



DESIGNING YOUR SMART-AASS GOALS

How many times have you set New Year's resolutions for yourself? As Dr. Phil would ask, "How's that working for ya?"

So often, New Year's resolutions go as fast as they came, because they are based on harsh and inflexible rigidity, high emotional giddiness, and lack of structures for support. They are born in a peak moment of high desire but fall flat when they make us perspire.



In other words, true movement forward requires that we plan level-headedly the course we want to take, set up structures for the management and completion of that course, and do the work required to bring ourselves to that destination.

Consider some definitions from Dictionary.com:

Resolution

- a resolve or determination: *to make a **firm** resolution to do something.*
- the act of resolving or determining upon an action or course of action, method, procedure, etc.
- the mental state or quality of being resolved or resolute; **firmness** of purpose.

Determination

- the act of coming to a decision or of **fixing** or settling a purpose.

Decision

- the act or process of deciding; determination, as of a question or doubt, by making a **judgment**:
Latin *dēcīsiōn-* (stem of *dēcīsiō*) literally, a cutting off, equivalent to *dēcīs* (*us*)

If you notice in the definitions surrounding "resolution," there's a lot of rigidity and harshness in words like "firmness", "fixed" or "fixing", and "judgment." It's this hardness of unbendability that often has resolutions die on the vine because, if one infraction occurs in the resolution, the entire plan is ditched because it didn't survive: it was "broken."

"Having lived by the ocean for many years, I've observed the strength and beauty of the tall palm trees that grow at the water's edge. These stately giants are able to withstand the hurricane-force winds that uproot and destroy many larger, older, and more majestic trees. What is the palm trees' secret to staying in one piece through huge, devastating storms? They bend almost down to the ground at times, and it's that ability that allows them to survive."
— Dr. Wayne Dyer, bestselling author and inspiring teacher

In designing your plans for the New Year, know that in spite of all of your “firmness” and “resoluteness” and attempt to “fix” permanently these intentions into unshakeable ground, the ground *will* shake this year, and all kinds of unforeseen and unexpected obstacles and roadblocks and unfavorable conditions will come your way. That is a given...because we all know, that’s just how life is. And some even believe that, the more committed to something you are, the more all the “stuff” that would prevent you from having it will come up...to be faced and moved beyond.

Whether it’s a fear, a pattern of giving up, an old internal self-doubt, or some issue that remains unresolved from your past, you can count on that when you stick your neck out and commit to making a real change, the proverbial “caca” will hit the fan. It comes down to who you are going to be in the face of that inevitability, how much you have planned ahead for challenges, the structures of support that you have in place to keep you moving forward, and your willingness to get outside your comfort zone to achieve something you haven’t had before.



There’s an old saying: if you want things the way they’ve always been, keep doing what you’re doing. If you want something other than that, you’ll have to think differently and do things differently.

Beyond “resolution”, consider alternatively the Dictionary.com definition of a “goal”:

Goal

-the result or achievement toward which effort is directed; aim; end.

Notice the greater flexibility in this term? The goal wants to be realized and isn’t as fixed or rigid necessarily in how it will be attained. Yes, there is effort directed, but the goal is the end or aim that one seeks to attain regardless of how one gets there.

Are you willing that you could put lots of directed effort toward your goals this year and yet unforeseen, unplanned, and unexpected forces could come into play to help you along? Of course you are. So we want goals, we want to direct effort toward them in a structured way, yet we want to allow for the unexpected and unforeseen to come to our aid.

If we look back at the Milestones & Memorable Moments process, we realize how incredibly much we actually achieved last year, probably with most of it in no particular plan in place at the beginning of the year. Even if we did start out with some general ideas of moving forward, we notice that so much came “out of the blue.”

Just as we must plan on obstacles arising, we can also plan on the “out of the blue” and cool events arising as well. Yet, we have more of those when we actually do the work to get a structured and supported plan in place to direct our intentions.

You may have heard of the term “SMART Goals”, but perhaps have never really implemented them for yourself. I want to introduce an extension of that concept, called SMART-AASS Goals. (Now that wasn’t cursing, just for you to know.)

