

*Building Sustainable Practices*

# Dream Big . . . and be Specific

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*{Editor's Note: We welcome "Bodywork Economics" as a new column in the Washington Massage Journal.}*

Happy New Year! For some, the turning of the calendar means to-do lists, gratitude for the year just ended, or optimism for what lies ahead. We all bring renewed energy and plans into a new year. Even if you are not inclined toward "resolutions," consider the possibility that your personal and professional life will benefit if you take the time to figure out what you want out of the next twelve months of your life. Just like the time we spend with clients at the beginning of a session, your outline can lend focus to your business goals for the next year.

What's your BHAG—big, hairy audacious goal? A good guideline is to make goals S-M-A-R-T. That is, Specific-Measurable-Attainable-Reasonable-Timely. If your goal is not all these things, you won't be able to assess your progress or determine if you've met the goal and actualized your dreams. Let me be clear: This is neither a New Year's resolution plan nor counseling. It is strategically outlining the life you want and planning to enjoy the fruits of your labor. Dream big, and be specific.

Would you like to...

- Get ten more referrals per month from doctors?
- Find 50% of your new clients by word of mouth?
- Finish a certification you've been working toward?
- Have better relationships with your family or kids?
- Travel more?
- Take a two-week vacation?
- All of the above?

Remember: S-M-A-R-T. Wanting to "be more successful" or "make more money" doesn't cut it. If a client told you they wanted to "feel better" but refused to fill out an intake form or give you any specifics, how would you feel about working with them week in and week out? So why would you accept the same nebulous attitude from yourself in figuring out what you want in your business and life? To kick off the process, write down a couple S-M-A-R-T goals. Do it now!

Once your wish list is brewing, you can start working on a corresponding list of what's getting in your way. Over the years you've probably identified things that take up your mental energy or just plain annoy you. Next, I want you to write the things in your life—in or out of your control—that have prevented you from achieving your goals. Title this list "Drains Me." Examples: stress, fear of failing, feeling

overwhelmed, money, the boss, the kids, the commute, feeling shy, and so on.

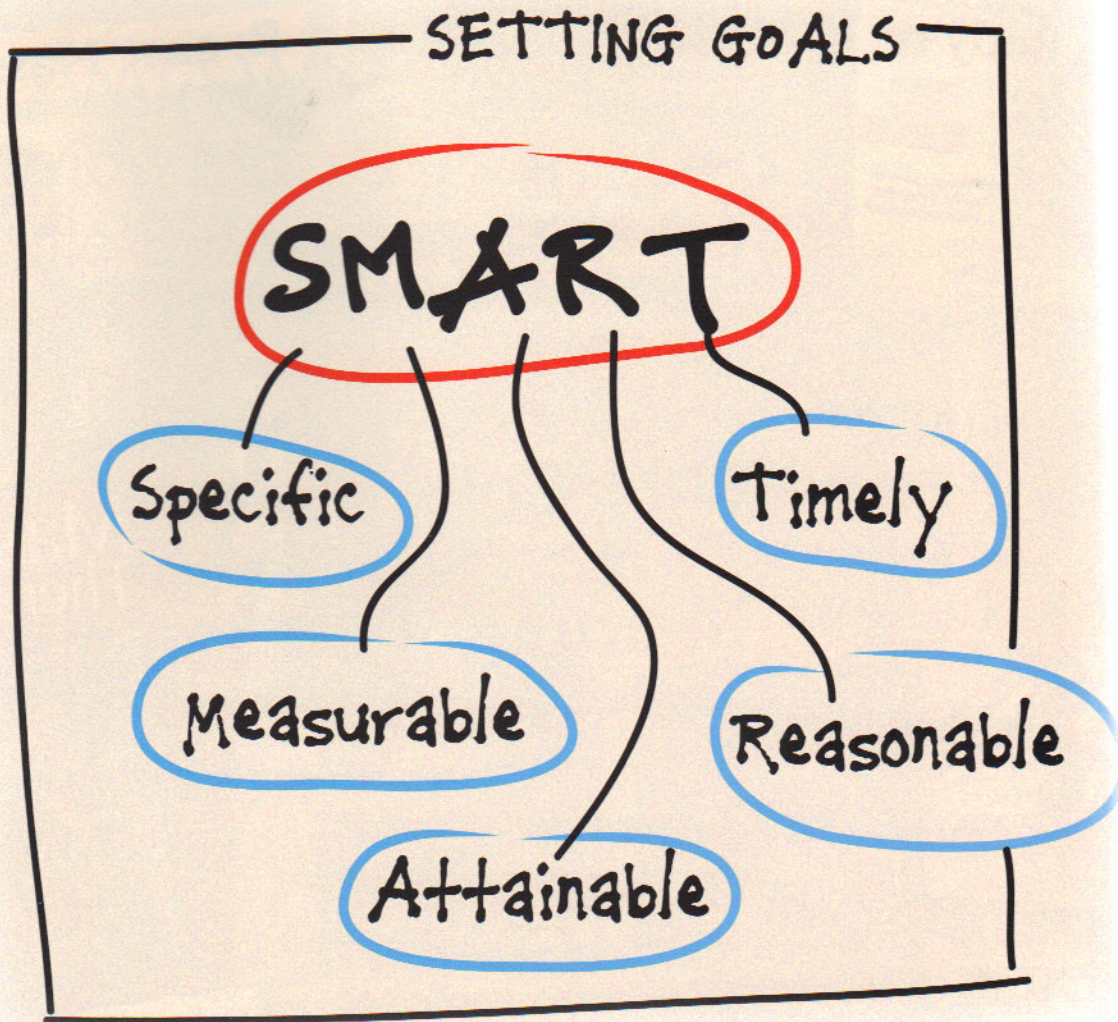
Right now, please jot down a few notes before you continue further with this article. Instead of just browsing the *Journal* and adding to the things you "should" do in your life, take a bit of productive self-development time to learn something about yourself.

