

Add ART to your S.M.A.R.T. Goals

I've never been a big fan of S.M.A.R.T. goals. This standard acronym for goal setting always felt too confined and safe. *Specific* and *measurable* I could grasp, but *achievable*, *realistic* and *time-based*? Those guidelines don't feel very risky or passion-filled to me, and why set a goal if it doesn't scare you just a bit?

In my life, most of my big lessons have come from setting big goals, maybe even unrealistic ones, that I had a good chance of *not* attaining. For years I fantasized about being on *Oprah*, and while that was a significant stretch goal that never came to pass, it led me to conduct myself in a way that was congruent with an eventual guest spot on her show. What was there to lose?

I've also learned a great deal about myself and my goals by connecting them to my passions. Making a career out of speaking with very little savings and even less of a plan may not have been the most realistic or achievable undertaking at the time, but I sure worked hard at it. I found success against the odds because I had skill as a speaker and was passionate about my goals.

Goals are meant to stretch you a little bit. They're meant to point you in the direction of your dreams and make you want to chase after them at all costs. You can't reach your goals unless you take action, and you won't take action on goals that don't excite you. I am a Certified Professional Co-Active Life Coach with the Coaches Training Institute (CTI) and when I was gaining my certification I was introduced to goal setting the CTI way. We'll begin with the end in mind and add some ART to our S.M.A.R.T. See if you like this method as much as I do. T.R.A.M.S. goals, here we go:

Thrilling

Instead of focusing on the specific and measurable aspects of your goal right out of the gates, look first at adding some fuel to your goal-achieving fire. *Time-based* goals are good for success because, let's face it, if it takes too long to realize progress you're more likely to throw in the towel. But to keep things exciting let's add another T to the mix.

Thrilling goals are goals that are so exciting or important to you that they never seem to go away. And if those goals are always in the back of your mind, eventually you're going to have to conquer them.

Your goal isn't meant to be something you feel you *should* do. Create a goal that inspires you and thrills you. Ask yourself, *What possibilities exist for me beyond my goal? What will its completion bring to my life? How will I feel?* Connect to that vision and see what transpires.

Set goals not for the accomplishment of the objectives, but for who you will become in accomplishing them.

~ Jim Rhone

I knew I wanted to write a book. As an emerging speaker I was thrilled about the idea of one day holding my completed book in my hands. I had no idea what the book would be about, but I was thrilled with the idea of writing it. I held on to that thrilling vision for over 10 years until I was clear on the details of topic and execution. I'm certain I would have written the book sooner if I knew about this style of goal-setting. I'll clarify why in a moment.

Resonant

Setting realistic goals might help you achieve them more easily but it likely won't help you grow beyond what you already know. In my version of SMART goals, we move away from establishing a *realistic* goal to creating a *resonant* one.

What a great word.

res·o·nant *adj.*

- a. Strong and deep in tone; resounding.
- b. Having a lasting presence or effect; enduring.
- c. Strongly reminiscent; evocative.

Is the goal you've set something you truly want? Does it move you toward the person you want to be? Does it have a *lasting presence* in your head and heart as you move toward completion?

If your goals don't resonate with you at a deeper level, they will be harder to stay connected to. I always knew I wanted to write a book, but I was rarely clear on the topic. It was through some trial and error and a whole bunch of digging deep that I tapped into this idea of *energy now* that allows me to speak to the topics of health, personal energy, success and fulfillment that I'm so passionate about. The topic of *ENERGY* resonated so completely with me that the ideas for the book just started coming... but I still wasn't writing. I needed the power of A to make things happen.

Accountable

Any goal worth making is worth achieving, and if you make your goals well you will. So, let's just accept *achievable* as a given and change this A to Accountability. One of the best ways to find success with anything is to have someone hold you accountable to your process. I know what you're thinking: *The last thing I need is someone scolding me if I don't succeed.*

Accountability shouldn't be about guilt or nagging, it should be about support and focus. Without this step my book wouldn't have been written. In the early stages of writing *Energy Now* I met weekly with two other authors and our book coach via a conference call, to talk about progress and set step-wise goals toward completion of our book proposals and first chapters. They held

me accountable to the process. At the late stages of book writing my publisher and my life coach both had a hand in that.

