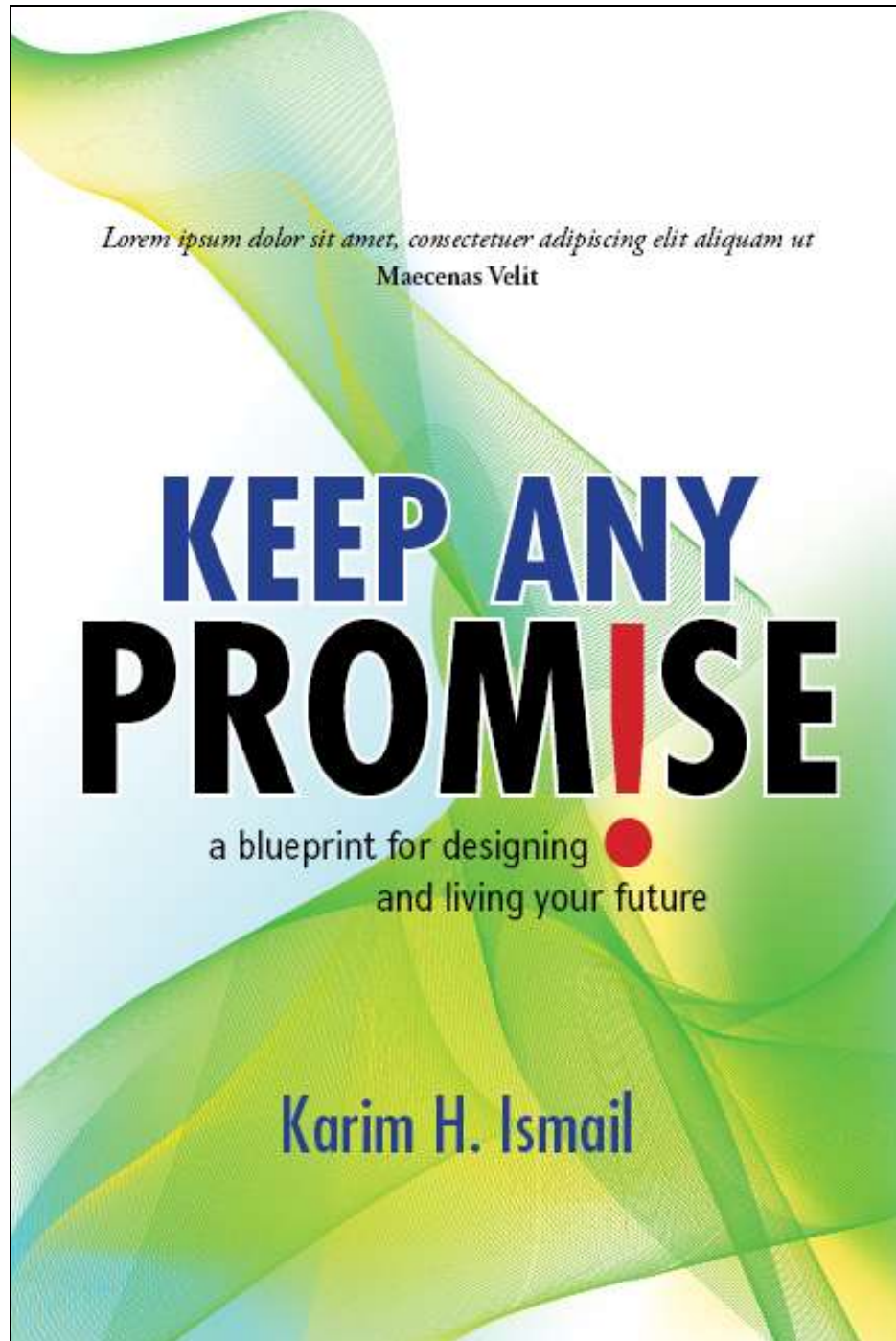


Special Report:
**12 Stop-You-Dead-in-Your-Tracks, Mistakes You Don't
Want to Make That Will Keep You from Your Goals**



Setting SMART (S.M.A.R.T.) goals: or is there a smarter way to achieve your goals?

