

## LET'S MAKE A GOAL!

Follow these tips to goal-making success!

**DECIDE ON A GOAL:** The first — and sometimes hardest — step to goal making is selecting a goal. So many people make the same resolutions each year: quit smoking, lose weight, get organized. And then they quickly abandon them. This year, ask yourself, "What do I really want? How can I make myself happier?" Brainstorm a bit and come up with five to ten ideas. Then select one or two to work on. The goal doesn't have to be daunting; in fact, it should be realistically attainable.

**WRITE IT DOWN:** The next step to achieving your goal is to write it down. By doing this, you are making a commitment with yourself and are more likely to follow through. Only about 5% of the population writes down its life goals, which may be one of the reasons that at least 50% of people who set New Year's resolutions have abandoned them by the end of January and up to 90% call it quits by April.

As you write your goal, concentrate on the positive, and make it specific and attainable. Instead of one big daunting New Year's resolution, try to list a series of smaller steps that will get you there in manageable increments. For example, if your resolution is to "try new things," your list might break down into these tasks:

- introduce myself to one new person a week
- eat at one new restaurant per month
- take a continuing education class this spring
- join local book club
- listen to foreign language tapes in car

Also write down WHY you want to reach your goal. Once you reach it, how will your life improve?

**MEASURE AND EVALUATE:** Another key to goal-keeping success is to define ways to measure your success. By using a time table, you'll force yourself to be accountable. Look at your goal in the short-term, mid-term and long-term. For example, don't say, "I will get organized this year." Say instead, "I will organize my closet this week," "I will evaluate my overloaded schedule next month," and "I will ask someone to help me organize my paperwork by the end of March."

Keep your written goals posted where you can always see them: your computer monitor, a bathroom mirror, the refrigerator door, or your daily planner. On your calendar, write down your task completion dates so you can evaluate

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## LET'S MAKE A GOAL! (continued)

your successes at least once a week. (If the goal you're working on involves changing a habit, remember that it usually takes 21 days to change a habit.)

At the end of a goal achievement, reward yourself — treat yourself to a small gift or relaxing activity. Celebrate what you have accomplished and move on to the next goal activity. And every few months, look at the goals you have set for the year. Do you still want to focus on these goals? Give yourself permission to change your goals and resolutions based on your life changes.

**GET HELP:** If keeping yourself motivated and moving forward can be tough, or if the thought of goal-making terrifies you, consider enlisting the help of a trusted friend, family member or co-worker. Consider hiring an expert in your area of change, such as a professional organizer, personal trainer, or financial planner. Or if you need help defining your goals, get help from a life coach (find one at [www.coachfederation.org](http://www.coachfederation.org) or [www.napo.net](http://www.napo.net).)

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