

# Get S.M.A.R.T

With Goal Setting



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**MOTIVATE ME!**

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## Get S.M.A.R.T with Goal Setting

When it comes to goal setting it makes sense to make sure your goals are S.M.A.R.T. ones.

For those of you who don't know what S.M.A.R.T goals are;

S.M.A.R.T. means your goals should be:

Specific

Measurable

Accountable

Realistic and

Time-bound

### **S is for Specific: Know what you want:**

First of all, let me say this.

Goal setting is more than just deciding what you want and writing it down. There are a few more steps you need to take before you can honestly say you have "set yourself some goals" and more importantly know how you are going to achieve them - but we will get to that in a minute or two.

The first question you have to ask is:

**What is a goal?**

A goal is something that you say that you want, but is not something that you can achieve in a day or two - they're classed as tasks. Now a task can take you towards your goals, but they can just as easily take you away from achieving them. What is the difference? Well a goal has to be both exciting and a little frightening. It has to take you out of your comfort zone into areas you've never been to before. Because - and this is the first key - achieving a goal is not just about the end result. But the kind of person you will have to become in order for you to reach those end results or "the goal".



Confused yet? Well let me also say that what may excite or thrill you, may bore your neighbour. What your neighbour may class as a "goal" you may class as being a task.

Goal setting is as individual as you are and that is why the "one size fits no-one approach" to goal setting does not work, nor would I "sell" you a program that promised everything and delivered not very much - you know the kind of program I am talking about - the one you get for 3 easy payments of ....

**How do you set goals?**

And more importantly how do you set goals that inspire you?

Did you ever write a list of New Year's Resolutions? Did you ever read it again, after you finished writing your list?

Why do we still insist on writing these things never ceases to amaze me.

Towards the end of one calendar year and more often than not in that relatively quiet time between Christmas and New Year, most people decide to spend a bit of time working out what they need to do to make the New Year a better one. They decide on the changes they want to make to their lives, and in some cases - they want to change EVERYTHING - is it any wonder they don't succeed.

Have you ever stopped to consider:

When you want to change EVERYTHING about yourself and your life, you can't think very highly of yourself can you? And more to the point if you want to change EVERYTHING, then where do you start? It is overwhelming, it is depressing and that is why most people remain stuck doing the same things they have always done - it's called habit.

I know it's not New Year - but bear with me, because in most cases, our goals list is similar in nature to our New Year's Resolutions list. And if it is like most other people's list, there will be a few classics:

- Earn more money
- Spend less
- Don't buy as many shoes



- Eat less
- Exercise more
- Go on holiday
- Pay off the credit card debt.

You have to admit this kind of list is hardly inspiring is it? And again is one of the main reasons why goals fail.

**To achieve anything of note, you have to be inspired and you have to be inspired enough to take action.**

And to do that you have to do some real thinking, which is another reason why most people's attempts at goal setting fail. Most people do not give enough time or thought to what they really want.

### **Step 1: Be Specific and set goals that inspire you**

Setting goals that inspire you is actually quite simple when you do stop and think about what you want. Think of goal setting in this way - what do you want to do before you die?

These are the things you say you have always wanted to do and see at some time in your life. You may want to:

- See the pyramids
- Learn Spanish so you can travel the country and converse in the native language
- Buy a house in the country
- Set up an animal rescue centre
- Launch a successful cake making business or
- Run the New York marathon

If you have never written this kind of list before you need to remember just one thing - do not censure your list. This is a list of things you say you want to do - assuming you had 3 things in place:

- a) Enough money to do them
- b) Enough time to achieve them
- c) Enough energy to get through the entire list



And before you start muttering about - well that's all well and good, but I don't have the time, money or energy to do what I want. To which I will say to you - with that kind of thinking you are absolutely right.

So - please stop there if that is what you really think. If you don't think you can find the time, money or energy to do something then you won't, it really is that simple. But if you are willing to think outside boxes, triangles and the odd circle here and there, there may be ways to achieve almost anything - as long as you are willing to think differently. So please, allow me to continue:

## Step 2: Write it down

Assuming you are still with me and I do hope you are I need you to get out a notebook or a couple of big sheets of paper and start scribbling down everything you say you want to do, see, be or achieve, bearing in mind the 3 caveats we spoke about earlier. Don't worry about the how just yet; we're more concerned with the what.

Once you have written this list, you might have 100 things, or you may have 20 - it doesn't matter how big the list is, as long as it has things on there that inspire you.

Before we go on I would like to ask you a couple of questions. Have you looked at every area of your life? Believe me when I say it is no good just working on one area and neglecting the rest.

And the why is simple:

- Your bad habits will re-surface and de-rail any kind of progress you are trying to make; and
- One goal will have multiple cause and effects, or one area will be influenced by another

Do you have a problem with spending too much money on things that give you pleasure, for example coffee, chocolate, alcohol or cigarettes? Do you also:

- Have a credit card debt? Or little or no savings?
- Have a weight problem
- Struggle finding the motivation to exercise?

