

The University of Southern Mississippi

**Personal Skills**

Exploring Skills Valuable to Personal Development

Kacheef K White

CSC 424 – Software Design

Dr. Michaela Elliot

April 6, 2021

## SMART Goals

The acronym SMART has been used by many individuals when the topic of personal development is introduced. This concept was first introduced in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century by George T. Doran (3). It is no secret that setting goals are a key concept for an individual to understand when trying to maximize their full potential. The relationship between goals and human beings are similar to what railroad tracks are to trains. It keeps us in a specific direction that we plan for ourselves. Similar to a train, we also can derail and spiral into a negative path.

The acronym SMART stands for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound. All of these concepts blend together to produce one of the easiest and most impactful acronyms that has ever been created. Being specific about what you want to accomplish is the most important characteristics to master when it comes to SMART goals. The more specific you are, the harder it is the stray from that path. The popular five “W” questions are usually associated with being specific. “What do you want to achieve? Why do you want to achieve the goal? Who do you need to help achieve your goals? Where are you going to achieve these goals and which resources are needed to support you?” (3). Providing details in your answers to these questions will allow an easy transition to the next part of our acronym. Being specific is like sharpening a dull needle. The sharper the needle, the easier it is to pierce through whatever object that lies in its path.

Your goals should always be measurable. How else are you going to keep a good track of your own progress? In my personal opinion, setting smaller goals to achieve the bigger goals works well after ensuring that your goals are measurable. Take for example your ultimate goal in life is to lose 10 lbs. of fat. This goal is quantified, and progress can easily be tracked. Smaller goals should be set in place like losing 2 lbs. each month or eating 500 calories less per week. These smaller goals will help keep your spirit up and to allow your body to reward you with the “feel good” hormone Dopamine. This is the right way to get your dose of Dopamine. We should not go the quick and easy route to get a feel of dopamine. It never ends well. Yes, I am talking about our everyday drugs and alcohol.

Your goals should be achievable. In other words be realistic with the goals you set. Setting a goal to be so strong that you can lift a bus with one hand is not going to cut it. What’s the purpose of setting a goal if you yourself do not believe you can achieve it? It defeats the purpose completely. One of the easiest goals to set are ones that have already been achieved by others. This allows you to use a blueprint left behind by that person and makes it easier for you to follow a solid plan. Setting a goal that has never been achieved before is attainable, but you must factor the hardship that comes with these goals. Doubt will start to run through your mind daily and the chances of getting support from family and friends are slim to none. These goals usually require a little more thinking and a more out of the box approach, which ultimately leads to innovation. A good example of this is Elon Musk. Creating an electric car was a far-fetched idea for most. Elon struggled with getting businesses’ support, but through hard work and creative thinking, he allowed electric cars to be an easier concept to grasp and very soon these cars will dominate the industry. Maybe setting a goal for flying cars does not sound too crazy after all.

One of the important questions to continually ask yourself is if your goal is still worth your time. The relevant section of SMART reduces the disappointment that may come if the timing is just not right for your goal. If your goals do not align with your overall plan for your

life or does not improve the environment in anyway then what would be the purpose of the goal in the first place.

Goals should be time-bound. Just as food manufacturers give us expiration date for their products, our goals should have an end date. If goals have no time limit, then it is very easy to drag your feet when trying to make progress. Putting off activities to another week could go on forever if time allowed it. A good tool that helps accomplish goals before the target date is prioritizing every task in your daily life. Focus on the higher priority first and then complete the lower priority tasks like beating your high score in a video game.

## **12 Laws of Karma**

The word karma gets a bad stigma attached to it when it is brought up in a conversation. People should realize that karma is not only about focusing on the negative but also the positive. What you put out to the universe comes right back to you. Karma is the twin sister of Newton's Law of Motion for the spiritual world. "For every action there is an equal but opposite reaction" (1).

