

# The UNM Sustainability Peer Coaching Kit

Bruce T. Milne

Mariel Tribby



<http://www4.unm.edu/sust/>

Bruce T. Milne, Director

[bmilne@sevilleta.unm.edu](mailto:bmilne@sevilleta.unm.edu)

Terry Horger, Program Coordinator

[thorger@unm.edu](mailto:thorger@unm.edu)

## Introduction

Being “green” does not mean making sacrifices or doing without. Instead, by integrating more sustainable practices into your life you can lead a healthier and more vibrant lifestyle! The purpose of the UNM Sustainability Peer Coaching Kit is to raise your awareness about the many ways to incorporate sustainability into your life and to help you achieve your own sustainability-related goals. Throughout the process, you will have a partner who will also be working on reaching their own goal. The “peer coaching” element of this kit allows for mutual encouragement and support for you and your partner, hopefully leading to success for both of you!

## Working on your goal

1. *Think of a sustainability-related goal that you feel you can achieve.* It’s okay to start small, but try to be specific. Look through the tip cards to get ideas. An example goal could be: “I will walk/bike/ride the bus to work one day a week.”
2. Once you come up with your goal, *set a timetable.* How long do you want to give yourself to achieve this goal? It may be beneficial to break the goal into smaller, more manageable steps. For the previous example, a timetable could be:

**Week 1:** Research routes to walk/bike/ride the bus to work and choose a few to try. Check in with partner.

**Week 2:** Travel route(s) on day off to compare travel times and note any needed alterations in your planned route. Check in with partner.

**Week 3:** Travel additional routes and/or choose a route to use. Prepare for your new method of commuting. Check in with partner.

**Week 4:** Commute to work one day with your chosen alternative transportation. Check in with partner.

3. *Contact your partner* and tell them about your goal and timetable. Ask them for feedback and set up times (preferably every week) when they will contact you to see how you are progressing. Your partner will also have their own goal. Come up with a reward for yourself for when you reach your goal and share this with your partner. If it’s feasible, both of you might consider a joint celebration for achieving your goals.

4. *Design a way to chart your progress.* This could be as simple as keeping a journal or blog, or creating a graph as you go. Choose a medium that you like to communicate in. As long as it is meaningful and clear to you, your chart will act as further motivation to reach your goal. See the “Goal Planning Sheet” for an example progress chart.
5. *Keep your chart up-to-date* as you pursue your goal. It is important to have a tool to motivate and remind you of your progress. Your partner will offer additional support and encouragement, but in the end it is up to you! Don't be discouraged if you do not achieve your goal according to your timetable. Give yourself more time and keep working. Discuss ways to move past obstacles with your partner. Be realistic about what you can achieve with your other commitments.
6. *Once you have achieved your goal, celebrate!* Next, *you can decide to take your goal to a higher level* or continue with the level you've reached. Use the tip cards to develop new goals for yourself. The length of time you continue with the UNM Peer Coaching Kit is up to you. Ideally, once you have finished the tip cards you will be motivated to continue to find new goals for yourself. If you do decide to stop participating please let your partner know.

### **Summary checklist:**

- Think of a sustainability-related goal that you feel you can achieve.
- Set a timetable.
- Contact your partner.
- Design a way to chart your progress.
- Keep your chart up-to-date.
- Once you have achieved your goal, celebrate!

### **Helping your partner achieve their goal**

Your partner is there to support and encourage you, but they will also have goals of their own. It is your job to give them feedback, encouragement, and support through their process. The tip cards contain suggestions about ways to work with your partner. Make an effort to get to know your partner if you don't already. The more you know about them as a person, the more you will be able to help them reach their goals and

suggest new ones to strive for. Do your best to keep in touch with your partner so you have an idea of their progress. Be sure to schedule time to communicate with your partner into each week. Your partner can also be a great person to dialogue with about sustainability news and practices. By keeping the lines of communication open, you and your partner may find an invaluable resource in each other.