpractice.com/six](http://www.thejoyfulpractice.com/six). That will bring you to this episode. In the notes that follow the recording, the show notes, you'll find a link to a worksheet. So if you like this episode and you want a worksheet, it will

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contain a prompt. It will contain some questions that you can ask yourself so that you can use this tool perhaps more effectively.

If you're listening to this episode in a car as you're driving for example, you may not be able to take note of what's going on. There is a transcript. All the podcast episodes have a written transcript on the website. So if you would rather read a podcast episode instead of listening to it, you're welcome to do that. In particular for this episode, there's a companion worksheet. So you can go in and find that. That way you don't have to worry about taking notes or anything like that.

So with that, I'm going to dive straight in and talk about this goal setting tool. For any of you who have done SMART goals, you will see some similarities between what a SMART goal is and what I suggest. But mine is a little bit different. There's a twist here. I call my system a GREAT! goal. It's "GREAT!". It is a six-part framework, and I'll go through each of those parts with you that follow the acronym "GREAT!".

I'm going to jump straight in. But before I jump in, sorry, I'm not going to jump straight in. Because I'm actually going to invite you to think about something that's going on for you right now, and to mentally plug in as we go through the exercises the answers to those questions for you in relation to that goal.

That goal could be anything. It could be you're sitting at your desk, and you need to send an email, but you're procrastinating on it. You don't really know what to say. Or maybe you're thinking about a health goal. You want to revamp your fitness routine. You're not quite sure what you want that to look like. Maybe you want to have a conversation with somebody about setting up a summer program for your children. Maybe you're about to speak with the nanny and talk about what that's going to look like.

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There could be any number of things that you have on your agenda right now that you want to do, and this goal framework is a very simple way of setting things up. This is something that I use all the time in my practice when I'm about to write and email, for example, before recording today's podcast, when I'm about to give a presentation, when I'm planning maybe a long-term goal. I use this framework before it helps me identify what it is that I'm doing, why it's important, what I need to do, and then at the end of it I can go back and see whether I've done those things.

So I recommend for this "GREAT!" goal format to have a piece of paper. I use a really small square of paper. I've got these little notepads that I use, and that is just about the right size for me because it's small and I can then tape it somewhere where I can see it. I like doing that. You will find your own ways of using this framework that work for you. Absolutely I recommend writing it down somewhere, going through that exercise.

So let's start with G, the first piece of the six-part framework which is goal. You're going to set up a goal. There are so many different types of goals that you can set up for yourself. There are goals that are stretch goals, goals that are outside of your comfort zone that you know are going to require that you try a whole bunch of new things. That you're going to risk failure. That you're going to really have to overcome a few challenges along the way. There's that kind of goal.

There's a wonderful expression about stretch goals. I think it is attributed to Hal Elrod, who's a gentleman who wrote a book called *The Morning Miracles*. He says when you create a goal, it's not so much the attainment of the goal that is important. It's the person that you become in trying to attain that goal. So I really like stretch goals for that reason. You can call them impossible goals. You can call them stretch goals. I think there's another expression out there. I'm forgetting what it is, but it's like the big scary whatever goal. There's that kind of goal.

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Then there are the goals that are a little bit less stretchy, the more attainable goals. So maybe the goal is writing the email, or the goal is completing your workout, or the goal is recording a podcast. Maybe that's me. Your goal might be getting the brief, speaking to the chamber's application. There's all sorts of goals that you might be setting up that are in your day that are not necessarily stretch goals, but they're important. They're things that you want to get done.

So I just want to acknowledge here that there's a wide range of goals that you can set for yourself. You can use this framework for, I think, pretty much any of them. I've used it for all sorts of different exercises, and so have my clients. So identify what that goal is.

Now, the important thing here when you're setting up a goal is to create a goal where at the end of this exercise, at the end of your work, you'll be able to look back and say, "Yes, I did that." So it might be really simple. If you're saying I want to send the email to opposing counsel or I want to finish drafting this side of contracts, you'll know when you're done. Some goals are not that obvious.

So, for example, if your goal is I want to feel more confident when I go into this meeting. The goal might be a little bit ambiguous, but you can actually help yourself to give some granularity to a goal like that by using some tools.

So one tool that I would offer in that regard would be if it's a feeling that you're going after, you want to feel more confident, then I would rate yourself. I would say, "Okay, I want to feel an eight out of ten in terms of confidence when I go into that meeting." So that might be a way for you to then be able to check back and say, "Yes, I actually did feel an eight out of ten. Or no, I did not feel an eight out of ten."