With your "Drains Me" list in hand, you now need to find the help you need to overcome the biggest obstacles so you can achieve your S-M-A-R-T goals. Please know that you do not have to fix all of the items on your "Drains Me" list by yourself. Rarely does brilliance or personal development happen in a bubble. Alone, we're often too caught up in the details to have a creative mindset that really serves us.

Circle several items on the "Drains Me" list you feel most hinder you from getting what you want. Take a hard look at the circled items and brainstorm (on the same or another sheet of paper) how others might help you with these items. For instance, "Feeling shy" could be balanced by building one-on-one relationships with people who could provide referrals for you (which in turn would assist "Building relationships" if that's on your list). "Feeling overwhelmed" could be balanced by committing to delegate tasks that aren't pertinent or just scratching them off your to-do list altogether (and thus "Choosing commitments carefully" might be another good addition for your wish list).

This process takes a little time—but not nearly as much as always worrying about what's missing in your life! Writing down what you want is the first step in determining which S-M-A-R-T goals will serve you. It has been determined that we are 60% more likely to achieve goals we put in writing. A few more tips as you write: Dream big; let your internal voice of judgment take a break; invite input from people who care about you. Take the time to look at each idea you develop in the brainstorming session. Which speak strongest to you? Which could you act on immediately?

Once you have a meaningful goal and ideas on who can assist you, the next step is to give yourself a timeline. Write down three of your goals to meet in six months. Then back up and figure out what you need to do by the three-month mark to meet your six-month goals. Then write down what



you need to accomplish within one month to achieve the three-month goals. Finally, write what you need to do in the next two weeks to meet your one-month goals. You'll find that the more near-term, the more action-oriented. For example, maybe a six-month goal is to have twenty coffee dates with complementary providers that you want to develop a relationship with. By three months, you should be having coffee at least every other week with a fellow provider. So by the one-month mark you would need to contact providers to set up dates. To meet your one-month goal, you should make a list of providers to contact within two weeks.

This is not rocket science, but it does take some effort. Imagine a client who schedules a daily massage during the following year. What kind of treatment plan would you need to develop to serve this client? How big is your dream for their health? How big is their dream for their health? How would you avoid getting bored? What kind of homework would you do to make the most of your sessions? Our time and personal development are no less important than this client. While it's highly unlikely we'll ever see a client 365

consecutive days, we do have the opportunity to serve ourselves every day, and in a way that facilitates our hopes and dreams. Are you willing to take the steps needed to forge a new path for yourself?

For some encouraging reading on opening up your creative spirit, I recommend *A Whole New Mind: Why Right Brainers Will Rule the Future* by Daniel Pink or *The Art of Possibility* by Benjamin and Rosamund Zander.

My dream for this column is to share ideas to help you build the life you want through sustainability in your business and your life. Please e-mail me with any specific topics you would like to see addressed. Happy New Year!



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