Chances are better than good that if you said yes to one area then you also said yes to most



of the other areas too.

Now taking another look at your list of things you said you wanted to do, be, see or achieve take another look at your list and make sure you have goals relating to:

- Your health
- Your family
- Your money
- Your house and living arrangements
- Your travel and pleasure
- Your work / job / personal development and
- Your hobb(ies)

When I said we needed to be SPECIFIC I meant it. But it doesn't stop there.

### Step 3: Break it down

Now you have the beginnings of a proper goal list, but we haven't finished just yet.

When we talk about being specific we need to add some details.

Take one of your goal list items - it doesn't matter which one, but for the sake of argument I would pick the one that you've always had sitting at number 1 or 2 on every list you have ever made.

Say for instance you have always wanted to learn the Tango so when you go to South America you can take part in the festivities.

What would it take for you:

- a) to learn the dance
- b) to get to South America

Do you want to throw in some Spanish lessons just in case?

The first couple of aspects of this are easy

- Find a dance school near you that offers dance lessons
- Ditto with the Spanish language course you've decided to take



Then all you need to do is book on and turn up. Granted you also need to turn up on a very regular basis so you can master the art and the language, but now you can begin to understand the steps involved in goal achievement.

While you are learning how to dance, you can then decide where you want to go and what you want to do and see while you are travelling. You can determine if you are going alone, or with friends and / or family; with your partner or without; in a tour group or on your own. Your timing may be a couple of years away depending on how much you need to save, and how much holiday you need to accumulate - SO.

You decide that in order to get there faster (because now you are excited about the prospect) you will hold a garage sale to get rid of the clutter that's built up inside your house. You may decide to get a second job or ask for overtime in the one you are doing. You decide you can do without the coffee and donut every morning and dollar by dollar you can begin to see your savings grow.

Do you need to organise passports and visas? How about inoculations? Will you need someone to house sit your home and pets? Will you need to find someone to cover your position while you are away?

You see, when you go into that kind of detail, when you are SPECIFIC - you can't but help to get excited - and you can't but help to achieve whatever it is you have set your heart upon achieving.

## **M is for Measurable: How do you know you are on the right track?**

When you set goals it is vital you know where you are in terms of achieving your goal.

Going back to our trip to South America there are some easy measures.

1. We know how much the airfares are going to cost
2. We know how much we are spending on dance and language courses
3. We know how long it will take us to save for the holiday based on our current expenditure

By the time we get to the airport to check in, we should be safe in the knowledge the airfares and accommodation are paid for. We've mastered the language and the dancing,



and we've got enough money so we can travel in style and do as much as we want to do while we are away.

If any of those are not in place, your measures and the next phase of S.M.A.R.T. Goal setting were not good enough.

But let's assume for just a minute you don't plan to go on holiday. What kind of measures do you have for your goals?

- For weight loss - you have the traditional scale measurement. You also have the number of holes on your belt, the sizing of your clothes, how many heads of lettuce you have consumed (OK I'm joking about the last measure) and other physical measures. Does your skin look healthier? How about your nails and your hair?
- If you have decided to stop smoking - do your clothes smell better? Do you wash them less often? Can you smell and taste things again?
- With sales calls, the number of people you have spoken to that day / week / month; the number of people who have bought from you.
- Websites: The number of people who have visited your site, the number of pages they have visited (on average), the number of people who have signed up to receive your newsletter, the number of phone calls generated as a result and how many people have bought whatever it is you are selling.

The measures you can use to track your progress are endless, so don't just rely on a single one.

- With weight loss for instance, you may not have lost weight on the scale, but your clothes may feel looser.
- You may not have sold anything, but you have created some new and valuable leads.



## **A is for Accountable: Keeping yourself on track**

We can have as many plans in place as we like, but they are merely dreams if we do not keep ourselves accountable.

It is no good saying you are going to go to South America if you continue to live and do what you have always done, without any consideration to the amount of money you have sitting in your bank account, how much you are spending every day and how much you need to save in order to achieve your goal. We can have all the measures in the world, but if we don't hold ourselves accountable, then the problems and the cracks begin to show.

Scope creep in our plans and goals, occurs when you decide you need to spend money rather than save it. A couple of dollars here and there may not seem like much on a daily basis. Added up of course these few dollars can be the difference between whether you achieve your goals or not.

Work it out.

Say you are in the habit of buying a cup of coffee on the way to work each morning. How much are you spending a day?

The average cost here is about \$4 which doesn't seem like a lot does it, until you start multiplying.

\$4 a day

5 days a week

=

\$20.00

OK, we work on average of 48 weeks a year

$\$20 \times 48 = \$960$

Which probably equals one airfare!

