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The goal of a professional coach is to partner with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential.

BE **S.M.A.R.T.** in 2010

Congratulations on successfully navigating through the holiday season and making it to the starting line for the New Year! Hopefully, you are finished basking in the afterglow and self-satisfaction of knowing that you have left a trail of many jobs well done; remembering time well spent with family, friends, and co-workers. Now what? We all have an idea of what we'd like to accomplish but don't know where to begin. Having a plan is essential if you want to get somewhere. *How* you plan affects your success. In setting goals for your day or for this year make your goal 'smart.'

Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely.

Specific - A specific goal has a much greater chance of being accomplished than a general goal. To set a specific goal you must answer the six "W" questions: ***Who**: Who is involved? * **What**: What do I want to accomplish? **Where**: Identify a location. ***When**: Establish a time frame. ***Which**: Identify requirements and constraints. ***Why**: Specific reasons, purpose or benefits of accomplishing the goal.

EXAMPLE: A general goal would be, "Get in shape." A specific goal would be, "Join a health club and workout five (5) days a week."

Measurable - Establish concrete criteria for measuring your progress! Seeing results energizes and gives you a reason to pat yourself on the back.

Attainable - Identify goals that are most important to *you*, and then think about making them come true. Remember the adage, "Where there's a will there's a way!"

Realistic - To be realistic, a goal must represent something which you are both *willing* and *able* to do. Your goal is probably realistic if you truly *believe* that it can be accomplished. Additional ways to know if your goal is realistic is to ask yourself what conditions would have to exist to accomplish this goal.

Timely - Tie your goal to a time frame. No time frame = no sense of urgency. "As soon as possible" can easily morph into "I'll do it when I have more time." If you are serious about reaching your goal, anchor it to a time frame and pull the trigger! Example; "I'll sign up at the local gym tomorrow."

Once your plan is mapped out and meets the definition of a S.M.A.R.T. goal, you have a strong starting point and a defined 'finish line.' Keep that old fable of the tortoise and the hare in mind. If achieving your goal is tantamount, it's not how fast you travel but perseverance in following your plan that keeps you moving forward. Tweak when necessary, but use your S.M.A.R.T goal as your guide and keep in mind it's progress not perfection that will get you over the finish line.