

Creating SMART Goals

SMART is an acronym for **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant, and **T**imely. It was originally developed to write better management goals for the corporate world but it can really be applied to any area of life. SMART goals should be:

Specific. Most of the time goals are too broad. Simply saying, “I want to get in shape” is vague. How will you know when you are “in shape?” What does that look like? Saying “I want to get in better shape by losing 10 pounds in six weeks” is more specific. At the end of six weeks, the scale will tell you if you have reached your goal.

Measurable. Can you quantify your goal? Is it computable? For example, all of us would like to make more money. However, simply to say, “I want to make more money” is unclear. How much more? A more measurable goal would be to say “I want to increase advertising revenue on my blog by \$100 per month.” That is a clear and precise target that can easily be measured.

Attainable. An attainable goal is one that is achievable. Have you honestly considered whether you can reach this goal? I have played or coached basketball for most of my life, but at this point I doubt I have a career lined up in the NBA. Goals are meant to stretch us as we develop the attitudes and skills to reach them. Some things, however, are just beyond our reach.

Relevant. Relevancy refers to whether or not a goal is worthwhile. Is this goal something you should really be doing? Is it the right time or place for this to happen? As a high school personal finance teacher, it would not be a relevant class objective to have my students learn about the Presidency of Abraham Lincoln. I’m not sure that teaches them how to prepare a monthly budget, stay out of debt or plan for retirement.

Timely. Goals need to have a deadline or a target date. When will you have this goal achieved? When I was training for my first marathon, I knew the race date I signed up for - Oct. 28, 2012. Having the exact date gave me the urgency to get started in June as I laid out my 20-week training program. The date served as a motivational future marker in time that I had to be ready for.

So, when creating goals:

1. Develop goals that meet each of the SMART categories.
2. Write your goals down. This makes them become more concrete in your mind.
3. Decide whether you want to share your goals with others. Sharing goals can create accountability for you. However, some goals you will naturally want to keep private for personal reasons. Be selective in what you tell others.
4. Evaluate your goals as you move through the process. They may require tweaking as you move closer to them.
5. Reward yourself along the way for small milestones. Make sure to celebrate **BIG TIME** when the goal is reached.