

SMALLIFY: A DIY Guide to Turn Big Goals into Small Bets

The Essence of Smallify

We've all stared at goals that feel impossibly big. They loom like mountains, and we wonder if we'll ever reach the summit. Smallify is about shrinking those mountains into foothills—breaking big goals into smaller, actionable steps, and using momentum to climb higher, faster. It's about small bets and small wins that generate progress, confidence, and energy.

Smallify is not about thinking small. It's about thinking big while betting small. The essence is momentum: the compounding effect of steady, achievable actions that fuel the courage to take on bigger challenges.

Thinking Big and Betting Small are not binary opposites. They go together hand-in-hand. A vision without a plan or action is just a vision. Actions that aren't linked to a clear vision just leave us busy spinning around in the status quo. But when we set clear goals and when we prioritize and commit to making daily, intentional progress toward those goals (no matter how small), that's where the magic happens. Each small win gives us a “dopamine spritz” and motivates us to keep going. That's how we map the world, transform our organizations and communities, and achieve our personal goals more quickly.

Smallify is a way of working with change itself.

Whether your goal lives inside you, between people, or out in the world, the pattern is the same: meaningful change moves forward through small, well-placed bets.

This guide is designed as a DIY Smallify Lab, a practical way to design momentum around any goal that matters to you, whenever you need it, at whatever pace feels right.

The Three Arenas of Change (I-WE-IT)

I (Personal Goals). If you wanted to run a marathon, you wouldn't run 26 miles the first day. You'd hurt yourself. Instead, it's perfectly fine to make a small bet: start by running around the block. If that feels too big, walk around the block. If that still feels too big, buy a pair of shoes or join a running group. A leader who wants to get better at delegation doesn't start by handing off their biggest, most risky project. Instead, they begin small: delegate a lower-risk task, then reflect, learn, and adjust. Each small delegation builds confidence and capacity for the next

We (Team Goals). Teams use Smallify to shift culture and become more innovative. If the goal is to build a culture of experimentation, the team doesn't have to start with a massive re-org or a high-stakes gamble. They can start in small, meaningful ways: learn how to set conditions for psychological safety for creativity and candor to emerge, launch a small pilot to test a new product with a customer experiment, hold a “failure fair” to share lessons learned, or host a 60-minute “Yes, and” jam that invites bold ideas without fear of judgment. Over time, the pattern

of trying, learning, and celebrating effort normalizes risk-taking and builds momentum toward breakthrough innovation.

It (Project, Product, or Community Goals). Google Maps didn't begin with the entire globe digitized. It started with *one camera on one van on one street* in Mountain View, California. That single bet set the stage for mapping the entire planet. Smallify works the same way. You place the first piece, then the next, and suddenly you're building something transformative.

As you work through this guide, choose the arena your current goal lives in: I, WE, or IT.

The method is the same.

Growth Mindset: Fuel for Any Change

Change is hard. The road ahead is always marked with obstacles. Failure or setbacks are part of the journey. What matters is how we respond. A *growth mindset* is the fuel that keeps us moving forward. It shifts our focus from shame to learning, from being stuck to experimenting.

A growth mindset sounds like:

- "I haven't figured this out yet, but I can learn."
- "Setbacks are data, not verdicts."
- "This is hard, and that means I'm growing."

We tap into our growth mindset by focusing on *affordable risk*—smallifying down to actions so tiny we can't not do them. We get unstuck by being okay standing in uncertainty, confident that if we move through it bravely and openly, the solution will reveal itself.

The growth mindset is the essential fuel for innovation. We practice "Yes, and," building on ideas rather than shutting them down. We look to others who've done it before, and even to *unlikely sources*. By asking, "How would Beyoncé lay out a vision for my organization?" or "How would Winston Churchill help me prioritize my work?" Seeking ideas from even unlikely sources opens up neural pathways that don't yet exist. At first it may sound silly, but our brains are wired to make connections. These leaps into the craft of others become the sparks of creativity.

Innovation happens when these surprising connections are made safe enough to surface..

SMALLIFY is All About Putting the Puzzle Together, Piece by Piece

Imagine opening a 1000-piece puzzle. At first, the pile of pieces feels overwhelming. The picture on the box (your goal) seems impossibly far away. So what do you do? You look for the *corner pieces*. Once those are set, you move to the edges. Slowly, the puzzle starts to take shape.

Each small win gives you a little dopamine spritz that propels you forward. Before long, momentum builds, and the pieces begin to click into place faster and faster.

The puzzle is the same whether you're changing yourself, your team, or a system. The pieces simply belong to different worlds.

That's the power of Smallify.

The SMALLIFY Lab: Designing Your First 30 Days

You can use this puzzle metaphor to Smallify any goal:

1. **Picture on the Box (Goal).** Define your shift, the clear picture of where you want to be in 30 days.
2. **Tricky Pieces (Tangles).** Identify the beliefs, fears, or habits that might hold you back (fixed mindsets). Acknowledge them. Then think of a growth mindset response to each.
3. **Pieces on the Table (Ideas).** Generate possible moves: your own ideas, things you've seen others do, and inspiration from people you admire, even famous figures or brands that inspire you. Then pause, step back, take note of the ideas that resonate most to you. Look for ideas that feel energizing, meaningful, or strangely light. These are often your best small bets. Then sketch out a rough 30-day timeline. Arrange a few favorite pieces in the order they would naturally need to happen. Ask: What would have to come first? What might build on that?
4. **Corner Pieces (Milestones).** Choose no more than four milestones for the next 30 days. Write them down with dates: *By [date], I will...* These scaffold your small bets and build accountability.
5. **First Piece Today (Small Bet).** Snap in the very first piece with an immediate action—so small you can't not do it.

