

The start of a new year is the perfect time to set goals for the coming months. To create concrete goals that you can both dream about and achieve, try these tips:

- ▶ **Define your goal.** When choosing a goal, it's important to figure out whether it makes sense for you at this time. Questions to ask yourself include:
  - Will focusing on this goal yield immediate rewards, or is it a necessary part of a long-term plan?
  - Is this goal self-contained, or will reaching it unlock multiple options for me?
  - Do I have the financial resources and time to focus on this goal right now, or would it be better to concentrate on something less challenging at this point in my life?
- ▶ **Break goals into smaller steps.** Create a schedule for accomplishing each small step (aim for checking off one a week). If you are ahead of schedule, either revise your plan or use the spare time to rest and regroup.
- ▶ **Organize effectively.** Arrange smaller steps into a logical sequence so that your project maintains momentum. For instance, if you will need to develop a specific skill before you can move on to a later step, schedule learning it early. This will keep your project from stalling out.
- ▶ **Celebrate milestones.** Sometimes, accomplishing a smaller goal may be more satisfying than finishing a much larger one. Keep in mind that what you learn and who you meet along the way may end up being the most valuable part of the experience. The joy is often in the journey.

# Concrete Goals

- ▶ **Plan a reward.** A nice dinner or fun day is a good way to reward yourself for reaching a goal.

While goals are important, keep in mind that life is not always a linear journey. Sometimes, you may discover that your end goal isn't what you hoped it would be or that your interests take you in another direction. It's a good idea to periodically re-evaluate your goals and consider if they still fit your plans for the future.

LifeMatters can help you set goals and break them into concrete steps. Call 24/7/365.



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