

Resolve to Be SMART

Let this be the year you reach your goals

We all want great things to happen in our lives, and while miracles do occur, we usually have to put in some effort to get what we want.

Setting goals is one way to bring about the differences and improvements that add more balance, joy, peace, and happiness to our lives. Whether it's because of weight loss or financial gain, the ultimate value from setting goals is in how you feel as a result.

So let's begin there. What are some of the emotions and feelings you want to have more of in your life? Compassion? Enthusiasm? Courage? Confidence? Optimism? Once you understand the feelings you value, you can develop the goals that will support you and your emotions.

This is where it pays to be SMART. I don't mean intelligent, though it does help to know a little bit about what you will be doing. What I'm referring to, however, is the SMART way to set goals.

First, get a piece of paper and a pen. Or your PC keyboard. Why? Because when you write your goals down, you are more likely to commit to them, and then they are more likely to happen. When your list is complete, whether you have one or 12 goals, how many of these elements are included?

- S = Specific. What do you want? If you're vague, neither you nor your support system will be clear on what you want. Use words that describe the goal in concrete terms.
- M = Measurable. How will you know if you are making progress, or when your goal has been achieved? Measurements are usually noted as a number, e.g. 15% reduction, 3 fewer days, \$7000 increase. When you have a target, you can see the bull's eye.
- A = Achievable. How reasonable is your goal? Even if you are stretching outside your comfort zone, which I recommend, be reasonable about what is do- able. You can always adjust if circumstances arise that cause a shift in your plans.
- R = Results-oriented. Is your goal consistent with other goals? Or does it compete and put you in the position of choosing one over another? What about how you want to feel? Don't forget to take that into consideration. Are you smiling or frowning as you write the goal?
- T = Time-based. When do you want to complete your goal? Two months? Mid-year? Four years from now? It will depend on the extent

of the goal, available resources, and how you manage any setbacks. Like your Measurement, your Timeline gives you a target on which to focus.

Would you like an example of a SMART goal? Here's one of mine.

To respect my body and to feel more energized, I will drink a minimum of 32 ounces of water every day to hydrate my skin and flush my body's toxins. (Note: Combined with the milk, OJ, coffee, tea fruit, and other foods I already drink and eat, I'll make it to the 64 ounces of fluids that are recommended daily.)

Setting SMART goals has always worked for me. Write them down. Tell someone, as I just told each of you. Measure your progress. Celebrate your tiny steps and your giant leaps.

Then watch what happens!

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