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The idea here is you want to be able to set something up for yourself that you can actually measure. If you're familiar with SMART goals, if you're not you can google it. There's all sorts of material on the internet about them. The SMART goal asks that you have a specific measurable goal, and I think we can include that in our G. Create something that is specific and measurable, something that you'll know at the end of it whether or not you've achieved it. So that's number one. You'll want to write goal, and then your goal next to it.

The next step, step two, is the reason. This is probably, well, I think they're all important. But this one is really what will drive you as you work towards your goal, which may be more necessary depending on how big and how long it's going to take you to reach your goal. When you ask yourself the reason, I would encourage you to use the language, "what is important to me about this goal"?

I would like to share that when I was going through my coaching training, I went to Royal Roads. It's a university in British Columbia, the province where I live. We learned all sorts of coaching tools. I think the one that stood out the most to me that I use often with my clients is asking the question, "What is important to you about X?"

That question has the power to really elicit in the mind of the person who's being asked that question some really amazing answers to what really is important to them. It really helps them to identify what matters in relation to a specific goal. So I encourage you to ask yourself what is important to me about this goal? You can also ask yourself why it is that you want to do this thing? It has a little bit of a different impact. It's still a very effective question.

When you ask yourself this question—what is the reason, what's so important to me, why am I doing this—what you might find is that the first



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answer that you offer yourself is kind of not all that inspiring. So, for example, if you have an email to send, it might be the first answer is, “Well, I want to send the email because when I send the email, I get to leave. I get to leave the office for the day. Or I said I’d send the email by the end of today.

Often, that is the first thing that pops up in my mind. If, for example, I’m creating an outline for a presentation, for example, I might say, “Well, why am I doing this? What’s the reason behind this? What’s important to me about this? Well, I said I would do it. I said I would do this thing.” Which may be perfectly true, but it may not be the most inspiring reason to be working towards something.

If you start to dig a little bit deeper, then you start to get to some really good answers. So if you ask yourself that question—what’s important to me about this—then you might start to think, “Well, this is a way of sharing information with others that is really important. It has the potential to have significant impact on the lives of others.

Maybe if you’re looking at an email that’s going off to opposing counsel. The import of that message is, “Well, my client has an interest that they have asked me to represent them in respect of. It’s my duty to put that message forward. It’s my duty to paint that in the best light possible.” Fill in the blanks depending on the situation that you’re in. Maybe it’s an email. Maybe you’re trying to build a relationship with somebody. Maybe it’s a networking type of email.

Maybe you’re thinking, “Well, I’m writing this email because I’m trying to build my network.” That might be your first response. But if you go deeper, it might be that you’re looking to form connections with likeminded professionals who you can build long term relationships with where there may be opportunities for collaboration, where there may be opportunities to

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create more impact down the road. So whatever it is for you, I would invite you to ask yourself under that R what is the reason? What is important to you about this goal?

Moving on to the third element of this framework. E stands for energy. That's right, energy. This is where, I think, this framework really departs from something like a SMART goal framework. Because what I'm inviting you to consider is the energy that you're going to bring towards your goal. I mentioned in an earlier podcast, I think it's episode number one and possibly others. I talk about having a bad day, how to turn it around.

One of the things that I think is really important there is to get in touch with your emotions, which is something I know when I was a lawyer I was not doing. I really wasn't focusing on my emotions. It was something that didn't really fit into the calculus of logic and facts for me. You may be different. To me, emotions and energy are an area where there is so much leverage. I think it's totally underutilized. So what I'm suggesting here is that you be intentional about the kind of energy that you want to bring to your goals.

Now, I thought of an example in preparing for today that I experienced as a lawyer. This was not necessarily intentional. I wasn't using this framework at that time. But it was a discipline that going to court had on me. When I was a student in law school and before that, I used to really take an all-nighter approach to preparing for big things. I remember when we had a factum assignment in law school, for example. My partner and I, we wrote these in pairs. I think we were up all night. I don't think we slept that night. We managed to get our factum in just in time.

When I prepared for exams, I would get up early. I would really study. I would stay up really late the night before, and I would show up probably looking like a truck had run over me several times. But that was the strategy that I used to get things done.

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When I started working as a lawyer, and particularly on days that I was going to court, I knew that I had to be on my game the following day. I knew I had to show up in a way that I was able to present and argue and process information on the spot, on the fly. That I couldn't show up looking like I hadn't slept. That wasn't really what I was going for.

