Developing Attainable Short and Long-Term Goals

Have you ever made a New Year’s Resolution to...

➢ Exercise every day?
➢ Get your grades up?
➢ Keep your room clean?
➢ Not argue with your mom/dad?

The list goes on and on! Well, these and other goals really can be reached if you tackle them with an effective plan.

Want to make a change? Follow the advice of a world-renowned trainer of helping people live highly effective lives: Stephen Covey (maker of Franklin Covey planners). He says to make your goals S.M.A.R.T.

**S.M.A.R.T.**¹:

- **S - Specific:** Write down exactly what you want to do – what you are trying to accomplish.
  *Ineffective goal: Get all A’s
  *Effective goal: Raise math grade from a 50% to a 75% in 2 months*
- **M - Measurable:** Make sure you can check to see if your goals and objectives are being accomplished and to what degree.
  *Example: Each week look to see if your new efforts are causing an increase in your grades. One week, your grade raise to a 54%, the next week it was a 58%.*
- **A - Achievable:** Aim to do things that can be done – don’t set your goals so high to where you feel discouraged if you don’t achieve them.
  *Example: If you have all F’s in your classes, it may be a good start to set the goal of passing all classes and then another goal to get all A’s or B’s once you are passing.*
- **R - Realistic:** Ensure that whatever your goal requires to achieve it, you can do it or get it. If it requires money or is partly based on someone else doing something, you will want to look at the goal to make sure it is realistic.
- **T - Timely:** Set dates and deadlines for each of your goals so that you can remain clear and focused on when tasks related to your goal need to be completed for the goal to be accomplished.
  *Example: Complete math homework first each day; study an extra 30 minutes each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday; etc.*

---

GREAT IDEA: Ask a family member or friend to check on you, bug you, and hold you accountable for achieving your goal. We are much more likely to accomplish our goals if we have others on our side coaching or cheering us along the way. It is your goal to achieve, but people can certainly help you along the way.

What Type of Goal Do You Want to Set?

The two most common types of goals are **Short-Term** and **Long-Term** goals.

**Short-Term Goal**: A goal you are wanting to accomplish soon: i.e. today, tomorrow, this week, month, year

**Long-Term Goal**: A goal you are wanting to accomplish in the future. Usually this type of goal would take 12 months or longer to accomplish.

Oftentimes, a goal could be either short-term or long-term depending upon what you’re wanting to achieve. Having both types of goals in your life is a great way to keep growing as a person and never become stagnant or lazy. It is best to set both types of goals using the S.M.A.R.T. format, but observe these key differences when setting them:

**Short-Term Goals**: Require constant monitoring – check on them daily, a couple times a week, etc. because they are easy to not achieve them if you don’t stay focused on them often.

**Long-Term Goals**: These can change as you meet or don’t meet your short-term goals. Try these tips when setting Long-Term Goals:

1. Write down or even draw how you want your life to be in 1, 2, 5, 10 years (whichever you choose).
2. Work backwards. “Think about what you want to achieve then plan steps going back to what you can do right now.”
3. Decide what you need to do in 1, 2, 3, etc. years to decide what your long-term goals should be.
4. “Write down what you need to do each month to achieve your goals.”
5. Every time you achieve a monthly goal, look at your goals and adjust/change them as needed.

Balance Being Strict on Yourself and Giving Yourself Grace

If you’re trying you’re hardest and you don’t reach your goal, **don’t beat yourself up**. Just get up and try again and know that tomorrow is a brand new day with lots of hope and possibilities! If you are just watching your goals collect dust on your desk, or don’t even know where you put them, it’s time to challenge yourself and be strict with working on your goals. You’ll never know how great you are until you fully apply yourself to meeting your goals!

---