Are you still willing to spend that \$4 a day when you can have almost a thousand dollars by the end of one year?



What else do you buy without thinking about it?

Lunches? Dinners out? A drink with colleagues at the end of the day?

In Goal Setting terms this is called "delaying gratification"

"What are you willing to give up today for what you really want tomorrow?"

In today give it to me now society we can be guilty of wanting it all and then some more.

All I am asking you to do is this - if you made some minor changes to your lifestyle on a daily basis would you be able to fund your goals far faster and far easier than if you didn't make some changes?

Which is something to think about

## **R is for Realistic: Don't set your sights too far / too high**

Truth is, what is a realistic goal for one of us, may scare our neighbours witless. A S.M.A.R.T. has to be Realistic to us.

When I talk to people about realistic goals one of the things most people have on their list is more money, and for some reason a million dollars is the figure most people pluck out of the air.

Why do you want a million dollars?

- So I can retire
- So I can do everything I want to do but I've never been able to afford to before

Yes, but what are you going to do to:

- Get a million dollars
- Ensure you don't eat into the capital during your "retirement" and goal wandering days?

Usually by this time, the blank looks have taken over.



Most people don't have a single idea how they are going to make a million dollars.

Well, let me put it to you this way, unless you have a rich relative who is going to bequeath you the money you have got to have a better plan than that. And don't assume you will win the lottery either - did you know statistically you are more likely to be hit by a car than you are to win? And if your plan is to rob a bank well even that is going to take some very careful planning if you hope to get away with it AND keep the money.

Of course there are many people who have made a million or two from nefarious means, but even those "get rich schemes" take some thinking about, planning and execution. Let me put it this way - It's probably just as easy to earn it legitimately as it is to lie, cheat and swindle your way to a million - AND you get to sleep easier too, and not in a prison cell.

So if you do want a million dollars - what are you going to do to get it?

- What business idea or partnership idea do you have?
- How much time, energy, effort and your own money are you willing to invest in the project?
- How long do you think it is going to take?

Take the last point - time.

Most people assume that if they build a great business, people will be flocking to their door to buy whatever it is they are offering. I have seen so many businesses go under who thought exactly that. And it is the same with web based businesses too.

Anyone who thinks they can make money on the internet in a couple of years is (I believe) completely delusional.

It takes time to build a following AND to maintain it - we are talking huge conversion number rates here. One of the things I found interesting was the conversion rate for normal "Direct Mail" (as in through the mail box) marketing is less than 1% on average. And believe me when I say the internet is not much different. There are so many people fighting for your attention, most people don't see what it is you are trying to sell.

So you do the math.



What kind of numbers do you need on an annual basis to give you a conversion rate you can live on, let alone make a million from?

Answer = unless you happen to be in the position to be able to gain access to someone else's mailing list (through joint ventures and affiliations) as opposed to SPAM = the answer is quite staggering which is why most people cannot make a successful living by selling an e-book on a website, and I don't care what the so - called GURU's tell you.

And if you still buy into their SECRET - I can't help but say - I told you so, when it doesn't work out.

## **T is for Time-bound: Deadlines are essential**

For any goal to succeed it needs to be time bound. So timelines are essential. It is not good enough to say, oh I think I will achieve that in a couple of years - how many is a couple?

When you look at your goal list, add in a column for how long you think it will take you - be it months, days or years. That is your "guesstimate". Bear in mind, some items will take you much longer than you expect and some items will be achieved much faster than you think.

Once you have added your guesstimate column, you need to add a final column to your timeline. And that is - the age you will be when you reach your goal.

How old will you be in 2 years, 5 years or 10 years? Do your goals take on an added urgency when you add in this piece of information?



## **Goal Achievement: Action Speaks Louder Than Words:**

Having a goal list is just the first part. The next question is:

How are you going to achieve these goal items?

I'm sure most of you will have watched the Secret, or at least heard about the phenomena that had people either rave or rant about the program. The "teachers" told you to visualise what you wanted and sure enough it would come to you. Well it may do - eventually, but as "the teachers" were quick to point out (when the glaringly obvious was pointed out to them) you do have to take action. And -

before you know it, the old habits kick in and the "goals" are no longer on the list of things being worked on. Any progress you'd made is lost and with a lack of progress comes boredom, eventually a lack of motivation and so the downward spiral begins.

**We began the process of setting goals by asking you to be SPECIFIC. But even by breaking down your SPECIFIC goal it can still appear to be too big, especially if you have never worked on a large project before. So:**

### **Start small:**

Take one goal item and break it down. Goal achievement is like any other kind of project you are working on, or have worked on in the past, you can't do it all in oneday - but each day you can complete a part of your "goal".