You have likely heard of the SMART (or S.M.A.R.T.) system of goal setting, which is based on goals being specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely. While this is a very useful way of looking at goals, I believe it misses out on MANY other key factors that you will want to consider if you wish to achieve huge goals.

In this brief report, I list the 12 mistakes that most people make in goal setting. If you pay special attention to avoiding these mistakes, your chances of achieving your goal will soar!

I have also used the example of a HUGE goal I set, and share with you how about I went about thinking through and achieving this audacious goal.

At the end of the report, I also provide you with a checklist of Do's that you can use for every goal you set.

To your success,

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Mistake 1: Not focusing on Your Most Important and Audacious Goal

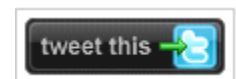
When thinking about the results or goals you want to achieve, the 1st mistake that people make is not focusing on those goals that have the most meaning to them, and which are HUGE and AUDACIOUS. Think of those achievements from which you have the most to gain. You will discover a simple truth: our minds do not change their deeply-ingrained ways of thinking if we set small goals.

Here's an example. Say you want to lose weight. If you set a small goal of five to ten pounds, you will likely make some progress. But your mind does not have to think differently. Now suppose you had an audacious goal? Like losing forty pounds or more and keeping the weight off permanently?

Your mind needs to engage on a different level. It knows that tinkering with food choices, exercise, etc., is not the answer. Something needs to change in a drastic way. Indeed, significant lifestyle changes are needed.

Keep in mind that no matter how large your goal, you will be achieving it in small chunks. But **the act of setting large, seemingly impossible goals spurs your mind to think differently.** And thinking differently is key to achieving your goal, because after all, it's your current thinking that has landed you where you are today.

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My audacious goal was to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro, at 19340 feet, one of the world's seven peaks. In mid 2003, most people would have dismissed it as a pipe dream, given I could not walk to the end of my driveway. But I set this HUGE goal, and below, I share with you how I reached it.

Mistake #2: Not having a clear timeframe or deadline

Think about a time in your life when you had a deadline. Perhaps before leaving for a trip, handing in a school assignment, or completing a project at work? You were likely extremely focused when you had a deadline.

The 2nd mistake that most people make is **not defining a clear deadline or timeframe for achieving their goal**. I highly recommend a three-year timeframe for a huge goal. But go with whatever timeframe your instinct signals to you.

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There is another vital reason for defining a deadline. A deadline is key to defining milestones along the path to your goals, which allows you to chunk up your goal into manageable parts. We'll look at milestones a bit later.



I set a very clear timeframe of reaching this goal in 1.5 years, taking the opportunity of a three week school break in January 2005 that my daughter would have to undertake the trek with me, and selecting the best possible time for good weather

Mistake #3: Not defining a clear measurement for achieving your goal

One of the biggest mistakes people make is not defining clearly how they will measure “success”.

For some goals, it is easy to define how you will measure progress. But I believe everything can be measured, directly or indirectly via a proxy

For example, if your goal was to “lose weight and get fitter,” you could measure weight loss, your Body Mass Index, the distance you can easily walk or run in a given time, etc. These are very concrete ways to measure weight loss and fitness gain.

If your goal was “improved family relationships,” it is more difficult to measure progress. Sometimes, you may have to define a whole set of “soft” performance measures to give you a good way to assess your progress.

In this example, is the frequency of family contact increased, especially if there is geographical distance between family members? Are the interactions deeper and more meaningful and satisfying? Are you increasingly happy emerging from those interactions?

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One way or the other, each of your goals can and should be measured, or you will never know whether you are making progress or have met your goals.



My measure of success was simple: get to the top of Mt. Kilimanjaro at 19,340 feet without endangering my life or those in the group.

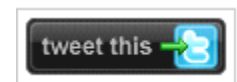
Mistake #4: Not defining your Compelling Reasons for wanting to achieve your goal

A common mistake is not articulating a clear, compelling reason (actually, reasons!) for *why* you must achieve a goal, especially a huge goal. Why is it important to very clearly spell out your compelling reasons ?

Simply because achieving any goal will likely involve changes in your life. It will possibly take you out of your comfort zone. It will most likely challenge your thinking. It may require hard work.

