SMART Goals

In fact, this has become popularized now as the well-known SMART goals:

S stands for specific: If I say, "become healthy," that's not very helpful. "Lose weight" is better because it's one specific thing I am aiming to accomplish.

M stands for measurable: If I say, "lose weight," that's specific but it's still not helpful. "Lose 100 lbs." is better, because now I can measure my goal. When I lose 100 lbs., I know I achieved it.

A stands for attainable: If I say, "lose 100 lbs.," that's specific and measurable, but it's still not helpful. "Lose 10 lbs." is better because that's much more attainable. I might still want to lose 100 lbs., but in order to do that, I'll work on losing 10 lbs. at a time. Setting more attainable goals allows me to ensure I'm making progress.

R stands for relevant: If I say, "lose 10 lbs.," but my weight is 160 lbs. and I want to get stronger, then this goal isn't helpful. "Improve squats from 180 lbs. to 200 lbs." is much more relevant because I'm focused on a goal that helps me measure the specific strength gains I want to make (and is aimed at the attainable increase of 20 lbs. in difficulty).

T stands for timely: If I say, "improve squats from 180 lbs. to 200 lbs.," that's still not the best it can be. Will that take me a year? Six months? My next workout?
Here's the best goal—a SMART goal: