

## Setting and Succeeding With New Years Resolutions

Well, it's that time of year again!

For most people, the Christmas and New Year holiday period offer a chance to exchange gifts and words of good cheer with family, friends and colleagues. It's also a time when we allow ourselves to indulge in the rewards of our hard work, rich food and good wine etc. Then as the day begins on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January many people take time to look towards their future, personal, professional. People start thinking about what they'd like to achieve during the coming 365 days and, perhaps creating a New Year's Resolution to help them get there. Research shows that much of the population have come to dread this annual exercise in long-range planning.

Sure, at one time we made our declarations full of hope and desire. We may have promised that "This'll be the year I ... start my own business, ... quit smoking, ... buy a new home, ... publish my first book" ... get fit ... etc. But no matter what we pledged, it never seemed to happen, so we've finally learned our lesson and stopped making resolutions altogether. If you know how to use them, New Years Resolutions can be extremely valuable.

Let's take a look at how you can reap tremendous benefits and rewards from this familiar, but poorly utilised custom.

Traditionally, people treat their New Year's Resolutions as dreams or vague desires that they hope will someday come true. In fact, it is precisely this unexciting or lacklustre attitude which causes most resolutions to fail in the first place! It comes down to the real point of difference, you have a choice. You can choose to view your yearly ideas of change as a "**wish list**". Say stuff like "that would be nice if it came true," but that you don't really (in your heart) expect to happen ... or, you can look at it as a positive opportunity to take action and create what you really want in life, starting NOW! Just understand that the first technique generally doesn't work; the second one does.

Okay, the fact that you're reading this tells me that you are committed to achieving some results; you must first **TURN YOUR RESOLUTIONS INTO GOALS!** The moment you begin to think of your promise in this light, you will automatically relate to it differently. After all, a committed goal is something serious. It is something that you intend to accomplish and something that you have to work towards.

What follows are 12 specific steps which will help you translate your New Year's Resolution(s) into solid, achievable worthwhile goals!

**1. SET GOALS WHICH CALL FOR YOU TO "STRETCH" BEYOND WHAT YOU MIGHT NORMALLY BELIEVE YOU CAN ACCOMPLISH.** As the great Napoleon Hill said, "Whatever the mind of man can conceive and believe, it can achieve." Determine what you really believe you can accomplish ... then consider expanding what you think is possible For instance; if you earned £20,000 last year and know that you can easily repeat this success, what would be a real stretch for you? Would it be £30,000? £35,000? Can you see yourself earning £100,000? If so, challenge yourself to acquire this extra amount. There are no limitations except those you place on yourself and acknowledge.

**2. SELECT AN AREA OVER WHICH YOU, YOURSELF, CAN EXERCISE CONTROL, RATHER THAN A SITUATION IN WHICH CHANCE HAS A LARGE INFLUENCE.** For example, a New Year's Resolution that you're going to win the lottery would not be effective because you don't directly influence the outcome of the lottery machine. You do, however, control the quality of your work, the number of times you call on prospective clients, go jogging etc. Focus on these areas and improve your personal performance.

**3. PUT YOUR GOAL IN WRITING.** When you write out your resolution, you'll find that you become much more serious about achieving it. You must also pay special attention to the way in which you write your goals (see steps 4-7).

**4. ASSUME SUCCESS.** Avoid saying, "I want to start my own business" say "I WILL start my own business by..." the power of our internal talk is a KEY factor in our failures or our success. Learn to be the master of your internal voice, "talk to your self rather than listen to yourself.

**5. MAKE IT SPECIFIC.** For example, "I will start my own catering business, focusing on healthy organic ingredients". Make the goal as clear as possible, any vague ideas about your goal need to be clarified. Make that picture big and colourful. If you can see it in your mind, then it can become a reality.

**6. MAKE IT MEASURABLE.** For instance, "I will start my own training business, filling out all necessary legal papers, renting a location, purchasing kitchen equipment, hiring at least one worker and providing a service for my first client." When setting your goal ask yourself the question, "how will I know I am making progress"?

**7. SET A TIME DEADLINE FOR ACCOMPLISHING YOUR GOAL.** Tack on a "by when" to the end of the above statement -- that is, "I will start my own training business by March 1, 2008" This adds a sense of urgency and immediately puts you into a "state" of action.

**8. LIST THE BENEFITS YOU INTEND TO RECEIVE BY ACHIEVING THIS GOAL.** This is crucial. So why are you doing this, what's the payoff? For instance, will you have more influence in the community? Will your family be more secure? Would you have fulfilled a life's dream? (NOTE: If you ever find yourself growing too scared or losing focus on your goal, take another look at what you wrote for this step.)

**9. SPEAK WITH OTHERS INVOLVED IN SIMILAR ACTIVITIES.** An effective way to build your confidence when sailing into uncharted waters is to associate with those who have already taken this or similar risks ... survived and succeeded. In the field of NLP we call this modelling, learn from others people's success, why reinvent the wheel?

**10. ASK A PROFESSIONAL TO SERVE AS A PERSONAL "COACH".** Make sure you choose someone who is both healthy and positive, to help you keep your resolution. Share your goals and commitments with this person. Report to him or her often and ask your coach to hold you accountable for doing what you say you will do.

**11. VISUALISE YOURSELF ACHIEVING THIS GOAL.** Create a vivid mental picture of yourself (for example) presiding over a tremendously successful training program. Imagine your client smiling and thanking you for delivering such an exceptional program. Allow yourself to experience the positive feelings e.g.. pride, happiness, satisfaction -- that go along with your accomplishment. The more you can "see" your success in your mind's eye the more likely you will be to create this success in reality.

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## Learning Zone Material



**12. ACT NOW.** Act on your thoughts now. Avoid putting off taking action because you feel that you need to be better trained or more prepared -- this is a form of procrastination. Again if you find yourself too scared to proceed refer back to step 8 and focus on the benefits you will receive making this resolution. Until next month,

Our destiny then is not in the hands of chance, rather it is in the hands of those that focus on a future outcome with laser beam intensity, remain flexible in their approach to challenges and determined in their pursuit of their vision. - -  
*Tony Nutley (Kick Start Personal Development Training Program)*

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