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## Why Your Goals Need to be More Than SMART – how to write goals you'll actually achieve (with bonus check list)

Too many of us aren't setting goals, and out of the small minority that do, they are not setting amazing goals that are going to progress them towards success.

Goal setting is key to success, progress and creating the life you want. Studies prove that those who write solid goals down are 33% more successful in achieving them than those who just thought about them.

We have all heard about writing SMART goals, but this is not enough – they need to be more than the usual SMART!

This is not a guide on SMART, so I am assuming you already know that goals have to be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-bound.

There are so many flaws to the traditional SMART goal setting, no wonder so many people fail in achieving their goals! It is regularly reported that only 8% of people reach their goals, so maybe it is time to have goals that aren't SMART! If you're in that 98% it is time to up your goal-writing game. Let me show you how.

The flaws with SMART mean that it is often easy to fall off the wagon, veer from good intentions and it assumes we're going to be motivated 100% of the time (which we are not by the way). When you just write a SMART goal, it fails to tap into the bigger picture and connect with our excitement.

Here is why you need to make your goal more than just SMART...

- A goal will only ever be achieved if it is connected to your "why". This is the driving force behind everything you do because when the chips are down, this is what is going to make you put your "big boy pants" on and keep going. And I hate to be

the bearer of bad news, but no one has ever accomplished a goal without any set backs! Don't just write a SMART goal but one that also has emotion, feeling and connects you to the bigger picture. When you are writing your goal, answer the question "why am I trying to achieve this?"

- Goals have to be specific (the S in SMART) because if you don't know where you are going, then how are you ever going to get there?! However, sometimes it helps to have a range, rather than an exact target.

For example, make the goal to lose 10-14 pounds in weight, or to get the promotion in the next 12-18 months. Why is this better? It is still a goal to aim for but by having a target, it becomes less definitive on the 'fail or succeed' scale. If your goal was to get a promotion in the next 12 months but you take 14, it could be easily deemed as a "failure" and dampen your morale and pride in your achievement. This ultimately could have a negative knock on effect to other goals.

- Sometimes a goal is put on us, (e.g. from a boss, government, or medical professional) rather than it being our "true desire", which is a part of life, but SMART doesn't address this. One way to feel motivated towards a goal that is not ours, is to get something from it – i.e. what are you going to learn along the way and/or what is in it for you? No matter who has dumped the goal on you, there is always a positive and something to gain from it!
- When writing your goal, you need to write it as if it is already a reality for you. For example, if you want a promotion to management, write your goal as if you have achieved it e.g. "*I am a manager with company X*", never write "I want" or you'll always be chasing your dreams!

"I am..." is a powerful signal to the brain and subconscious. Don't write your goals like, "*I want to lose 7 kg*" or "*I hope to save enough money for my mega trip to Australia by June*", turn them in to a reality that it has happened.

- Similar to above, write your goal in a positive frame. Unfortunately, SMART doesn't encourage either of the two points I just made. Often we have goals that drive towards loss or giving something up, which panics our brain and subconscious as why would you want a goal involving loss?

You have to write your goals in a positive frame, so the goal is not to quit smoking but *"I am a non-smoker"* or *"I am going to be more efficient at work"* rather than *"I am going to stop procrastinating"*.

- Having a goal that is measurable (the M in SMART) often gets people confused when their goal is not something that is easily measured. For example, if your goal is to be less stressed and calmer and in control at work, this can be quite tricky to measure.

What I suggest is having a baseline to your goal so you have something to measure it on, in the same way if your goal was something more measurable like saving money or upping the number of miles you can run, you would have a baseline you can measure it against. So going back to the "be more calm" example, you would start with a baseline and this could be measured in a number of ways, such as scoring yourself out of 10 for a week before the goal and then measuring it along the way, or asking others to rate your stress/calm levels, or keep a diary of the days you do and don't feel calm etc.

- Guaranteed whatever your goal is, it will have an impact on someone else and/or someone will have an effect on your goal. Whether your goal is related to health, money, work, personal development, whatever it is, there will be someone else involved. SMART fails to address this, so factor that in when writing your goal and ask, "who else needs to know about this?"

For example, if your goal is to get fit, and you're wanting to go to the gym before work, you'll need to push back your starting time in the office to 9.30am. Or, if you are needing to improve your confidence and you book on for your 1-2-1 confidence course with me, this will have an impact on your spouse, because you'll be committing time to your personal growth.

- For me it is unthinkable to have a goal and not display it! You need to have your goal somewhere visible. I don't just mean sticking it up on a cork board in the office at home, but you hardly go in there, so you only see it once every two weeks. I display my goals in my office (I work from home, so I see this daily), the fridge and the bathroom. Why the fridge and bathroom? Because there are two places I go to multiple times a day without fail so it's great visibility!

- When it comes to SMART, I have an issue that goals have to be 'attainable' especially when they relate to our personal development and growth. For example, I recently had a couple months with a Personal Trainer a couple times a week – my fitness levels are great but I wanted to take it to the next level, and in our short time together I almost doubled what I could weight lift in some exercises. The trouble with things being 'attainable' is we sometimes stay in our comfort zone, don't push our potential, and things didn't improve or get invented in that way. So sometimes you need to forget whether the majority of people think it is attainable or not – push the boundaries, do more, become more

Whenever you write a new goal, use this simple check list to help ensure your goal is as solid as possible to give yourself the best shot of achieving it.

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Does your goal connect to the bigger picture – what is your WHY            |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Do you need to have a range rather than one target                         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | What else are you going to get from achieving this goal                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Write your goal as if it is already a reality                              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Write the goal in a positive frame, rather than a loss                     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | What are the baselines to measure against                                  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Who else is involved, or who does this affect                              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Display it so I can see it every day                                       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Does the goal push me (is it more than just 'attainable')                  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Is the goal specific enough (include numbers, emotions, actions, outcomes) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | When will this goal be achieved by   |

*Alice Dartnell, life and success coach.*

*Alice works with busy professionals empowering them to be successful, transform their lives and achieve more by improving their confidence, mindset and time management. For more details, go to [www.alicedartnell.com](http://www.alicedartnell.com). You can find more information on how 1-2-1 coaching, the courses or events can benefit you.*



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