

## The Power of Creating S.M.A.R.T. Goals

*Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time Sensitive*

Setting, writing, and tracking goals can be one of the most powerful tools you have to attain personal and professional success. When your goals are in writing, they become more real than if they remain only in your mind. Tracking goals provides you with a sense of accomplishment when met. When setting your goals, use the following five guidelines to prioritize and develop SMART goals.

1. **Be Specific** - A goal that is described in specific terms has a much greater chance of being accomplished than one described in general terms. Answering the following six questions can help to create a goal that is specific.

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| <b>Who</b>   | Who is involved?   |
| <b>What</b>  | What needs to be accomplished?                                   |
| <b>Where</b> | Identify a specific location.                                    |
| <b>When</b>  | Establish a time frame.  |
| <b>Which</b> | Identify requirements and constraints.                           |
| <b>Why</b>   | Specific reasons, purpose or benefits of accomplishing the goal. |

**EXAMPLE:** A general goal would be, "Get in shape." But a specific goal would say, "Join the ABC health club and workout 3 days a week for a minimum of an hour."

2. **Make it Measurable** - Establishing concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of each goal you set will help you to measure your progress, and stay on track to meet your target dates.

To determine if your goal is measurable, ask the question: "How will I know when my goal is accomplished?" Some goals are harder to measure than others. For those difficult goals, ask yourself, what will things look like when your goal is accomplished.

**EXAMPLE:** Your goal may be to get more organized. How do you measure this? Ask yourself what being organized will look like. It could be that all papers are filed each Friday in the correct folder. So you would measure each Friday if you have accomplished your goal.

3. **Goal is Attainable** - When you identify and prioritize your goals, you begin to figure out ways to accomplish them. You will develop the energy level for attainability including: attitudes, abilities, and skills to reach them. You can accomplish most goals you create when you develop a plan. Goals that may have seemed unattainable eventually move closer and become attainable. When you list your goals you build your self-image and develop the traits, personality and habits to achieve your goals.
4. **Make it Realistic** – A realistic goal must represent an objective that you are both *willing* and *able* to work towards. Be sure that every goal represents substantial progress. A high goal is often easier to reach than a low one because a low goal exerts low motivational force. Some of the hardest jobs you ever accomplished actually seemed easy because you were fully engaged in the process.

Your goal is probably realistic if you truly *believe* that it can be accomplished. Additional ways to know if your goal is realistic is to ask yourself if you have accomplished anything similar in the past or what conditions would have to exist to accomplish this goal.

5. **Create Time Sensitivity** – Goals should be grounded within a time frame. The lack of a time frame provides no sense of urgency in accomplishing the goal. If you want to lose 20 lbs, when do you want to lose it by? If you anchor the goal within a timeframe, "by June 30th", then you've set your unconscious mind into motion to begin working on the goal.

## TIPS

Now that you understand how to develop S.M.A.R.T goals, it is time to start putting them down in writing to make them concrete and real.

1. Complete the **Personal and Business Goals** worksheet. When developing goals, make sure that they are stated in the positive not negative.

**EXAMPLE:** Stated positive: *"I will be on time for all appointments"* versus stated negative: *"I will not be late for any appointments"*

*Hint:* Having a hard time with personal goals? Think about areas in your personal life that are significant to you such as family and home, spiritual, social, cultural, physical, and mental/educational.

2. Determine the action steps needed to get to your goal and when they need to be completed. Which ones do you need to accomplish before others.

**EXAMPLE:** "Join the ABC health club and workout 3 days a week for a minimum of an hour." The steps needed for this goal may be to: purchase workout clothes and shoes, and schedule time in your calendar 3 days a week.

3. Tracking your progress is the final step. Create a habit of asking yourself daily, are the decisions you are making getting you closer or further from your goals. Getting to your goals is about choice, your choice. The more you remind yourself of your ultimate goals, and make the choice to move in the direction of attaining the goal, the more likely you will be successful.

*Hint:* A good reminder tool for your goals is put them down on paper or an index card and carry them with you so you can reference them on a continual basis.



### Recommended Reading

The Success Principals, by Jack Canfield

Eat That Frog, by Brian Tracy

Goals!, by Brian Tracy