Going back to our holiday example - we don't have a passport, so one of our first steps would be to go to the post office and get a form. That is step 1. The second step would be to fill it in. Step 3 is get some passport photographs, Step 4 get it witnessed and Step 5 take it back to the post office, hand over all the necessary forms and documents and pay your money. Step 6 is the easy one - you wait for it to be delivered.

A second part of our goal would be to set up a separate savings account, or we may decide to put our daily coffee money into a jar on our dresser. At the end of a month, we take it to the bank where we've set up our savings account.



Each tiny step may not seem like much, but each tiny step takes us a little closer to realising that particular goal.

Or if going on holiday isn't your goal, take painting a house as a good example:

You have a house with a number of rooms, and they all need decorating. An average size room can be stripped of furniture, cleaned, patched and painted in a weekend or an average of two days.

If you only have the weekends - then each room will take you a weekend, so if you have 4 bedrooms, then you are looking at 4 weekends, or 8 days. I don't know anyone who can work a full week and then "work" all weekend on goals and projects (especially painting), and especially when you have other things to do as well. So be realistic in your timelines.

Starting small is essential, but it doesn't have to just equate to painting a house, but any of your goals. For instance:

- Weight loss - half a kilo to a kilo a week is do-able...any more and you run the risk of putting the weight back on as soon as you stop restricting your calorie intake. So work out how much weight you need to lose and you have the number of weeks it is likely to take you. 10 kilos = 10-20 weeks
- Writing a book - if you are working, then a thousand words a day is a good target, depending on how fast you write (or type) - an average novel starts at about 100,000 words - therefore a hundred days or 3 and a bit months (to get the first draft)

### Determining the benefits of achieving the goal items:

We are all quite selfish - we all want to know "What's in it for me" so we need to determine the benefits of each goal. If you don't know **WHAT THE BENEFITS ARE**, if you don't know **WHY** you want something then you won't be motivated to take the steps that you need to take.

So what are the benefits that you think you will get from achieving the goal item?

- Writing a book - you may get international or national recognition, and more money. You may simply have the satisfaction that you did it.



- Losing weight - may mean - better health, a whole new wardrobe, much better self-esteem and an improved bank balance.
- Travelling to South America - you've managed to save the money, you have seen the land of your forefathers, everyone told you that you couldn't possibly do it and you proved them wrong.
- Once decorated, the house will sell for more money, which means you'll be able to move to the area that you want to live in.

## What are your reasons for doing it?

While benefits are a good way to motivate you, the best motivational tools you can use to achieve your goals are the reasons you have these items on your goal list in the first place.

Why you want to achieve something can take you towards your goal. You can see it, you can feel it and you know why you want it. Imagine that you had to succeed with the goal - or someone close to you was going to die. How motivated would you be to get going on the goals on your list? I suppose it depends on how much you like the person I suppose, but if you really want something, you will move heaven and earth in order to achieve it.

So work out your reasons, and you will have all the motivation you need to get moving.

Renovating the house:

- The house is a pigsty and needs a complete overhaul;
- We've just moved in and we want to make it look like it belongs to us
- It's been years since these walls last saw a coat of paint - it's time !!
- That style of decoration went out 30 years ago (don't worry - wait a few more years and it will be back in again)

Weight loss:

- I have an unhealthy BMI and the doctor told me to lose weight or die
- I do not look very nice without clothes on !!
- I don't look much better with clothes on !!!!!!!!
- I hide behind frumpy clothes to try and disguise the fact that I am fat and unhealthy
- I don't have any energy



## Who will help you achieve your goal?

Every one needs help, and those people who say they don't are usually hiding behind the lies so they can find all sorts of excuse not to do something. The richest, most powerful people in the world have armies of advisors to help them. Sports people have coaches and personal trainers to help them improve their game. Why should we be any different?

Believe me when I say, you will struggle to do everything you need to do by yourself. So enlist the people who can take your dreams forward:

- An author needs an editor and a publisher. Even if you decide to self-publish your work, you still need to get someone else to read it to make sure you haven't written drivel.
- You may need encouragement to reach your new weight - in which case a personal trainer can be invaluable, or a weight loss consultant, a nutritionist, your partner and your kids can all help you to keep to the straight and narrow and encourage you not to buy and eat "bad" things.

## What is stopping you?

Your belief in yourself may be your biggest stumbling block. If you don't believe you can do it, you may struggle to achieve anything.

- Lack of motivation is the other big factor - if you don't believe in your goals, if they don't inspire you to get started on them, then you will find all the excuses in the world not to get started.



## Remember:

When you are working out your goal plan, ask yourself the questions:

- What do you want?
- How are you going to get it?
- When are you going to achieve it by?
- What are the proposed benefits of getting it?
- What are your reasons?
- Who will help you?
- What is currently stopping you?

Goal setting isn't hard - that is the first question in the above list....goal achievement is easier once you have the answers to the remaining questions worked out.



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