

Make Your Dreams Come True

If you're like most people, at the beginning of the year you probably

- ❖ Set goals – or
- ❖ Established objectives – or
- ❖ Created a wish list – or
- ❖ Made New Year Resolutions.

If you're like most people, by the end of January you had also probably given up, fallen behind, lapsed, reverted back, or even failed on most of your resolutions. The real tragedy is not that people fail on their resolutions but rather that year after year of failure causes people to stop dreaming, stop resolving, and stop hoping. Each year's failure takes one more bite out of their self-image, self-esteem, and self confidence.

It doesn't have to be that way.

- ❖ You can achieve your resolutions.
- ❖ You can accomplish your goals.
- ❖ You can make your dreams come true.

But changing requires following certain guidelines. The key to success is being smart; it means having **S.M.A.R.T.** goals. **S.M.A.R.T.** is an acronym for five qualities of an effective goal. Let's look at each quality.

1. Specific – One of the most important qualities of an effective goal is that it's *specific*. Specific means you know exactly what you want to accomplish. The more specific you make your goal, the more "magnetic attraction" it pulls toward becoming reality. The mind is very much like a computer: garbage in – garbage out. Specific goals in – specific results out. Just like a computer, your mind can work only with what you feed into it. The key is in the programming.

One simple action you can take to make your goals more specific is to write them down. By writing them down in "black and white," you will see more clearly where your goal is specific and where it isn't.



2. Measurable – Next, your goal must be *measurable*. Measurable means quantifiable. You must know accurately where you stand at any given point. You must be able to quantify how much you have left. It's a matter of keeping score.

Can you imagine two basketball teams playing in front of thousands of fans but not turning on the scoreboard or the game clock – just playing until they felt like quitting? If your goals aren't measurable, you're playing without a scoreboard or game clock. You don't know if you're winning or losing, if you're ahead or behind, or if you're growing or dying.

To make your goals measurable, set up a way to track them. Use a graph or a daily, weekly, or monthly progress report. By always knowing where you stand, you will always know what to do next.

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3. Attainable – For your goals to be attainable, they must be within the realm of the possible. They can't violate any physical laws. They also shouldn't violate any legal or ethical laws. In other words, your goals should be both possible and worthwhile.

4. Realistic – Realistic goals are different for different people. *Realistic* goals are based on who you are today. If you've never exercised a day in your life, it's unrealistic to set a goal to run a

marathon this weekend. However, if you've been training rigorously and have run in marathons before, it's probably a realistic goal. It depends on where you stand.

The key to having realistic goals is having a thorough understanding of yourself. It means knowing who you are and where you stand. To do this, start by writing your own personal history. In other words, write out your life story. Include a complete character description of yourself. Only by knowing yourself can you set realistic goals.

5. Tangible – The one quality that will turbo-charge your goals more than anything else is to make your goals *tangible*. Most people don't know how to make their goals tangible. For a goal to be tangible, you must be able to experience it "in advance." In other words, you must be able to feel and sense what it will be like when your goal is accomplished.

When you make your goal specific, you're usually able to "see it." But to truly make your goal tangible, you must also be able to hear it, smell it, taste it, feel it, and experience it emotionally. It's only when you're able to add one more of these senses that you're able to experience your goals "in advance." And only when you can experience your goals will they have sufficient "pull" to help you overcome your present behavior patterns.

When you make your goals **S.M.A.R.T.**, you put the odds in your favor. You will finally be playing a game that you can actually win!



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