



SMART APPROACH FOR FALL RESOLUTIONS

The end of summer prompts some people to get organized and sometimes the focus of those efforts is relationship issues. A systematic approach to addressing relationship issues can help keep this type of Fall Resolution from joining the New Year's Resolutions that ended up in the dustbin.

Ironically, the first step is to identify the end result that is desired. In other words, a person might try to envision what a successful change in or enhancement of the relationship would look like. This then becomes the person's VISION.

A SHARED VISION is a picture of future success which all members of the relationship hold in common. Thus, a second step could be determining if the focus should be one person's vision or a shared vision. True shared visions are developed jointly by brainstorming. As the shared vision gels, the participants check and re-check with each other to make sure the shared vision is correctly communicated.

Once there is a vision or shared vision, the third step is to plan the steps to reach it by setting goals. A very simple way to set effective goals is to use the acronym SMART. SMART goals are:

- S** SPECIFIC
- M** MEASURABLE
- A** ATTAINABLE
- R** RELEVANT TO THE VISION
- T** TIMELY

Continued on page 2






Inside this issue:

*SMART APPROACH 1-2
FOR FALL RESOLUTIONS*

SURFING THE NET 3



Checklist For The Upcoming Two Months

-  Confirm parenting time schedules for autumn break and autumn holidays.
-  Obtain the school calendar and set aside time to attend school events with your children.
-  Contact your children's teacher and arrange to receive classroom information, including how to sign up for parent-teacher conferences.
-  Attend your children's parent-teacher conferences.
-  Watch for sign-ups for early winter sports and extracurricular activities.



If you'd like some practice with these steps, try to answer the following questions about a fairly typical couple that you might see in a family law situation.

1. A's vision is for A's child J to get to know J's other parent B better because A and B have never lived together. This is a shared vision because it involves both A and B. True or False?

ANSWER: False. One person's vision can involve others, but unless at least one other person has helped develop the vision and has agreed to try to work toward it, it remains one person's vision.

2. B's vision is for B and A to be more cooperative about J. B sets as a goal inviting A to coffee sometime within the next month to discuss what activities A suggests for J when school starts two months from now. B plans to share B's ideas with A at the same meeting. B's goal meets all of the SMART criteria. True or False?

ANSWER: True. It is specific as to what B will do, i.e. invite A to coffee. It is measurable in that A will or will not accept the invitation and will or will not participate in the discussion and the discussion may or may not generate an agreement. . It is attainable, because it requires action by B which is under his control. Communication is often the first step in cooperation and so the goal is relevant to B's vision. Because B will try to set the meeting within the next month and decisions are not needed for two months, the goal is also timely.

3. B meets with A to discuss J's activities for the upcoming school year. Because he was 100% successful in achieving this goal, therefore, he has attained his vision. True or False?

ANSWER: False. B should celebrate the success, and set a new goal or goals to establish and maintain the desired result of ongoing cooperation.

4. A envisions peace at home. A's goal is to separate from A's live-in significant other R who is too loud and inconsiderate. By November 1, A plans to ask R to move out. Between then and now A plans to look for a new apartment suitable for A and J. A plans to consult with an attorney by October 15th about A's responsibility for the lease that both A and R signed for their current residence. A's goals are not SMART, because two of the goals are contrary to each other. True or False?

ANSWER: False. Each of A's goals meets SMART criteria. A is apparently willing to consider more than one way to achieve the goal of separating from R.

5. B's vision is to be the best parent to J that B can be. B sets as a goal for B's self to be wise. B's goal does not meet the SMART criteria. True or False?

ANSWER: True. This goal is vague and as a result, difficult to measure and attain. However, being wise is probably always relevant and timely to parenting!

You may be only one person in
the world, but you may also be
the world to one person

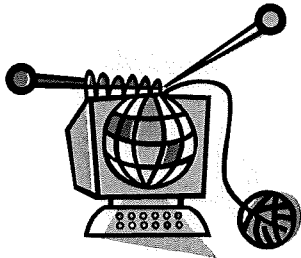
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A truly happy person is one who can
enjoy the scenery on a detour

Anonymous

SURFING THE NET

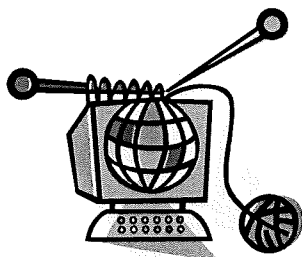
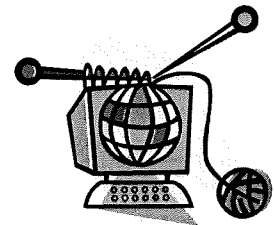


HOW THE THINKING PART OF ADOLESCENT BRAINS DEVELOP

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbhh/pages/frontline/shows/teenbrain>

NEW STATUTE REINSTATING WAGE WITHHOLDING OF SPOUSAL MAINTENANCE

http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/groups/children/documents/pub/dhs_id_029202.hcsp

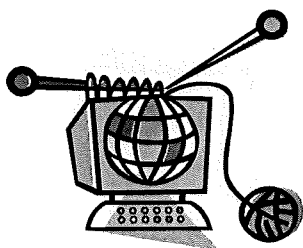
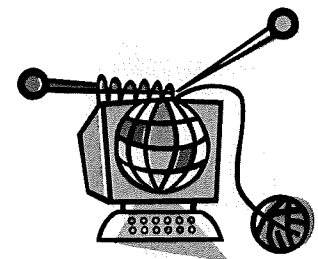


NEW CHILD SUPPORT LAW EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2007, BASED ON BOTH PARENTS' INCOME

<http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us>
(In the "legislation" tab, enter SF630)

NEW RULES OF COURT PROTECTING CONFIDENTIALITY OF PRIVATE INFORMATION SUCH AS TAX RETURNS, BANK STATEMENTS

<http://www.courts.state.mn.us/news/posting.aspx?ID=20302&pageID=1>



PARENTING

Divorce and special education issues:
Pacesetter, Summer 2005 (pages 16-17)
See also www.pacer.org

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a single event transforming the lake...



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