The first law of karma explains that you have to behave the way you want to be treated. This is the law of cause and effect. The second law states that you have to create your own reality. If you want to be rich then sitting at home playing video games is not going to work well for you. The third law teaches us to have humility within ourselves. We "must accept something in order to change it"(1). The fourth law tells us that changing ourselves and our behavior is the best way to change our environment. If someone wants to make a big change in this world then they must first grow and make big changes within themselves.

The fifth law reminds us of the important role of being responsible for everything that happens in our lives. It is displeasing to meet someone in your life that blames everyone else but themselves for what has happened to their life. The truth is that we should always blame ourselves for when things go wrong just as much as we like to take credit for when things go right. The sixth law explains to us that everything is connected. Example the plants, animals and human beings are connected together. One cannot live without the other. Plants provide us with oxygen through photosynthesis for living organisms and we convert that oxygen to carbon dioxide through respiration for plants to use. In our lives. The smallest things will impact the bigger things in your life. Small tasks are like steps on a ladder that leads you from the ground to the roof. The seventh law of karma teaches us that multitasking is impossible. It is impossible to focus on two things at the same time so we should choose wisely on what we focus on. You cannot focus on being happy in a moment while your thoughts are building up from anger. The eight law states that the universe will test our values. If you believe in something, then prepare to defend your belief system. Practice what you preach.

The ninth law shares that being in the present is extremely vital for moving forward in life. Looking in the rear-view mirror of a car constantly while moving forward on a highway is not going to end well for anyone. The mirror is there for you to check periodically but not constantly. Focus on the present, here, and now. The tenth law is evident in our daily lives. Nothing remains the same. Change will occur in the future. We should always prepare our minds for it and be adaptable to our circumstances. The eleventh law reinforces the importance of having faith in what we are doing. Being disciplined and patient will eventually lead to the reward that is ahead of us. The final law of karma tells us that we reap what we plant. If our

actions are garbage, then the results will be garbage in return. Without karma what would stop a man from doing the wrong things in life? It is one of the most important law that governs our world and without it, chaos would be the theme of this world.

### **Art of Negotiation**

Mastering the art of negotiation can reduce the stress of life and create rare opportunities that may come with a lot of fulfillment. A man that has mastered this skill will be able to bend the world at his will. It would be like having an unlimited supply of genie wishes in his back pocket. The art of negotiation is like a strategy game played by both parties where the person with the best move will win the game. Negotiations should always try to end with a win-win for both parties.

The first step of a skilled negotiator is establishing a connection to the other person before establishing any other activity. Displaying kindness, agreeableness and politeness in this stage is essential for setting up yourself for success. Setting the foundation with trust is the beginning of a triumphant negotiation. Sales representative at a dealership do this all the time. They try to gain your trust through stories and or appearance. Acting as if they have your best interest at heart.

The next step is understanding that you should never be considered as disingenuous or display negative intent. People are gifted naturally on picking up on red flags from manipulative persons. Underestimating this capability will surely spiral the situation out of your favor. A sense of integrity is integral for coming on top of a negotiation.

Zoning in on the benefits that the other party will receive from your service is a good way to shift the focus from yourself and keeping your eyes on the prize. If the other party feels as if they are getting the short end of the stick, then you are sure to be on a losing path. When negotiating on a job interview, reminding the hiring company of all the benefits and values that you bring will give you a better chance at getting your desired outcome.

Negotiating is done in 3 phases. The first phase is where information is exchanged, and this is usually preceded with research from one or both parties. This gives you a feeling of where you stand and what the situation actually entails. The next phase is bargaining. This is the phase where proposals are made, and all negotiations are broken down in details. This is a critical part of the negotiating process. The final phase is the closing. This is where an agreement is acknowledged usually in the form of a signed paperwork or any other alternative options like a firm handshake.

## **References**

1. <https://www.beinghappybuddha.com/blogs/insights/the-12-laws-of-karma-everyone-should-know>
2. <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/253074>
3. <https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/smart-goals.html>