

New Year Resolutions... Why Don't We Just Do Them Already?!

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As all of us know, many people make New Year resolutions each January 1st... and most break them by February 1st (if they last that long)! I myself have been guilty of all of the above (more than once)! I'm constantly amazed at the resistance I still throw at myself with every new goal I want to achieve! What's up with that??

OK, we've all heard it all before. So, why don't we just do it already? The problem with New Year resolutions is that:

1. **We don't make them real.** They are often too vague (*I want to lose weight, I want to make more money, I want to be a better leader*), but the specifics aren't there.

THE SOLUTION: Determine how much weight you really want to lose. How much money you really want to earn. Set a number that can be measured. If the goal is a soft one, such as "improve my leadership skills," identify your strengths and weaknesses, and focus on one skill at a time. For example, a colleague was having trouble creating videos because he was very uncomfortable in front of the camera. What did he do to fix this? He got in front of the camera for several hours and did 50 practice videos! After that, creating his real videos was extremely comfortable and came naturally for him.

2. **We don't treat resolutions as goals.** Even when we get specific, we don't treat resolutions like real goals. Instead, we put an intimidating end result out there without a plan to accomplish it. Would you ever set a goal to "Be CEO of a large corporation" without creating a plan to obtain the education and experience necessary to get there... or without the realistic expectation that it won't happen overnight? Of course not! But we do this all the time with resolutions!

THE SOLUTION: Break the resolution into specific, small, "bite-sized" sub-goals that, when added together, will eventually get you to the end result. Make the sub-goals small enough to actually be do-able, or you won't even be able to motivate yourself to start. Be sure to put interim deadlines on the sub-goals (and sub-sub-goals). For example, another of my colleagues set a goal of selling 100,000 copies of her CD. Her method was to sell 100 at a time at presentations and public appearances... and 100 CDs at a time, she reached 100,000!

3. **We confuse the what with the how.** Even when we identify the specific sub-goals we need to achieve, we don't identify HOW we're going to achieve them. For example, if we want to lose 25 pounds this year, we think that just breaking it down and saying we'll lose 2 pounds per week is sufficient. But that 2-pound sub-goal is just another form of the WHAT – it doesn't identify the HOW. We can define all the WHAT's we want... but

the devil is in HOW to make them happen.

THE SOLUTION: Determine what specific actions you must take every day in order to reach each sub-goal. List them out. If you have a weight goal, create a daily menu of healthy meals. Set a goal to exercise for 10 minutes a day (to start) and work your way up to more as you develop the habit of exercising. If you have a sales goal, determine how many calls you must make each day in order to achieve your desired income. Once again, start small. Make 2 calls per day for the first week. By the end of the week, even that small goal will result in 10 more calls than you're probably making right now! If you need to improve a soft skill, plan to take courses, read one blog post every Monday morning, and implement one good tip from it in your interactions with others every day that week.

BONUS HINT: Overcome the resistance associated with new activities and mindsets by doing them early in the day (or week). This helps you fight procrastination, which could allow you to leave it all until the end of the day or week, and then get de-motivated and overwhelmed, and say "forget about it!" for that day or week. The further behind you get, the more de-motivating it is, until you finally you give up because you're just too far behind.

SECOND BONUS HINT: Get all your "prep work" done ahead of time: for those sales calls, identify your prospects, do your research on them, get the phone numbers, and prepare what you'd like to say to them – don't wing it! Even if it takes you a week to get all the prep work done, make it a goal to accomplish one piece of the prep work each day during the first week and then dive into the calls on the second week. Otherwise, "not having the prep work done" will be a convenient excuse for not making the calls.

4. **We don't keep the faith.** Once we start seeing results, we are inspired to stay with the program, but until that time, it can be very difficult to stay on a food plan (or sales plan... or any other kind of plan).

THE SOLUTION: The key is to have faith that you're doing the right things, and then have the patience to see them come to fruition. I remember when I was a REALTOR, it was hard for me to get into a prospecting rhythm and stay there because I was getting far more no's than yes's at first. In fact, I once had a string of 125 sales calls before getting one YES – so frustrating!! But because I had started using a system that worked for others, I had faith in the process, so I persisted. Over time I learned what worked; I also discovered how many *wrong* prospects I was calling, which was a huge "win" because I learned how to identify the right ones. Once I did that, I got my ratio down from 125:1 to 8:1 and things got a whole lot easier. But if I hadn't had faith in the process and continued to do the activities I knew worked for others, I would never have stuck with it and achieved my 6-figure income goal!



5. **We get depressed or de-motivated by the success of others.** Why do we constantly compare our progress to the progress of others? Even though our goals may not be the same as theirs, when we don't experience the same level massive success, it often depresses and/or de-motivates us.

THE SOLUTION: Stop comparing yourself to anyone else and just focus on (and feel good about) your own progress. There's always going to be someone who's doing better in a certain area... that will never change. However, if we celebrate with others, instead of envying them, they might just share what's working for them so we can do it, too. And if they don't, let it go and find your own path to success!

6. **We don't get emotionally connected to the goal.** Visualizing what life will be like WHEN we accomplish a goal is a huge motivator because it lets us imagine how much happier/healthier/wealthier we will be when that goal becomes a reality.

THE SOLUTION: Create a Vision Poster that contains photos, quotes and other motivating materials to help you visualize how great it will be to achieve the goal and put it up where you can see it every day. Include photos that represent the lifestyle you wish to live or any other manifestation of the goal you wish to achieve. Learn visualization techniques to help you get emotionally connected to your emotions surrounding the goal.

7. **We don't take time or make plans to celebrate along the way.** We keep our eye so firmly on the final goal, that we forget about the success and motivation that comes from achieving some of the pieces that lead up to it.

THE SOLUTION: Commit to a few really nice rewards for yourself along the way to make achieving part of the resolution worthwhile and fun! A weekend away, a concert or show, or even just a daytrip to the beach can be a fun reward we can look forward to while working our way toward the end result.

What stands in our way is human nature. It is difficult, frustrating, and often painful to try to break old habits and create new ones. For me (and I'm guessing, for many of us), what it comes down to is finally becoming so tired of NOT achieving a particular goal that the pain of not doing what I need to do is greater than the pain of actually doing it.

So, if you're in the position of finally being so tired of not achieving a particular goal that you're ready to face the temporary pain of changing your habits in order to achieve the desired results, get cracking – and make those resolutions a reality!

