

You 2.0: WOOP, WOOP!

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Growing up in Germany, psychologist [Gabriele Oettingen](#) was not surrounded by people who spoke explicitly about their dreams and ambitions.

“When I came to America, it was wonderful because people always said, ‘Yes, do it. Yes, that’s possible. Yeah, OK, this is a good idea. Why don’t you do it?’ Whereas back in Europe, people were more cautious and said, ‘You know, are you sure you want to do this? Are you sure this is possible?’ So I was really happy to come to America because people were just sort of encouraging whatever idea you had.”

But Oettingen’s research has found downsides to this mentality.

“Positive fantasies and daydreams, as pleasurable they are, they have a problem when it comes to fulfilling our wishes and attaining our goals.”

Through the years, Oettingen has studied dieters, students, job seekers, love seekers, people recovering from physical injuries, and other strivers. She’s found they all have something in common: Those who have stronger, more positive fantasies about reaching their goals are actually *less likely* to achieve them. They lose fewer pounds, earn worse grades, receive fewer job offers, stay lonely longer, recover from injury more slowly.

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