So when I had court applications, I developed a discipline of doing things ahead of time. I developed a discipline of shutting things down. I'd still prepare until relatively late in the evening, but I wouldn't deprive myself of sleep. I always made a priority of resting. What I was doing there was really focusing on the energy that I wanted to bring with me into the courtroom.

Now, in terms of energy I was thinking about it from the perspective of presentation. What I was thinking about and what I think we can all do here is to think about the energy that you want to bring to the goal that you're serving. So, for example, if the goal is showing up in court, maybe the energy that you want to bring to that is confidence, clarity, calmness. That feeling of authority. There might be a number of energy descriptions, and I encourage you to write all of these down, that set a framework for how you want to show up.

If what you're doing is reaching out to somebody in a networking capacity, you might think about the energy that you want to bring to that conversation. Maybe it's warmth. It's curiosity. It's friendliness. It's confidence. Whatever it is that you're about to do, there is a certain energy that you're going to want to bring to some element of that goal. What I would invite you to do and what I would encourage you to do is once you've written down the energy that you want to feel or the energy that you want to bring to that goal is to start practicing that right now.

So if you're preparing for court, for example. I know that preparing for court can get kind of sweaty, right? There's a lot of moving parts. There's the

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paperwork. There's the presentation. There's the speaking. There's the thinking about who else is going to be there. There's a lot that is going on.

I would invite you to use your goal energy, whatever it is that you've described. If it's confidence, authority, calmness to start practicing that well before you ever set foot in the courtroom when you're working on that goal. Because I believe that the energy that you have throughout that process is the energy that you're to bring when you are executing on that goal.

So energy is the third step. I think it's really important. It's something that I think is easy to overlook. I know I didn't really factor that into my goal planning ever really until I started coaching. I learned just how impactful it could be if you started to leverage that in your favor.

So the next item. So item four is actions. I think this is where we're all a little bit more comfortable in terms of goal setting. This idea of creating a list of action steps that you need to take to reach your goal. I know all of you are familiar with that. You're lawyers. You're practicing. You've got a number of things going on. This should be, I imagine, very familiar to you. So what I'd recommend doing here is brainstorming and thinking about all the action steps that you need to take in order to reach your goal.

This came up a lot for me. For example, I did a lot of research and writing when I was a lawyer. There were a number of action steps that I would take. So I would have a list of all the different steps that I needed to take that stood between me where I was in the moment and delivering a final product. I would encourage you to do the same. Think about what that roadmap looks like. What are each of the steps that you need to take? I would encourage you to break them down into the smallest steps possible.

Now, you might not do this on your initial note paper. If you've got a small square paper, which is what I do, you will not have room for all the action

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steps that are required for a large task. Whenever you write those down, I encourage you to get pretty granular about that. Because that will make it easier as you start working towards your goal.

Well, I should say maybe I'm speaking for myself, but there's nothing more satisfying than taking an item off your to do list. I find that to be really rewarding, especially if it's something that was really challenging. So think about what those action steps are. If you're preparing for a court hearing, for example, what are the steps that you need to take to get there? Itemize all of them so that you have your roadmap, you know exactly what you need to do. Now you're just following your own instructions. When you're doing with them, then you've managed to reach the end.

So those are the action steps. I just wanted to pause and acknowledge all the solicitors that may be listening. I hear you. I see you. I apologize that most of my examples come from a litigation background. That's what I did as a lawyer. So that tends to be the first thing that comes to mind. But I do work with solicitors. I do recognize that you have your own unique challenges. And hopefully as I progress in my podcasting skills, I will try to be more fluid in the nature of the examples that I share. So thank you for that. So yeah. That wraps up really our actions is to create that very granular road map of what you need to do to give life to your goals.

Another thing that you might also think about with your action steps is to create your actions in a way that delivers a result. So thinking about what each deliverable is along the way can be a helpful way to know that you're producing. So it might be, for example, writing a memo. Then it might be gather facts, then it's write the first draft, then it's review the first draft, then it's finalize the first draft, then it's add the authorities, add the hyperlinks. Whatever that process looks like to you. It will look different for everybody.

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But I recommend doing that so that you have this nice checklist that you can go to after the fact and check those items off the list and feel like you've done what it is you need to do. Those are all the things that are within your control. I should also note here that when you are creating your action list, you really are focusing on the things that are within your control.

There are things that are outside your control. Those don't really belong on your action list. Maybe you nudging somebody or reaching out to somebody, trying to communicate with others. You want your action items to be things that you can do.

