



## What does personality research tell us about setting goals for the New Year?

An [extensive review](#) by Tim Judge and Remus Ilies found that personality contributed a lot to motivating goal-setting.

It's easier to set goals (and also build self-efficacy or self-belief) if you have the self-management capabilities (planfulness, controlling impulses, seeing obstacles as challenges to work through rather than threats) which are related to the trait of conscientiousness.

It's harder to set goals if you are buffeted by the negative emotions and self-doubt characterised by high levels of the nervousness trait.

Agreeable people (as in the trait of agreeableness) may be less inclined to set high performance goals because these might appear incompatible with getting along with their family or team.

If you feel that your level of conscientiousness might not be up to the challenge of persisting with an ambitious New Year goal - use a template (including - setting stretching goals, inoculating yourself against potential challenges by reviewing likely issues and preparing plans to address these).

If you worry that emotions may knock you off course - include a resilience dimension in the 'coping with challenges' suggestion above. Also invest in mobilising support - notify others that you may need to turn to them for guidance, and for help putting things into perspective.

If you are concerned with putting yourself first in setting goals, try a joint goal-setting approach with significant others (partners, team-members, your manager).

Don't delay - get started on making a first draft of your goals. To help you customise your approach to your goals around your unique personality - Dr Iain McCormick and Stewart Forsyth have produced a simple and free personality type test that anyone can use on the understanding they are willing to share their anonymised data with the authors. For a PDF version of the measure [click here](#)