

# SETTING REALISTIC GOALS You Can Accomplish

It's January! The time of new beginnings, fresh starts, and writing down long lists of goals you're going to try really hard to reach and then forget about or give up on by the middle of the year and promise yourself that you'll "try again next year." Sound familiar? Why is it that we want to change and become better, but sometimes, we just can't stick with our goals? Well, success is determined by how realistic our goals are and how much work we're willing to put in!

Here are a few tips on how to set realistic goals you can accomplish this year:

- \* **Write your goals down.** Keep your goals somewhere you can see every day! Whether they are on a bulletin board in your room, in your locker at school, or even on your phone, keep them somewhere you will see them every day. The more you're reminded of the goals you've set, the more likely you are to keep working toward them.
- \* **Be specific.** If you have "Learn something new" on your list of new year's resolutions, it's definitely a realistic goal, but it's not specific! What sort of thing do you want to learn? A new instrument? A new recipe? Maybe a new hobby altogether? Be specific about what you want to accomplish.
- \* **Set short-term goals.** You can set a major goal for yourself, but in order to achieve that goal, you need to set some milestones to hit on the way. For example, you can say you want to run a marathon this year, but in order to work up to being able to run for 26 miles, you need to start small. Set a goal to run a few miles every week, and then slowly increase your distance each week until you've reached 26 miles. You didn't learn how to walk without first taking baby steps.
- \* **Make time for your goals.** A lot of times, we want to work on our goals, but life gets so busy that it can be easy for them to get lost among school, jobs, friends, and family. But, if you set aside a specific time to work on your goals each day, each week, or however often you would like, you are more likely to stick with them.
- \* **Don't do too much.** The beginning of the year is a time when everyone makes long lists of New Year's resolutions—sometimes so many that you can hardly remember everything that you've planned to do. If you start with only a couple goals, instead of throwing yourself headfirst into forty at a time, you will feel less overwhelmed and more confident in your efforts to reach your goals. And when you achieve one, you're more likely to achieve another! Small things lead to big things. **NE**