

Setting SMART Goals

People often set very strong work-related goals and neglect to do it for any other area of their life. While career is typically the most structured part of life, it doesn't have to be only one that benefits from clearly defined goals. Encourage all students to take the time to establish at least one solid goal for each area of their life. Here are some examples (some of these may not apply):

- Professional
- Relationships (family, friends, co-workers)
- Fitness/Health
- Intellectual
- Community Involvement
- Financial
- Education
- Artistic

A "good" goal has 5 distinct elements. To define them we are going to use the SMART acronym:

Specific

What do you want to achieve? How will you achieve it? Why is it important to you? Clearly define the outcome you want.

Measurable

Establish concrete criteria for measuring your success. Use actual numbers, target dates, or specific events to indicate when your goal has been achieved.

Achievable

Your goals should push you past your comfort point but you should still be able to attain them with effort and commitment.

Relevant

Your goals should be important to you and the outcome should impact your life. Likewise, you should have the ability to directly impact them. Don't set goals that aren't significant or that you can't do anything to control.

Timely

Your goals should have a time element established. This will keep you on track and prevent you from simply pushing a goal far into the future. It should matter now and you should have a sense of urgency about it.