So unless you have compelling and powerful reasons for why it is important for you to achieve your goal, you significantly diminish your chances of achievement.

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Focus on why it's really important to you to achieve this goal. Your reasons could stem from a huge challenge, from your pain, someone else's pain, an image, etc. Think hard, and make these reasons as emotional as possible, as we are all driven by our emotions, no matter how rational we think we are.

Be careful not to focus on benefits, as we will look at the importance of benefits soon. Instead simply list *why* it's important to achieve this result.

I defined 10 absolutely compelling reasons why I was undertaking the climb. I printed these out and laminated them into a small card, which I kept next to me, and memorized. Every time I wanted to turn back, I would think of one of these reasons, and it would spur me on –to put one foot before the next, especially at high altitude. I also used the 10 reasons to ensure I was not suffering from altitude sickness: if I could remember them all, I figured I was doing OK! Here are the 10 reasons.

1. To prove to myself that I can take on a **huge physical challenge** and accomplish it
2. A **21st birthday gift** for my daughter Aliya that she will cherish for the rest of her life
3. To **inspire others** to set and accomplish huge goals
4. To experience and **celebrate nature** through a photo essay/s
5. Because I have **told the world** I am doing it!
6. To have **time for deep reflection**, out of the box thinking, and different perspectives on life
7. To experience first hand the challenge of the mountain so that I can assess its suitability as a **leadership challenge for high schools students** at independent schools across Canada
8. To help students **raise funds for scholarship endowments** at their school and for **local, child centred educational initiatives**
9. To **raise awareness of HIV/AIDs in North America** among independent school students
10. To fulfill a **33 year dream**, having taken my first flight over Kilimanjaro when I was 10 years old.

Mistake #5: Not defining the Benefits You Expect to Gain

We all know that we will achieve some benefits from reaching our goal. But it would be a big mistake to not **define the key benefits or results you expect with absolute clarity**. The clearer you are, the more you will be more driven to do what it takes to achieve your goal.

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Make this list as detailed as possible: the more benefits to be gained, the greater the focus you will have on the goal.

Getting clear about the benefits of achieving your goal is therefore critical to achieving your goals, which in turn are crucial to keeping your promises to yourself, your family and the world.



The key benefits I defined were:

- 1. To prove to myself that I could go way out of my comfort zone;*
- 2. To be a role model to others: if I could do this, I figured anyone else could! Here, a group of students from Crescent School, Toronto is at the top as a direct result of the role modeling.*
- 3. To raise \$1 million in 5 years for developing world projects*

Mistake #6: Not willing to face up to the Consequences of Not Achieving Your Goal

The psychologist Sigmund Freud observed that the human mind is consciously and subconsciously motivated by two forces: the need to avoid pain and the need to gain pleasure. Pain is often more immediate than pleasure, so we may become more concerned with avoiding pain and, in general, develop a preference towards avoidance.

So it is important to **define with clarity the consequences of *not* achieving your goal**, something many people forget to do.

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Put another way, what is the pain that will result from not achieving your goal? As you define these consequences, you will be motivated to avoid this pain and to focus on your goal, especially if you have also clearly outlined the benefits of achieving it.



The key consequence of not achieving my goal would have been my inability to motivate others to take on huge challenges. This was particularly important since I wanted to inspire students to climb this mountain, and raised hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The image of this girl reaching her hand out for chocolate (that we could not give her because it would upset her stomach), and her sister guardian next to her, all at very tender ages when they should have both been at school, became seared in my mind. As the going got tougher, I reminded myself that not completing the climb would possibly mean that I could not help thousands of little girls like her down the road.

Mistake #7: Not pre-defining the Obstacles to Achieving Your Goal

Life throws us many challenges, which we often view as obstacles that prevent us from getting to our goals. These obstacles then stop us dead in our tracks from achieving our goals.

So the BIGGEST mistake people make is not embracing these obstacles. For in them lies the solution to achieving your goals.

Why? Well, over thousands of years, as a species, man has learned to out-think obstacles and find solutions. This has been the primary reason for our survival as a species, and for the progress we have made.

So if you define your obstacles carefully, you will find that your mind very quickly finds solutions, no matter the circumstances. It's a remarkable skill we all have.

