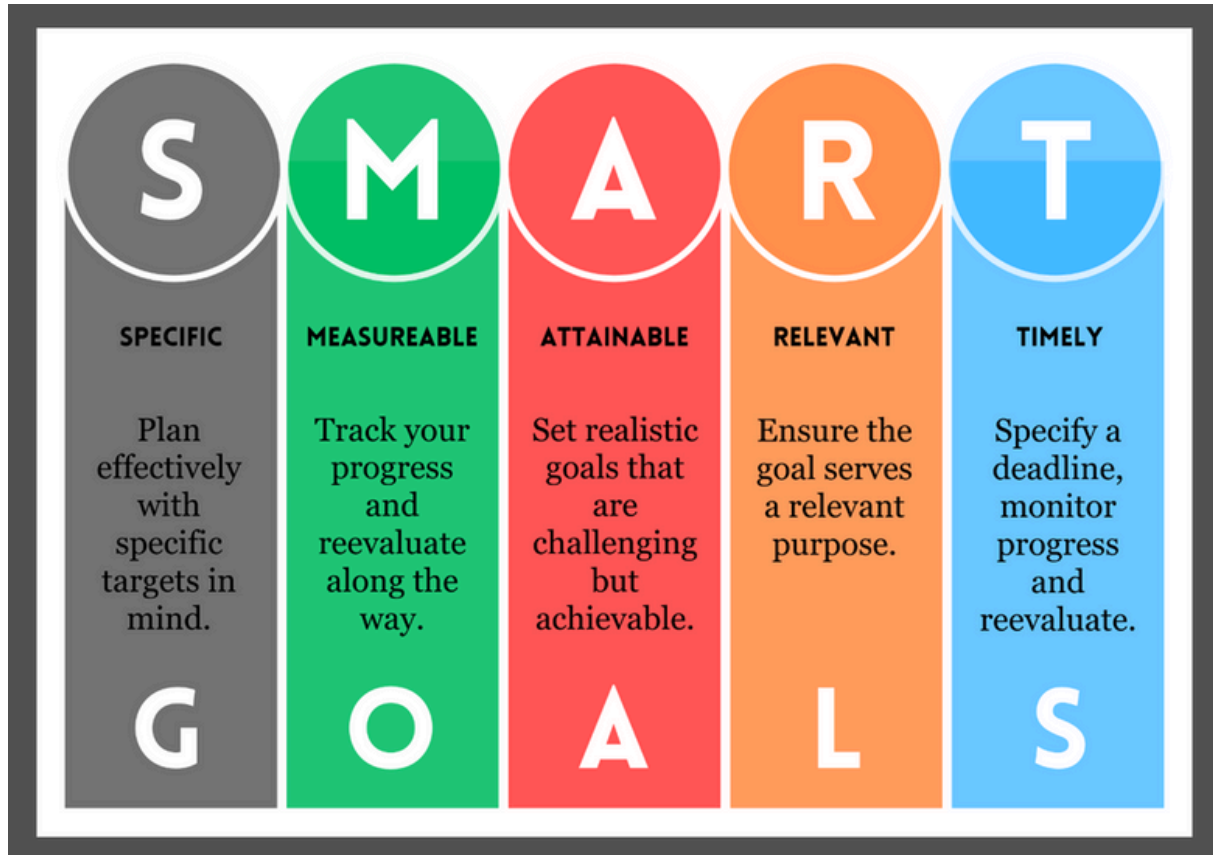


SMART GOALSETTING



A SMART goal is a framework used to formulate and manage goals effectively by ensuring they are clearly defined and attainable within a certain timeframe. This process helps identify any misalignments between priorities and resources, providing a structured approach to goal setting. By working through each aspect of a SMART goal, one can avoid the common pitfalls of setting vague or unrealistic objectives.

SMART goals offer a focused aim, much like hitting a bullseye on a target, which increases the likelihood of success. They clearly specify both what needs to be achieved and when, ensuring that your goals are realistic, measurable, and trackable. This allows for timely adjustments and a clear pathway to celebrate achievements upon completion.