That brings us to the fifth part of our framework, which is time. I'd invite you to look at time from two perspectives. The first perspective is to look at the deadline. So if you've got a closing on a certain date there—I think I'm making this more relatable, or I'm hoping I'm making this more relatable to my solicitor friends.

If you've got a closing on a certain date, if you've got a filing on a certain date, you know that there's a deadline that is coming up. You can schedule your action items, for example, to fall on certain days to help you get ready for those filings, those big dates that are coming up. So there may be a timeframe where that is sometime in the future.

The other way I'd like you, and I think we're all familiar with that. It's really setting deadlines for your goals, for your deliverables. The other way of looking at time is to think about how long you're going to spend on each item or how long you're going to be on that goal. This can be really, really helpful if what you're doing is hard.

I use this sometimes when I'm speaking, for example. Not because I don't love speaking, but because it gives me a boundary. It allows me some comfort that if I am finding it hard, it's not going to go on for several hours.

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It might just be an hour here. Or maybe it is several hours. It allows me to wrap my head around what it's going to look like.

This can be particularly helpful if you're going to have a difficult conversation. If you're calling counsel on the other side of a file and you are anticipating a difficult discussion, you might ask yourself ahead of time how long is this conversation realistically going to take me? Maybe it's five minutes. Maybe it's 20 minutes. But if you're able to give yourself a timeframe, you know that you can go in. You can do this hard thing. It's going to have a container on it. It's not going to last forever. That can provide a lovely sense of comfort going into it. It helps you feel more in control. It helps contextualize the thing that you're about to do.

So I'd invite you to look at not just the timeline—when is this thing due, when is it a deliverable—but also how long am I going to do this? This may also be of interest if what you're doing is not necessarily time bound or if it's working on a longer timeframe. If what you're wanting to do, for example, is maybe it's a health goal. I like health goals because those are ongoing. We continue no matter where you start. It's like brushing your teeth. You don't brush your teeth, and then say, "That's it. I'm done brushing my teeth for the rest of my life." It's a practice. It's something that you need to keep up.

So when you're looking at these longer-term goals, things that are going to be ongoing, I would invite you to think about how you want to set that up for yourself. How you want to think about time in relation to your goals. So maybe that means I'm going to spend the next two months focused on a particular thing. Maybe it's building confidence in the way that you interact with others in your office. Maybe it's two months because at the end of that, you've got a deadline. Maybe it's two months that you're implementing a new time keeping system or a time management system.

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Whatever it is, if it has a bit of a fluid goal or a fluid timeline, I'd invite you to set one for yourself and then make that an event. So now you're looking at, "Okay, I'm going to test out this new strategy for the next two months. Then I'm going to revisit and see how things are going.

That brings us to the last part of the framework. That is the exclamation point. The exclamation point is a catch all question that comes at the end. Once you've gone through this exercise, you've outlined your goal. You've identified your reason for wanting to accomplish this goal. You've decided on the energy that you want to bring to the goal. You've set out all the action steps that you see necessary to attain that goal, and you've thought about the time in terms of when it's due and how much time you want to spend on it.

Now you're at the end, and I would invite you to think about what's missing here. What isn't captured in these questions that you think is important about this goal? What I have found with this question is it sometimes produces some of the most wonderful answers because at the end of it you're thinking about your goal. You're thinking about why it's important. You're thinking about the steps that it's going to take to get there. Sometimes those are the most impactful responses that you're going to come up with.

Often, for me, when I use it, it's a reason that I hadn't thought about when I first wrote down the reason at step two. I would encourage you to do the same process and see what comes up for you as well.

So those are the tools my friends. Super excited to share those with you. I hope that you're able to, like I said, use this in a way that is simple. That you can use it for big goals. You can use it for small goals. If you're about to sit down and have a difficult conversation, what are your goals for that conversation? It's just a really great way to get focused, to get your energy



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straight, and to be more intentional about how you go about creating that result for yourself.

So if you liked this goal setting framework, there is going to be a downloadable PDF for you. It's going to be available on the website. So I invite you, again. That's [www.thejoyfulpractice.com/six](http://www.thejoyfulpractice.com/six). You can find the resources there. I would also encourage all of you who enjoy the podcast, if you enjoy listening to it, I would invite you to please subscribe to the podcast. I would love to hear from you. I would love if you would leave a review for the podcast. I'd love to know what you like and topic areas that you would like me to discuss. It would be absolutely fantastic.

So, once again, thank you to everybody who has tuned in today. Go out there. Create some goals. I'd love to hear what goals you're creating for yourselves. I'll look forward to tuning in again and connecting with you next week. Bye for now.

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