

New Year, New Me

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If you are like most people, you have (or had at one point) made new year resolutions. There is something novel and attractive about the new year that is filled with hope and possibilities. However, if you are, again, like most people, you have utterly failed on most, if not all of them. So what is the secret for meeting New Year's resolutions or any of your goals?

Start implementing **S.M.A.R.T.** goals format to all your resolutions:

- **Specific** - Who, what, when, where, and how will the goal be accomplished?
- **Measurable** - How do you keep track of the progress?
- **Achievable** - Is the goal realistic or idealistic? Do you have the internal and external motivation and resources to accomplish this goal? Knowing yourself and your capacities are key!
- **Relevant** - What is the purpose of this goal? Is it relevant to your values?
- **Time-bound** - Is there a start and end date to when you need to do this? Or is it always, "tomorrow"?

Here is an example of a general vs SMART goal:

General: I want to learn how to play the saxophone.

SMART: I have wanted to learn how to play the saxophone ever since I was a child. I want to learn how to play the "Fly me to the moon" (a beginner song) by the end of June. I will learn how to play 1 new note a week until I have learned all of the notes, and practice for 1 hour a week.

Not only can having SMART goals help achieve some of the things that you want to do, it can also help reduce the guilt/shame from not "accomplishing" a goal and promote a realistic accountability system. As you work on your new goals, don't forget to celebrate the little wins (i.e. learning a new note) to keep yourself motivated in moving forward.