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There were many obstacles in my path. Below, I share these, and the solutions I found.

Mistake #8: Not enough focus on the Solutions to Overcoming Your Obstacles?

If you have defined the possible obstacles to your goal, your mind will suddenly perceive solutions where none existed before.

Why? I suggest that it's because, as a species, humans are instinctive problem-solvers. The mistake most people make is not listing their obstacles on paper. If you do so, perspective usually changes. But if we don't put them down on paper, challenges usually loom large in our minds, where they keep growing and growing and growing!

So don't make the mistake of not thinking of solutions. **For each obstacle you defined, brainstorm one or more possible solutions.** If you find that you are unable to define all the solutions on the first try, don't worry. Just keep coming back to this list, and eventually solutions will come to you.

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Remember, problem solving is ingrained in our nature

	Obstacle	Solution
1	<i>Not enough time to train, given my busy work and volunteer schedule</i>	<i>I trained as best as I could during weekdays, cutting down on sleep, and then trained intensively on weekends</i>
2	<i>Cost was high, and we were trying to recover our financial footing</i>	<i>Scrimped and saved, borrowed some equipment</i>
3	<i>Health challenges including Achilles tendonitis</i>	<i>Army of supportive health care practitioners</i>
4	<i>Had a daily lay priest role, early morning</i>	<i>Had to take 17 days off/others were honoured to fill in, I just had to ask</i>
5	<i>Time off work as we were re-establishing ourselves</i>	<i>Partner took on my role</i>
6	<i>Spouse did not approve quietly— her fears that I would hurt myself or die on the mountain</i>	<i>I reassured her as best I could, but then had to learn to ignore her views if I was to fulfill my mission</i>

Mistake #9: Trying to do it all alone

Often when facing a goal, we make the mistake of assuming we have to accomplish the goal on our own. Why do we put this pressure on ourselves? This is surely one of the biggest mistakes anyone can make!

There are many, many resources in the universe that we can tap into. We need only ask. Since your ultimate aim is to achieve your goal, does it matter if you achieve your goal on your own, or if you get help along the way?

Enlisting the help of those around you (and I am deeply convinced that most people want to help) makes it much easier to reach your destination.

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So enlist every resource you can in helping you achieve your goals. Especially seek the help of experts who can help accelerate your learning, and soon, you will be well on your way to exceeding your goal.

BTW: Resources can be people, tools, financial or spiritual systems, or anything you wish. You might also want to include the resources that you would like to enlist, but feel you cannot for one reason or another. Then watch what happens!



I had many friends I enlisted. Had it not been for their constant support, encouragement, and assistance, there is no way I would have made it on the trip, or up the mountain. Everyone was ecstatic to be part of the journey (and maybe a thankful that I was not asking them to climb!)

Mistake #10: Not setting clear milestones on your path to success

Sometimes reaching a goal feels miraculous, like a quantum leap. But if you look closely, you'll notice that the goal was attained by moving from one step to the next. **To make steady progress, it is critical to define steps and timeframes along the way.** Timeframes allow you to assess your goal, determine your progress, and take corrective action.

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Many people make the unfortunate mistake of not setting clear milestones i.e. well-defined steps with clear timeframes.

I have found that it is best to define 90 day milestones. Why 90 days? It's long enough for you to achieve meaningful progress (rather than a 30 day timeframe, which can sometimes be too short). But it's much shorter than an annual milestone, thus allowing you four times in a year when you can measure progress and take any required corrective action.

Be as specific as you can about your milestones in order to easily measure them.

My key milestones were training-related. I had 1.5 years to get fit. One of the first things I did was enrol in the 60km Weekend to End Breast Cancer walk, and trained with teams for a whole year, then completed the Walk in 2004 (and for four more years after that). I also enrolled in a walking ½ marathon. And each weekend, I would increase my walking/training distance. Gradually, I felt fitter as the day approached – only to have a recurring Achilles tendon issue flare up three weeks before the event!

Mistake #11: Not sharing your goal widely

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Sharing your goal with others is vital to your success. However, many people are uncomfortable doing this, so they make the mistake of hiding their goal, or only sharing it with one person.

You might feel uncomfortable at first, but hiding your goal will not help you.

