

S.M.A.R.T Goals

S Specific

M Measurable

A Action-oriented & achievable

R Realistic & relevant

T Time-bound & tangible

Writing Smart Goals

Let's take a closer look at each of these properties...

Specific

Your SMART goal statement should be a clear and specific statement of what you want.

The main reason is that your brain behaves like goal-seeking mechanism, similar to a precision guided missile. As these missiles fly, they continually make small adjustments and correction to their trajectories to realign themselves to their target.

Your brain also works in a similar way. Dr. Maxwell Maltz, author of the classic *Psycho-Cybernetics*, said that human beings have a built-in goal seeking "success mechanism" that is part of the subconscious mind.

This success mechanism is constantly searching for ways to help us reach our targets and find answers to our problems. According to Maltz, we work and feel better when our success mechanism is fully engaged going after clear targets.

All we have to do to use this mechanism is to give it a specific target. Without one, our success mechanism lies dormant, or worse, pursues targets we didn't consciously choose.

When your target is vague or ambiguous, your success mechanism can become confused and either shut down or go after the wrong target.

Measurable

- There is an old saying that says "what gets measured gets done."

Making your goal measurable helps you **see your progress**, recognize if you are moving in the right direction, and see how far you still need to go.

Some types of goals, like saving a certain amount of money each month, or reading 100 pages per week, are very easy to measure, while other goals aren't really measurable directly.

For example, if your goal is to improve your relationship with your significant other, how do you measure it?

One option is to use some sort of rating. For example, you could say that your relationship is a 6 and your goal is to make it an 8.

The problem is that these types of ratings very subjective, can change from day to day, and don't really give you very good feedback.

A better option is to focus your goal on specific actions you can take that will help you achieve your overall objective.

For example, if you want to improve your relationship, your goal might be to practice the "4 small steps to a better relationship" every day. This is something that you can easily measure.

Even though measurable goals are very important, I think it is equally important to remember your original objective. Otherwise, it is easy to lose yourself in your goals and forget the reason you set them in the first place.

Action-Oriented

This means your goal should focus on actions you can take that are in your direct control. It's OK to have goals whose outcome you can't directly control, as long as you are clear about the actions you need to take to do your part in the process.

Realistic

Realistic is another word for achievable. Again, this doesn't mean that the goal needs to be easy.

Realistic also means that the actions associated with your goal are things that you can do. For example, if your goal requires you to spend 3 hours at the gym each day, that may not be a very realistic assumption given your present situation and lifestyle.

Timely

For goals that have a natural ending (like outcome goals), establishing a clear deadline for them adds an element of urgency and motivation. All goals should be trackable so you can see what your progress is, either in terms of results you are experiencing, or actions you are taking. Tracking your goals helps you determine if you are going in the right direction and make any necessary adjustments along the way.

If you want help setting SMART goals for your personal and professional life, [life coaching](#) is a great resource that can help you get clear about what you really want, set realistic SMART goals and develop a plan to get it.

The best SMART goals are focused, specific, short-term targets that involve things that are under your direct control. This is what makes goals such powerful achievement tools, but it is also what can limit them.