Example 1: Sharing the Vision

Goal: Get better at sharing my organization's vision.

Tricky Pieces (fixed mindsets): Fear of sounding unclear. Belief that people won't be interested. Habit of focusing on tasks instead of vision.

Growth mindset response(s): "Clarity comes from practice," "I've been able to engage people around a plan before," "I don't need to be Steve Jobs to name where we're going."

Ideas: Draft a story version of the vision. Watch how a mentor presents a vision at a meeting. Use AI to generate ideas for a vision statement. Take inspiration from a famous TED talk or imagine how Beyoncé might tell the story (e.g., she'd "Put a Ring on It," distilling the message into a simple, repeatable phrase that everyone can remember and rally around).

- **Corner Pieces (Milestones):**
 - By Oct 5, I will write a one-page draft of the vision story.
 - By Oct 10, I will share the draft with a trusted colleague for feedback.
 - By Oct 20, I will practice delivering the vision with a few trusted advisors.
 - By Oct 30, I will deliver the vision in a team meeting and gather reflections.

- **First Piece Today:** Write down one sentence that captures the essence of the vision.

Example #2: Prioritization

Goal: Get better at prioritizing my work so I focus on what matters most.

Tricky Pieces (fixed mindsets): Belief that I need to say yes to everything. Habit of reacting to the urgent over the important. Fear of letting people down if I don't respond immediately.

Growth mindset response(s): "I've said no before, and important relationships survived," "I've seen better results when I focus on what matters most first," "I don't have to carry everything to be valuable."

Ideas: Use a tool, like the Eisenhower Matrix, to identify urgent and important things. Make a "stop-doing" list. Study how a mentor structures their week around big rocks. Imagine how Winston Churchill would choose priorities in a time of crisis (e.g., he used "Action This Day" red stickers to highlight the few most important items requiring immediate decisions).

Corner Pieces (Milestones):

- By Oct 5, I will identify my top three ("red sticker") priorities for the month.
- By Oct 10, I will remove or delegate two tasks that don't align with those priorities.
- By Oct 20, I will implement a daily 10-minute morning review to set focus.
- By Oct 30, I will share with a colleague how my prioritization has shifted outcomes.

First Piece Today: Block 15 minutes on my calendar to write down everything on my plate and circle the three items that matter most.

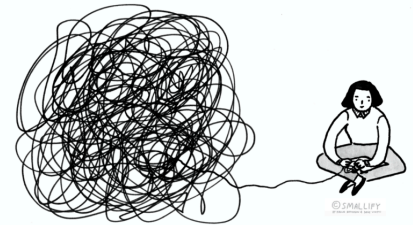
Make a Small Bet on What Matters

Big things start small. That's the essence of Smallify: one small piece, one small bet, one small win at a time. Every change is a puzzle. Take a breath. Lay out all the pieces. Start with the corners. Find the edges. Set down that first piece today and just keep going every day until you get where you want to be. Always remember: *Think big. Bet small.* And when something feels too big, just *Smallify it!* until you can't not do it.

SMALLIFY Your Goal

Write down the name of a **famous person** who inspires you:

_____.



1. Name Your Goal (the picture on the puzzle box)

In 30 days, I want to have meaningfully moved toward: (e.g., *build a high-performing team, launch a pilot, get better at delegating, improve public speaking, design a new service, develop my workforce, create psychological safety on my team, incorporate AI*)

"I will _____."

2. Spot the Tangle (internal conflicts / tricky pieces)

On the left, list 1–3 mindsets or constraints that might hold you back (e.g., *"I might fail or look incompetent," "This feels too big or complex," "I/We don't have enough time or resources," "I might upset someone," "I don't know where to begin"*). Then on the right, list your growth mindset response(s) (e.g., *"I'll learn something," "Smallify it!," "What can we do with the time/resources we have?" "I'll start with something small and low-risk to get a quick win."*)

Fixed Mindset(s):

Growth Mindset Response(s):

3. Place the Pieces on the Table (idea generation).

Spend 2 minutes brainstorming possibilities. Don't judge — just list. You can use AI for ideas.

- **Your own raw ideas (specific actions you might take):**



- Moves you've seen others make towards similar goals (mentors, peers, rivals):

- Inspiration from a famous person who inspires you (*How might X solve this ...?*):

Look at all your ideas above, moves others make, and inspiration from famous people. Sketch a simple 30-day flow, cluster top ideas or make a timeline of what needs to happen when.

4. Find the Corner Pieces (30-Day Goal + 4 Milestones)

- **Corner Milestones (max 4):** Concrete, winnable stepping stones that create structure and momentum (small wins) over the next 30 days (include target dates).

1. By _____, I will _____
2. By _____, I will _____
3. By _____, I will _____
4. By _____, I will _____

5. Snap in the First Piece Today (small bet)

What's the smallest step you can take **right now** to begin? (*Make it so small you can't not do it.*)

"Within the next 24 hours, I will _____"