

## Goals

You previously identified the cluttered areas in your home that require work to improve safety and make them usable for everyday activities. Information on the risk levels that may be present in various areas should help you prioritize where to start. Now it is time to set goals for yourself to actually complete the work. You can increase the likelihood that you will achieve your goals by making SMART goals (Doran 1981).

### What Are SMART Goals?

SMART is an acronym in which the letters represent five key qualities of achievable goals.

S = Specific: Be precise. What exactly do you want to do?

M = Measurable: How much, how often, and when will you know you have done it?

A = Achievable: What is involved in achieving this goal? Is the goal something where:

- you have previous experience doing it?
- you have done something similar in the past?
- you know where to go and what to do to learn it?
- you know how to get the help you need to do it?

R = Relevant: Is your goal important enough to make it a priority and to apply the required effort to achieve it?

T = Time frame: By what date do you want to have reached your goal?

On the following pages, I provide examples of how to create goals that meet these criteria. The goals you make should help you fulfill the basic needs you have. According to Tony Robbins (2018), humans have six major needs:

1. Certainty: assurance that you can avoid pain and gain pleasure
2. Uncertainty/variety: the need for the unknown, change, new stimuli
3. Significance: feeling unique, important, special, or needed
4. Connection/love: a strong feeling of closeness or union with someone or something
5. Growth: an expansion of capacity, capability, or understanding
6. Contribution: a sense of service and focus on helping, giving to, and supporting others

One way to decide on a goal is to focus decluttering efforts on an area of your environment that is really bothering you, and to tie the motivation to a reason that is really important to you. For example: Today I will spend 15 minutes e.g., decluttering my front entryway. This is a priority to me because I would like my best friend visit me in two weeks, to show me how to knit hats and booties for premature babies in our local hospital, and I would like to be safe in my home.

If after my first 15-minute decluttering period I feel up to another 15-minute decluttering period, I can go ahead. But if I commit to that 2<sup>nd</sup> 15-minute decluttering period, then I must complete it, and no more. The reason I want you to do this in this way, is that I want you to learn how to make a conscious plan you can commit to, and then carry out that plan, not to go off the plan and make it drudgery which you will not want to return to the next day. Trust me. Don't improvise.

## Types of Goals

There's more to life than decluttering goals. I recommend that my clients make three goals for each period we are setting goals for.

Goal 1 relates to hoarding.

Goal 2 relates to increasing non-hoarding-related play, pleasure, and joy.

Goal 3 relates to making progress to learn or do something they have always wanted to learn or do.

## Examples of the Three Types of Goals

Goal 1 (hoarding related): Each day, I will

- ✓ take one pile, 2 inches deep (gradually increase), and
- ✓ sort using the 1-10 scaling process and permanent place system

*Remember:* Starting is the *hardest part*. Do the thing that you are LEAST want to do FIRST, and get it out of the way.

Goal 2 (play, pleasure, and joy related): I will, for a predetermined, manageable period of time each day,

- ✓ read a book or magazine and dream, play a CD and sing or dance along, or do both  
(Go wild!);
- ✓ do a puzzle and congratulate myself for each part I solve;
- ✓ call a friend and not complain or listen to complaints;
- ✓ go for a coffee or tea; and
- ✓ sit in the park, close my eyes, feel the breeze on my face, and breathe in the fresh air.

Goal 3 (learning or doing something I have always wanted to do): I will

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- ✓ take up knitting; and
- ✓ learn to play chess.

## **Setting Goals**

Using the “My Goals Worksheet” that follows, set out goals for yourself or, if you are supporting another person, help that person set goals. Keep the following tips in mind:

**S = Specific:** Be as precise as possible when choosing your goal.

- Determine the specific steps and tasks needed to achieve your goal.
- Use the words “I will” because these words express action and commitment, not wishful thinking.

**M = Measurable:** Set a specific amount of time to put into your goal each day or week and describe what achieving the goal looks like.

- How many hours per day, or how many days per week for how many hours each day?
- How will you know when you have reached your goal?

**A = Achievable:** Make sure your goal is within reach using your current abilities and experience.

- Be realistic about your time frame and how much time and energy you will be able and willing to give to your goal.
- Make sure you know how to access any resources you may need to achieve your goal.

**R** = Relevant: Ask yourself if this goal is important enough to actually motivate you to do it.

**T** = Time frame: Decide on an overall length of time to put toward your goal.

- How long will it take you to achieve this goal?
- Use the format “from this date, until this date” so that you have a firm timeframe for beginning and ending. </UNL>

### **My Goals Worksheet**

<p>Between ____ / ____ / ____ and ____ / ____ / ____ (dates)</p> <p>I will do the following:</p> <p>1. Hoarding related: I will</p> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>2. Play, pleasure, and fun related: I will</p> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>3. Learning or doing something I have always wanted to do: I will</p> <hr/> <hr/>