

Please print one "Written Plan" worksheet per problem/issue.

WRITTEN PLAN

ADMIT: WHAT'S THE ISSUE?	
IDENTIFY: WHAT'S CAUSING THE ISSUE?	
ESTABLISH: WHAT'S THE PLAN? (S.M.A.R.T.E.R.)	
IMPLEMENT: MAKE THE CHANGE	
EVALUATE: HOW'S IT WORKING?	

S.M.A.R.T.E.R. GOALS

SPECIFIC	
MOTIVATING	
ACHIEVABLE	
RESULTS	
TIME-SPECIFIC: SHORT TERM	
TIME-SPECIFIC: INTERMEDIATE TERM	
TIME-SPECIFIC: LONG TERM	
EVALUATE	
RE-ADJUST	

Handling Life with Nathan Tabor. Learn more at HandlingLife.org.

Do you want to be S.M.A.R.T.E.R.?

S.M.A.R.T.E.R. is an acronym which you use to guide your goal setting or develop a plan of action to address problems. The purpose of writing **S.M.A.R.T.E.R.** objectives is that it makes you go through a process which helps you establish the outcome you desire.

What Does **S.M.A.R.T.E.R.** Mean?

Specific: “clearly defined or identified” — You should be clear and specific. Otherwise, you won't be able to focus your efforts or feel truly motivated. When writing this, be as specific as possible and list as many details as possible.

Motivating: “an interest in, a reason for or enthusiasm for doing something” — It's important to have motivation. If you feel yourself stalling during the process, motivation is what helps you stay focused and gives you the strength to accomplish your task. What is your motivation?

Achievable: “able to be brought about or reached successfully” — You have to be realistic to be successful. In other words, stretch your abilities, but stay within the realm of attainable. Identify opportunities or resources which can help you be successful.

Results: “a consequence, effect, or outcome of something” — You should be able to measure the effects of your actions and see the outcomes they have produced. Just “doing” the motions or activities will not produce the effects you desire. Remember, results are traceable — “large enough to be measured; noticeable; definite”.

Time-Specific: “plan, schedule, or arrange when things will be done” — A timeline or date should be part of the process. Being time-specific ensures you know exactly when you are supposed to have something done. If you wait, procrastination will set in.

Evaluate: “to judge or determine the significance, worth, or quality of actions” — You have created your action steps, desired outcome, timetable, etc. Now, it's now time to determine how things are progressing. It's important to always be evaluating how things are going throughout the process. If your actions aren't producing the results you desire, then start back at Specific.

Re-Adjust: “alter slightly in order to achieve the result” — Life is full of surprises, you can't control everyone around you and sometimes you make mistakes. It's part of being human. Don't quit if something isn't going right. Simply adjust your behavior and responses as new challenges arise.

Use the “Written Plan” worksheet to develop your action plan.

S.M.A.R.T.E.R. applies to ALL aspects of your life:

Personal: your spouse, your family, your friends

Professional: your business, your job, your work

Physical: your diet, your exercise, your health

Financial: your money, your budget, your spending

Spiritual: your relationship with God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit

Four P's of Goal Setting

You need goals to get things done. However, not every goal is effective. The way that you word your goals will determine whether or not you reach them. When establishing goals, it is important to remember the Four P's of goal setting. They need to be positive, personal, possible, and prioritized.

They Need to Be Positive

When creating your S.M.A.R.T.E.R. plan, remember to make sure all points are positive. This means that you focus on what you want to achieve rather than what you want to avoid. For example, you would write, "I will find a new job" rather than "I will no longer work at this horrible job." Staying focused on the positive will help improve your outlook. This, in turn, will improve your chances for success.

They Need to Be Personal

When creating your S.M.A.R.T.E.R. plan, reflect your dreams and desires. Make things about you and how your behavior affects you and those around you. If your aspirations aren't personal, you will have a hard time maintaining them.

They Need to Be Possible

When creating your S.M.A.R.T.E.R. plan, make sure all points are realistic. When you set impossible goals, you set yourself up for failure and disappointment. Creating possible goals demands that you be honest with yourself.

They Need to Be Prioritized

When creating your S.M.A.R.T.E.R. plan, take the time to rank each action. Make a list of your top five goals which are the most important to you. This helps you identify where you need to spend your time and energy.

How to Remain Positive

Remember the Victories

The human brain is an odd thing. For some reason, it's easier for us to remember all the bad, instead of all the good. It's our default setting. The way to overcome this is to focus on the positive and remember all the good. Remember all the blessings the Lord has provided unto us.

Remembering the victories and positive memories are powerful motivators. You can either focus on the time in the valley or the time spent on the peaks. Your achievements will encourage you and motivate you. Now, before you say, "Nathan, I don't have any peaks," let me challenge you. My challenge is for you to focus on the peaks NOT set by the world, but victories set by God's word.

The world would say you have been victorious if you have these "material" things. Those aren't the peaks I'm talking about. I'm talking about who you are and what you have done for others. I'm talking about the love you have shown others and the type of person you are. I'm talking about what God has done for you!

Build on Your Successes

Success itself can become a cycle if you start small and build on your achievements. Think about your failures. Normally, one doesn't just all the sudden fail. There are a series of missteps and bad decisions that lead to failures. Successes are the same way. You start out with a small success here and there, which leads to other successes and so on.

For example, if you want to get into better shape, don't sign up for a marathon right away. Trust me, it isn't going to go well for you or your muscles. Start out with the basis and build from there. As time passes, you will look back and be amazed at what you have done.

Remove "Should" from Your Vocabulary

The words that you use have a greater impact on your life than you may realize. Constantly telling yourself you can't do something is discouraging, and you should definitely avoid language that involves uncertainty. For example, the word "should" needs to be removed from your vocabulary.

This word immediately makes you feel guilty. You are admitting you "should" have already done something, or the chances of you actually doing it are slim to none.

What's the difference between "I should" and "I will"? One is probable and the other is definite. Saying, "I will start exercising" is making a commitment to follow through. Try it in your daily life. Making this simple shift in vocabulary will commit you to action and improve your productivity.