

Finding a meaningful resolution to focus on is just 25% of achieving your goals. Here are **5 effective strategies** to help you achieve your goals, besides applying forward relevance.

1. Make you goals SMART:

- *Specific*: Specify your goal and be specific about what you want to achieve, when, how, why and with who. The more specific you are the more likely you will be to achieve your goal. Also identifying limitations is a way to be specific about what is and is not possible.
- *Measurable*: Making your goals measurable is a way to identify what you want to see when achieving your goals. Feeling good is not specifically measurable, but living a healthy lifestyle, by taking a 15 min stroll during every lunch break, is. Make sure that you can measure the outcome of your goal.
- *Attainable*: Make sure your goals are attainable. First, try to define goals that you believe are reachable within your capacity (time, effort, resources, other commitments). If your goals are too big or personal limitations don't allow you to achieve your goals, then you will surely fail. Also watch out for goals you cannot fulfill yourself. Try redefine goals which are attainable with your power and capacity.

- **Realistic:** Make sure your goals are relevant and realistic for you to achieve. Identify the source of motivation for you to achieve your goals and ensure you are committing to your goals because you really want to. This sometimes requires some deeper reflection, so feel free to revisit your goals to make sure of its relevance. The Future Relevance approach is a great way to focus on this point.
 - **Timely:** Time management is key in helping you achieve your goals. Make sure to set deadlines for yourself and don't be too stringent about them. Allow for some flexibility, but not too much.
2. **Change Big Goals into Bite-Size Learning Goals.** Break bigger goals down into smaller (manageable goals) and also try to frame them as learning goals. So, if you don't achieve all of them within the time specified, at least you still worked towards achieving some of them. Don't kill yourself if you don't achieve all your goals. Framing them as learnings goals is also a great way to learn what you did well, what you liked about working on them and what you can do better or differently next time.
3. **Planning:** Planning is a key strategy in achieving your goals. Setting some guidelines and achievable goal posts at the onset can help you plan in achieving difficult attainable goals. Successive achievements of goals throughout the year promotes motivation and helps you stay on track

without losing focus of the main goals you want to achieve by year-end. Goal planning does not only have to be long-term, but can also be short-term as well.

- Behavioral science shows that there is a big difference between intentions and actual behavior. Using Intention implementation as part of a short-term planning strategy can help you effectively transform intentions into actual behaviors. This is done by specifying your goals very precisely as an ‘if-then’ approach, indicating that when time X occurs (time and/or place), a specific doable activity Y should be initiated and completed to attain goal Z. For example *If/when I pass the supermarket on Sunday, I will buy groceries for the week so that I can cook food at home improve my eating habits.*

4. Have OTHERS help you achieve your goals: The science shows that we achieve more together. Try to find other people that share the same goals as you and find ways on how to work on those goals together. Working on goals together is more fun and can help a lot when one feels slightly discouraged and demotivated. Having someone work with you or support in achieving your goals is proven to be highly effective. Don’t forget to celebrate your achievements.

5. **Make your goals PUBLIC:** Behavioral Commitment Research shows that if you make your goals public to others, you are more likely to stick to them. Write them down, share them with others and have others remind you of your verbal commitments you made to achieve them. You will need this when your motivation is low or your interest is dropped. Expect this to happen, so tackle this before it does!

