

GOAL SETTING

Every single decision and action you've taken up to this very moment was a direct result of your choices and your actions. Goal setting is a powerful process for thinking about your ideal future, and for motivating yourself to turn your vision into a reality. The process of goal setting helps you choose where you want to go in life. Properly set goals can act as a road map for us, helping us to determine our priorities, get organized and to make big decisions. By knowing precisely what we want to achieve, or where we want to go, we know where we have to concentrate our efforts and what we have to do. But how do you properly set goals?

The first step is to simply take some time to decide what direction you want your life to take. Everyone has goals, whether we know it or not. Make sure your goals are something you really want, not just something that sounds good. After giving it some careful thought, it's time to write out the plan. When it comes to goals, an easily remembered acronym is S.M.A.R.T.

S – Specific/ Simple
M – Measurable
A – Attainable
R – Realistic/ Relevant
T – Time bound

Your goals should meet the criteria of the “SMART” goals. You want to make sure they are specific and simple, outlining the how? the what? the when? and the why?

You want to make sure they are measurable. You want to make sure the goal has criteria for measuring progress so you stay on track, reach your target dates, and experience the exhilaration of achievement that spurs you on to continued effort required to reach your goal. Plan your steps wisely and establish a time frame to carry out those steps.

Realistic means “do-able”. A goal must represent an objective toward which you are both *willing* and *able* to work. Your goal is probably realistic if you truly believe that it can be accomplished. Be sure to set goals that you can attain with some effort! Too difficult and you set the stage for failure, but too low sends the message that you aren't capable. Set the bar high enough for a satisfying achievement!

Is your goal relevant to your purpose in life? You want to create goals that are in-line with your personal mission statement or your purpose in life. Relevant goals ensure that you are dedicating your effort towards goals that are focused towards who you are as a person.

Every goal that you create must be time-sensitive in nature. Not having a time element attached to your goal breeds procrastination, there's no sense of urgency. If you don't set a time the commitment is too vague. We would simply be motivated to put the goal off for a later time and never get around to it. Goals must have definite starting points and ending points and milestones along the way.

By spending time making sure your goals meet the SMART criteria, you will benefit by ensuring your success.