

Tools for Wise Leadership

A programme of TWR-Africa, produced by TWR-Zimbabwe, presented by Rev Dr Roy Musasiwa

Series 14: Personal Development Planning

Talk 5: Personal Development Planning - Planning SMART Goals

Welcome to the programme Tools for Wise Leadership where we are focusing on personal development planning for leaders. We are saying you have to take responsibility for your own personal development so that you can model this aspect for your followers. You have to be intentional about it; you are not a tree that just develops by itself as long as the environment is conducive to such growth. You are a person created in the image of God, with a mind and a will. Therefore your development should be a matter of intelligent planning.

And just a reminder: We have stated your personal development plan should consist of the following four elements:

- Your vision of the future
- Your life mission
- Your goals and strategies
- The values you live by

Having looked at vision and mission we started to talk about personal goals and strategies. A goal is what you intend to achieve. A strategy is how you intend to achieve it. It is necessary to come up with goals in life that cover every aspect of life, the physical, spiritual, professional, social relationships, financial and mental improvement goals. Such goals must also be SMART, which means they must be:

- Specific,
- Measurable,
- Attainable,
- Realistic, and
- Time-bound.

Today we start by taking a closer look at each of the components of the acronym SMART.

Firstly goals must be Specific. That means you should not be vague or ambiguous when you set smart goals. Ambiguous goals produce ambiguous results. If you say you want to be educated you are being vague. What is being educated? For someone getting through primary school is being educated, whereas for someone else you are only educated if you have a degree or a professional qualification. So be specific in your goal. Do not hide behind vague spiritually sounding phrases like reaching a new height of spiritual maturity. These kinds of phrases are not specific.

And this takes us to the letter M in SMART. Our goals need to be **measurable**. A goal that says “I want to lose weight” is not adequate because it does not have a measure attached to it. But if you say that you want to lose one kilogram per month for the next five months is a good measurable goal.

Next in SMART is “A” which stands for **attainable**. It does not do any good to set goals that are so high they are unattainable. In Luke 15:28-32 Jesus in a parable referred to 2 people whose foolishness resulted in setting goals that were too high and that they could not attain:

- For which of you, said Jesus, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, ‘This

Tools for Wise Leadership, Series 14: Personal Development Planning

fellow began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace.

So when we set goals we have to ensure they are attainable, but of course without limiting what God might want to accomplish in your life.

The R in the acronym SMART stands for **realistic** which is somewhat related to the concept attainable that we have considered. This means the goal should be within our scope of capability. It should not be too big or too small compared with our resources. A goal that is realistic is one that we can reasonably make real while at the same time stretching us.

The last letter T in SMART stands for **time-bound**. Every goal should have a time frame attached to it. You can say that your goal is to build a three-bedroomed house in your particular suburb. Now that is specific, measurable, attainable and realistic. But what is missing is the time element. That missing element is likely to make you procrastinate – to just delay and delay and postpone the achievement of the goal. After 5 years you might still not have built the house because you did not specify the time limit. Just specifying the time limit creates some pressure for you to accomplish the goal by the given time.

So, as you set your goals please make sure they are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound. That is being SMART as a leader.

It is now time to apply the concept of SMART goals to personal development planning. Remember that our personal goals must be holistic? Ok, then, what are your goals for your physical wellbeing?

The closest asset that we all have is our bodies. We cannot afford to neglect them or abuse them as so many people do. The Bible says that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and that we must glorify God with those bodies. Are you adding value to your body? Let me remind you of some things we said when we were talking about leadership stewardship. If you cannot add value to your own body you can hardly be expected to add value to other things entrusted to you. And you are either adding value to your body or subtracting from it.

Now we can add value to our bodies in many ways. What we eat is either adding value to or subtracting value from our bodies. Refined Western foods have brought many lifestyle diseases to our bodies. Many people now don't have the patience to cook healthy food. They would rather just buy junk foods. What is the result? Heart diseases, ulcers, obesity, high blood pressure and other food related diseases. Worse than junk food is an intake of harmful substances like tobacco and drugs. When something takes away your money and leaves you in a worse condition it surely means bad stewardship of our bodies and our resources doesn't it?

And what about exercise? Our bodies are designed to be exercised in order to remain healthy. Unfortunately the modern lifestyle is causing our bodies to be lazy. In offices we are sitting behind desks. We get out of offices into cars to drive home. We drive to the corner store which is only 400 meters away to buy bread. No wonder again lifestyle diseases afflict us.

Then of course poor stewardship of bodies comes through reckless behaviour. Reckless driving may be putting at risk the body which you need to function with. And so many people in Africa are HIV positive just because of risky and recklessly sexual behaviour.

Tools for Wise Leadership, Series 14: Personal Development Planning

Jesus grew and became strong in body. That must surely mean that Jesus had good goals for his physical well-being. So what are your goals and how will you achieve them? Remember goals must go along with strategy if they are to be useful goals. Here is an example from my life. At 105kg my weight is just too much. It is giving my heart too much pumping work and exposing me to other preventable diseases. So I have set myself the goal of losing a kilogram every month until I am 95kg. My strategy for achieving this is to cut my starch and sugar intake by 50% while at the same time doubling my physical activity per week. This is just one of my physical development goals and I hope it serves as an illustration of what we mean by having smart physical goals.

Our time has run out, so let's reserve discussion of other areas of goal setting for the next programme. In this programme we have covered the meaning of SMART goals and we have used physical development planning as an example.

Now that you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. Thank you so much for listening, and let's make a date for the next programme.

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