S The S stands for “Specific”: First, your goals must be specific. You can’t just say “I want a job” or “I want more money.” You must get very detailed and paint the picture of exactly what kind of job, doing what,

in what field, and how you want to actually *feel* in your work. You must state exactly how much money you will achieve. The more specific, the more you are putting your “order” into the Universal Waiter.

M The M stands for “Measurable”: You must be able to actually measure whether you have achieved the goal or not. Vague, unclear, or undefined goals get you nowhere because there’s no tape to break at the end of the finish line. Whether it’s how many new networking contacts you’ll make each week, how much time or investment you’ll put into learning new methods to expand your career, how many times you’ll get to the gym each week...everything you set as a goal must have an element of measureability. An old adage says “You can’t manage what you don’t measure.”

A The A stands for “Achievable”: You need to get real, though not necessarily weak, about what is truly at the edge of the envelope for you in terms of achievability vs. what is pie-in-the-sky. Pie-in-the-sky goals leave you depleted and feeling like a loser, whereas goals that hit your gut as actually doable—even if a stretch—set you up for a feeling of accomplishment and success.

R The R stands for “Relevant”: Your goals need to be pertinent and related to what’s most important to you. If someone else thinks you need to lose weight but you don’t, it’s not relevant and will be a waste of your time to have as a goal. If someone else thinks you need a coach to help you achieve something but you don’t, the goal nor the coach will do you any good. When it comes to “relevant,” think of the word “juicy”: a goal that gets you excited and lights you up.

T The T stands for “Time”: A goal without a deadline is nothing more than a wish or high intention. A strong wish and \$1.89 will get you a cup of coffee. A deadline is an activating agent for an intention. Only when a time structure is applied does the goal begin to develop the legs to become a reality.

Now, here’s the addendum:

A The first A in the addendum stands for “Accepting”: As mentioned earlier, you can count on that there will be unplanned problems and conditions that will come up as you take on your goals. As part of the very goals themselves, you want to affirm that anything and everything that comes up will be perfectly designed for the attainment of them. That means even the things that show up as obstacles have some way of moving you forward...if you accept them and learn what they came to teach you.

A The second A in the addendum stands for “Allowing”: This is yet another way of saying that you’re willing to let go of your “pictures” of the way it needs to happen. Yes, you’ve created the SMART elements of your goal, and you create an action plan to fulfill on those SMART goals. Yet, by “accepting” and “allowing”, you make room for the unexpected and “out of the blue” to occur that can move you forward even faster than you thought possible.

S The first S in the addendum stands for “Spirit”: Now this could be a touchy subject for people because there are a lot of different faiths on the planet. I simply call it “Spirit” to acknowledge that there’s something beyond us that has a hand in the way things are going to go. You could call it God, “the Universe”, Higher Power, or for agnostics or atheists, simply Dumb Luck...but realizing that there’s something behind what you’re doing that *can* kick in actually *allows* it to kick in.

S The second S stands for “Support”: This reminds us that we can’t do it on our own. On some of your goals, you might make progress alone. But, I’d say the majority will only happen if you have others who not only know of your goals but are supportive and committed to your attainment of them. The whole concept of “Mastermind” as spelled out in Napoleon Hill’s *Think and Grow Rich* is a testament to the power of mutual support around goals.

Therefore, when we spell it all out, we have SMART-AASS Goals: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, in Time, Accepting & Allowing of Spirit’s Support. The SMART is the structure, the AASS is the attitude.

What’s important to you this year?

What have you been putting off that you’d really like to finally make progress on?

What elements of your career, your health, your family, your interests, or your future do you want to expand?

It can’t ALL happen this year...but a LOT of it can and definite progress can be made if you get SMART-AASS about it. Break out the SMART structure first by the overall year, then by month, and even by week if you like...so that you have an actual plan to take into your New Year. Then create the AASS attitudes you’ll carry with you in the form of attitudes and declarations.

With well-defined SMART-AASS goals, along with structures of support, you’ll achieve more than you now even think possible!