



**UNIVERSITY
OF LAGOS**



UNLEASHING HUMAN POTENTIALS

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SELF-REFLECTION AND GOAL SETTING FOR A NEW YEAR

INTRODUCTION



As we step into a new year, it represents more than just a change in date; it offers a valuable opportunity for the renewal of our mindset, attitude, pedagogy, relationships and overall approach to work and life. The beginning of the year often inspires us to set resolutions aimed at achieving lasting and meaningful change. Reflecting on our experiences, achievements and challenges from the past year provides valuable insights that guide us to make more informed and purposeful decisions. However, meaningful progress does not occur by chance. It is driven by intentional self-reflection and effective goal setting. Through thoughtful reflection, we are better positioned to set purposeful goals that foster personal growth and organisational success. This process lay the foundation for a more productive and fulfilling year.

In this edition, we explore practical strategies for success, including:



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- Engaging in meaningful reflection
- Setting SMART goals
- Cultivating a growth mindset

THE MEANING AND IMPORTANCE OF SELF-REFLECTION

Self-reflection is the process of examining one's thoughts, emotions, behaviours, and motivations in order to gain insight, learn from experiences, and promote personal growth.



The image of the person looking into a mirror above is a visual metaphor that symbolises the process of confronting oneself and gaining clarity.

Several positive outcomes can be achieved as a result of this powerful process:

- **Builds Self-Awareness and Clarity:** It helps you understand who you are, what you value, and what you are going through in life.
- **Enhances Goal Setting:** With self-reflection, priorities are clarified and goals that align with personal and organizational objectives are set.
- **Encourages Personal Growth:** Reflection allows one to identify knowledge gaps, negative attitudes, learn from mistakes and adopt better approaches, thus allowing for positive change and personal development.
- **Improves Decision-Making:** The ability to gain clarity leads to making better, more aligned choices that fit one's core values.
- **Enhances Emotional Intelligence:** Understanding your own emotions improves interactions and empathy with others.
- **Strengthens Accountability:** Self-reflection encourages responsibility for actions rather than blame-shifting.
- **Boost Productivity and Performance:** Learning from past mistakes and adopting better approaches lead to improved efficiency and outcomes.

KEY AREAS FOR SELF-REFLECTION

To reflect effectively on your performance and progress, it is very pertinent to focus on these key areas:

- **Personal Growth:** Reflect on how your actions align with your values and consider your strategies for emotional well-being and self-improvement.
- **Career Progression:** As you move forward in your career and academics, keep track of your recent accomplishments, identify the challenges you have faced, and the opportunities to learn something new.
- **Relationships:** Assess how you communicate, show empathy and evaluate the strength of your personal and professional support systems.
- **Health and Lifestyle:** Review your physical fitness, mental health habits, and daily routines to ensure balance, self-care and long-term well-being.

- **Time Management:** Evaluate your productivity and work-life balance, and check if your daily tasks align with your main goals.

PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE GOAL SETTING (SMART)

Effective goals follow the SMART framework:

- **Specific** – unambiguous and focused goals.
- **Measurable** – progress can be monitored and assessed.
- **Achievable** – realistic and attainable.
- **Relevant** – aligned with values and vision.
- **Time-bound** – deadline-driven.

HOW TO STAY ON TRACK WITH YOUR GOALS



- **Break Down Large Goals:** Divide big objectives into smaller, more doable activities.
- **Establish an Accountability System:** Share your goals with a mentor or partner for support and motivation.
- **Track Your Progress:** Use a journal or an app to regularly track your progress.
- **Celebrate Small Wins:** To keep momentum and motivation high, recognise small achievements.
- **Remain Flexible:** Be prepared to modify your plan when circumstances change.
- **Be Consistent:** Consistency in career goals means staying focused and committed to your professional aspirations over time.

THE REWARDS OF CONSISTENCY

Sticking to your goals brings key benefits:

- **Stronger discipline and resilience:** Pursuing your objectives consistently helps you overcome obstacles.
- **Increased self-esteem and confidence:** Reaching milestones boosts your self-worth and confidence in your skills.
- **Long-term success through sustainable habits:** Maintaining dedication creates routines that support long-term success and continuous development.
- **Builds momentum, credibility:** Development of personal branding and trust are aided.

ADOPTING A GROWTH MINDSET FOR THE NEW YEAR



A growth mindset is the belief that your abilities can be developed through dedication and effort. To cultivate this mindset:

- View challenges as opportunities to grow.
- Actively seek and learn from feedback.
- Persevere through obstacles and setbacks.
- Measure success by progress, not perfection.

CONCLUSION

Self-reflection is a deliberate act of examining one's thoughts, experiences, actions and achievements in order to learn and grow. It helps us become effective and fulfilled in both life and work. Self-reflection provides clarity, SMART goals give structure, and a growth mindset sustains progress. As we step into the new year, let us commit not just to setting goals — but to growing through them.

“The future depends on what you do today.” – Mahatma Gandhi

PARTING SHOTS

- Reflect - How did you fare in 2025?
- Set your goals - What are your goals for 2026?
- What are your strategies for achieving your set goals in 2026?