Creating a SMART goal starts with deciding on what you want to accomplish, and then addressing each letter in the SMART acronym. It is very important that your goal centers on the outcome and not a routine or set of behaviors. A SMART goal needs to achieve something specific.

S	Specific	What do you want to accomplish? What specific outcome do you want to achieve?
M	Measureable	How will you measure your success? What type of data will you include? How will you evaluate it, and how frequently will you check?
A	Attainable	Do you have all the necessary skills and resources to achieve this goal? If not, can you obtain them?
R	Relevant	Is this goal aligned with your other goals?
T	Timely	What is the timeframe for achieving this goal?

To write a SMART goal, simply define each component in the SMART acronym. Go in order, and ensure that your proposed goal is specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely. If it doesn't meet each of these criteria, slowly refine the goal until it does.

Step by Step SMART Goal Setting Guidance

1. **Specific.** Ensure Your Goal Is Specific

Think about this step as the mission statement for your goal. Focus on an outcome you want to achieve, not just a set of practices you want to implement. Be as specific as possible. To do this, try to answer the following five "W" questions):



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- **What** do I want to accomplish? Dive into the details and get as granular as possible.
- **Why** is this goal important?
- **Who** needs to be involved?
- **Where** is it located? This question may not always apply, but if there's a location or relevant event your goal is tied to, identify it here.
- **Which** resources are involved?

Consider also how you feel about the goal you are setting. Are you excited by it? Is the goal challenging enough to spark your interest and motivate you? If you do not feel strongly about the goal, you likely need to modify/clarify it.

2. **Measurable.** Decide How You Will Measure Your Goal

In this step, decide which metrics you will use to track your progress and to define whether you are successful. Assessing your progress helps you to stay focused, meet your deadlines, and feel the excitement about getting closer to achieving your goal. If your goal will take several months to complete, identify ways that you can reward yourself when you make progress. Incremental rewards for reaching specific subtasks will help motivate you through the entire process.

Allow yourself plenty of time to accomplish complex goals. Set deadlines to apply an appropriate amount of pressure, while keeping things realistic. If you start to feel stressed about meeting your goals, they might be too complex or unrealistic. Reassess both areas and modify the goals if necessary.

3. **Attainable.** Ensure Your Goal Is Attainable

Your goal also needs to be realistic and attainable to be successful. In other words, it should stretch your abilities while remaining possible. An achievable goal will usually answer questions such as:

- How can I accomplish this goal?
- How realistic is this goal, based on other constraints such as financial or technological factors?

4. **Relevant.** Ensure That Your Goal Is Relevant to Larger Objectives

Relevance is checking to make sure the goal matters to you and that it also aligns with other relevant goals. Ideally, your goal will support the other work you're





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doing and serve your long-term goals in some way. If nothing else, it should not detract or divert energy away from goals you're already committed to.

A relevant goal would answer the following questions with a yes:

- Does this seem worthwhile?
- Does this match with my current efforts or needs?
- Is this the right time to pursue this goal?

5. Timely. Give Yourself a Time Limit for Accomplishing Your Goal

Every goal needs a target date so that you have a deadline to focus on and something to work toward. Having a time target helps prevent everyday tasks from taking priority over your longer-term goals. A timely goal will usually answer questions such as:

- When?
- What can I do today?
- What do I need to be doing next week?
- What do I need to be doing two weeks out?

The Power of Words and Phrasing

The words and phrases that you use play a crucial role in achieving your goals. Your brain focuses where your thoughts lead, so keep the following points in mind when defining and writing out your goals:

1.State Goals in the Positive. Focus on what you want to achieve rather than what you wish to avoid. Replace goals like "I want to stop" With positive outcomes. For example, say "I will read for 15 minutes every evening before turning out the light for sleep".

2.Use Present Tense. Frame your goals as if they are already happening to make the change feel inevitable. For instance, "On March 1st I will have \$5,000 saved in my emergency fund", or "On October 31st, I will be running 3 miles per day."

