

# ORGANIZING

## Make smart organizing resolutions

Happy New Year! By the time you read this, we'll be a few days into 2020. Whether or not you have made any New Year's resolutions, most of us will be



**Angie Hyche** thinking about them. If you're like most people, you may be thinking something like, "I probably should make some kind of resolutions or goals, but I don't usually do well keeping them, so why even try? I think I'll just skip it this year."

While it's true that success rates for keeping New Year's resolutions aren't great, it's also true that people who make New Year's resolutions are 10 times more likely to meet their goals than people who want to change their behavior but don't make resolutions. So obviously setting goals is still a good idea.

When we make New Year's resolutions (or any type of goals) and aren't successful in achieving them, we usually blame ourselves. This blame starts us on a vicious cycle of self-condemnation that never serves us well, and makes us even less likely to set goals in the future. But maybe the problem isn't you. Maybe the problem is that you're not making the right kind of resolutions. Maybe your goals are unrealistic, too vague, or just not well-suited to your life. We all want to reach our goals, so let's talk about how to make the kind of goal we can reach.

Getting organized is a very common New Year's resolution. In fact, it usually makes the Top 10 list of resolutions every year. I'm so glad that it's on the forefront of so many people's minds, because I definitely believe that getting more organized is one of the best uses of your time! However, setting a goal of getting more organized is just like setting a goal of being more healthy. It's way too broad, can't really be measured, doesn't include a plan,



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and is kind of overwhelming. So what makes a good goal? The best kind of goal to set is a SMART goal. SMART is an acronym for five specific qualities of an effective goal. The most effective goals are Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic and Time-bound.

A specific goal says exactly what you're going to do. A measurable goal is one for which you can easily tell when you're making progress on it and when you've achieved it. An achievable goal is one that can realistically be attained. A relevant goal is one that will benefit your life, making you happier, healthier or more successful. A time-bound goal includes some kind of schedule or time frame. If you want to set an organizing goal with the best chance of success, make sure your goal includes all five of these criteria. This really takes goal-setting to a new level, doesn't it? It takes

some time to think through all of these principles. I guarantee you that this thinking and planning is worth every bit of time and effort.

Now let's talk about a common organizing goal and evaluate it based on the SMART criteria. **Goal:** "I'm going to organize my house." **Problems:** This goal is probably relevant, but it's probably not achievable. It isn't specific or measurable, has no plan, and isn't time-bound. **Better Goal:** "I'm going to organize my garage so that there's nothing on the floor and I will be able to park both cars in it." This is a little better. It's more specific, measurable and relevant. But it still doesn't include any plan or timeline. **SMART Goal:** By the end of February, I will organize the garage. I will know I've succeeded if there is nothing on the floor, and I am able to park both cars in the garage. This goal is specific; the garage

is the one area to be organized. This goal is measurable. It will be easy to tell if the goal has been met because the floor will be clear and two cars will be parked in the garage. This is an achievable goal. Limiting the goal to one room makes this goal attainable. This goal is relevant. Being able to park both cars in the garage and having a clear floor will improve his/her daily life. This goal is time-bound; it will be completed by the end of February. Now that this goal has been adapted to make it SMART, now what? I can't just sit back and wish for it to happen. I need a detailed action plan. Here's an example of a garage organizing action plan: I will set aside a Saturday on my calendar. I will pull everything out of the garage, grouping items into categories as I go. I will eliminate anything that I don't love and use by selling or

donating. I will purchase and install some shelving. I will purchase and install a wall-mounted track system. I will place items that I am keeping either in clear labeled bins on shelves or hang on the track system. If you're thinking, "Wow! That's a lot of work for just one goal," you're right! It does take a lot of work to think through your goal, make sure it's a SMART goal, and to come up with a detailed plan. Taking the time to complete all of these steps is key to being successful in reaching your goal. The fact that it involves a lot of work is a good reason not to make too many goals in the first place! You may have a lot of areas you want to organize, and it's OK to make a list of all of them. But you stand a much better chance of success if you will just focus on one goal at a time. You could even start with something very small. Conquering one small area can give you the momentum to keep going. Even with a small goal, make it a SMART one. **Problem:** The junk drawer is a jumbled mess. It's so full that the drawer always gets jammed, and I can never find anything. **SMART Goal:** I'm going to organize my junk drawer by the end of the weekend. I will know I've succeeded if I can easily open and close the drawer and can find what I need when I am finished. Now make a detailed action plan, and get busy organizing! What if your home is so disorganized that you don't even know where to begin? I recommend that you get some help. If you don't have family and friends that can help, give me a call. I'd love to help you reach your goals!

Angie Hyche is a professional organizer and owner of Shipshape Solutions in Kingsport. Email her at [beshipshape@gmail.com](mailto:beshipshape@gmail.com).

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