With the old model of SMART goal setting I could tell myself that a fourteen-chapter book on personal energy was absolutely achievable – in fact I did...several times – but it wasn't until I connected accountability to my process that I *achieved* this ten-year-old goal. It's powerful stuff.

Once you've established these first three elements, then specific and measurable take care of themselves.

Specific

Good goals are crystal clear in their outcome. What do you want for yourself? *I want to write a book someday* doesn't clarify my goal all that much. *I want to write a self-help book* gets a little clearer. If I say *I want to write a book to help people get more energy in their lives*, it's easier to visualize the outcome and get started.

Measurable

Make your goal measurable and attach a date to it. This step is essential because it helps you know when you've reached it. If you want to reduce your credit card debt you can set a goal to pay off \$1500 by February 15th. On that date you'll know whether you succeeded or not. You might also set a goal to lose ten pounds by April 1st, or have five website pages built by October 30th. All are goals you can measure easily once the date arrives. You've either reached the goal or you haven't. *By May 1st I will finish writing my fourteen-chapter book that will help people get more energy in their lives* is both measurable and specific.

Let's use this T.R.A.M.S model for a fun fitness example. Let's say you have a goal of training for and completing a running race. What would make that goal thrilling? Maybe deep down you've dreamed of completing a MARATHON but have been too afraid to *put it out there*? Wouldn't it be **thrilling** to cross the finish line of your very first marathon?

It might be, but a marathon is a lot of work, and what if you're not motivated to train? Your chances of success with training will go up if there is something meaningful about the race that **resonates** with who you are and what you love. Maybe you love music and would be excited about running the San Diego ROCK N' ROLL Marathon where they have a band at every mile. Cool.

Or maybe you decide to combine this race with your love of travel and choose a fun destination like HAWAII to run your marathon. I don't know about you, but the idea of escaping winter and heading to Honolulu in December would motivate me to get those training runs in.

Now suddenly the idea of NOT getting to the start line becomes a real fear. So, to avoid the disappointment of watching another goal come and go, ensure you add **accountability** to the mix. You decide to sign up for a marathon training group that will provide you with a training plan, running partners, weekly info sessions and runs, support, and guidance. So even on those days where you're talking yourself out of your training run you'll have a whole support group to keep you motivated. It's starting to feel more real isn't it?

Michelle Cederberg

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By the time you've worked through these first three steps the **specific** and **measurable** take care of themselves. Choose the specific date that you will run your measurable 26.2 mile race and set specific training runs of measurable distances to get there. You get the idea.

Wouldn't you agree that *smart* goals established in this way are far more powerful than *achievable*, *realistic* and *time-based* goals? The truth is, when we connect our goals to our passions it adds a power and presence to them that is difficult to ignore, and as if by magic, the goals become achievable!

#yougotthis

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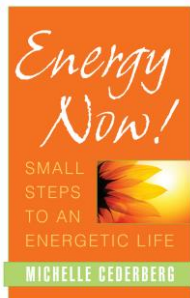
For over 15 years, Certified Speaking Professional Michelle Cederberg has been captivating audiences across North America with her empowering and humorous messages about how to set worthwhile goals, get energized for success, and live a Carpe Freakin' Diem life.

An in-demand speaker, author, coach and consultant, she believes that personal and professional success is directly influenced by the physical, mental and emotional capacity we each have within us to create the life and career we want. She helps people boost that capacity, so they gain clarity, build confidence, and get the discipline to do the freakin' work.

She holds a Masters in Kinesiology, a BA in Psychology, a specialization in Health and Exercise Psychology, is a Certified Exercise Physiologist, a Certified Professional Co-Active Life Coach, and an ORSC-Trained Team Coach. She truly combines mind, body and practicality to empower change.

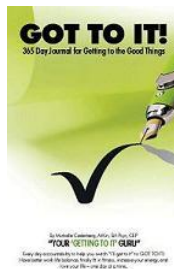
Michelle is the author of three books. Her newest book *It's How We Work* will be released late 2019.

Michelle's Books



Energy Now! Small Steps to an Energetic Life

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