Instead, you will find that when you have the courage to share your goal, you articulate it more clearly for yourself, and you strengthen your commitment to your goal. Sharing your goal also allows you to receive objective feedback; by sharing your huge goal, you will undoubtedly inspire friends, family, and colleagues. So please consider doing what we always ask children to do, and share!

You will find it most helpful if you share your goal with people who will give you encouragement and feedback. They should also challenge you when you are having difficulty. Be careful, though, of naysayers (and there are plenty of them), for they will undermine your confidence. So select this small group carefully, and keep them updated regularly, for they will spur your progress.

Once you have selected the people (a minimum of three people please!) with whom you would like to share your goals, ensure you will commit to updating regularly, ideally every two weeks.

I found that as I shared my goal, people started responding in all kinds of unexpected and supportive ways. One man, who I had met only once when undertaking a Weekend to End Breast Cancer training walk, lent me his entire trekking kit! Health practitioners dropped or lowered their fees to work on just about every part of my body! Life coaches spent time inspiring me! I learned that the more widely I shared my goal, the more widely the universe responded, all the way up the mountain too!

Mistake #12: Not visualizing with clarity what Your Goal will Look Like, Feel Like, and Sound Like

No Olympic athlete or world-class performer ever achieved success without imagining himself or herself as a champion, standing on the podium.

Yet a common mistake is not having a crystal clear vision of what success will look,.

You will find that **visualizing success as vividly as you can** (use photos, mental images, detailed descriptions to show you what it will feel like) **is a vital step to achieving and exceeding your biggest goals.**

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I constantly visualized this photo, and being at the top of the mountain, till it really happened!



To summarize, setting and achieving goals is all about having clarity and the inner motivation and drive to achieve your goals. Setting SMART (S.M.A.R.T.) goals, ones that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely would be a good start.

But I believe that instead, avoiding the 12 mistakes outlined above, and following the 12 step goal setting process outlined in *Keep Any Promise: a blueprint for achieving your future*, will virtually guarantee that you will not only achieve, but likely exceed your goal. These 12 steps are summarized below: for full details on these 12 steps to achieve ANY goals, useful worksheets, inspiring stories, and a whole lot more, simply visit <http://www.KarimIsmail.com>.

To help you achieve those life changing, earth shattering goals, consider these 12 key points every time you set a goal:

1. **Think Bigger!** The act of setting large, seemingly impossible goals spurs your mind to think differently and thinking differently is the key to achieving your goals.
2. **Define a clear timeline and deadline.** This will allow you to chunk up your goal into manageable parts
3. **Set smaller well defined milestones to** keep you moving forward. This will allow you to measure your progress and take corrective action when necessary.
4. **Identify your measurement criteria.** This is how you will know when you are making progress and when you have met your goal.
5. **Define your compelling reasons** to achieving your goal. Make the reasons as emotional as possible because we are driven by our emotions no matter how reasonable we think we are.
6. **List all the benefits** to reaching your goal. The more benefits to be gained the greater the focus you will have.
7. **Define the consequences of not reaching your goal.** Your mind is programmed to avoid pain so defining that pain will motivate you to avoid failure.
8. **Embrace all the obstacles in your path.** Your mind is programmed to find solutions, so focus on your obstacles and then your mind will begin to search for ways around them.
9. **List all your possible obstacles on paper.** Challenges always loom larger when they are swirling around in our subconscious. By writing them down you allow your brain to search for the key.
10. **Utilize all your resources.** Trying to accomplish things alone is one of the biggest mistakes we make. We were never meant to be a lone ranger.
11. **Share your goal** with people who will encourage you and keep you accountable. The more you articulate your goal the more clear it will become and the more committed you will become.
12. **Have a crystal clear vision of your success.** Visualize what success will Look, Feel and Sound like.

About The Author

To learn more about Karim H. Ismail, please visit <http://www.KarimIsmail.com/about>.

To take a FREE Life Quiz that will help you pinpoint where you are on every key aspect of your life, please visit <http://www.LifeChangingWorkshop.com>.

To access the secret to achieving ANY goal, please go to <http://www.KarimIsmail.com/order> and decide on the best option that will help you.

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