

Turn Your Resolutions Into Goals for Success

It is easy to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of the end of the year and the beginning of the New Year; especially when we have just made it through the holiday season. The intention of the holiday season is to be able to count our blessings, and spend time with friends and family. However, it is too easy in our culture to lose that focus and, instead, get caught up in all of the things that we need to do in our businesses and in our business life. I implore you to take time out each day to focus on your family, to have a balanced life, and to enjoy all of the blessings that you have been given. I also strongly suggest that you develop goals for the New Year in all aspects of our life, not just New Year's resolutions.

What is the difference between a goal and a resolution? On the surface - there is not much difference at all, unless you look at the intention of each word. Setting goals is making a long term commitment to reach a specific outcome. A resolution, on the other hand, is merely an unstructured commitment to change one behavior for an unspecified time and an unspecified reason. It is the lack of focus that causes 90% of New Year's resolutions to be broken by February 1st. Unfortunately, most people set New Year's resolutions and few people truly set goals. In fact, when I ask my clients in my business growth workshops what percent of people set goals, many times they guess that it is about half of the American public. The sad truth is that only 3 percent of Americans set goals.

When people make a resolution it is usually an ad hoc decision, based on something about which they are not comfortable in their life. It is not written down, there is no plan of action, there is no timeline, and there is little definition of when the person will have achieved success. It is a vague "plan", destined for failure. Furthermore, resolutions are usually behavior based, not outcome based. Does this mean that we need to stop making New Year's resolutions? No. We simply need to treat our resolutions as goals, which is far easier to say than to do.

Why is it that only 3 percent of individuals set goals? One of the main reasons is that people have not been taught the importance and value of goal setting. However, if you were to poll the top 3% of the wealthiest Americans, you would see that goal setting is a fundamental part of their success. They didn't become successful by accident; they carefully studied their playing fields, examined their strengths and weaknesses, established a destination, mapped out a way to get there, periodically re-evaluated their progress toward their goal along the way, and sought help of outside professionals to keep them accountable to the goal setting process.

What if wealth is not your desire; is setting goals important in other aspects of life? Absolutely! That is why in the beginning of this article, I strongly suggested that we take time to be with our family throughout the year and to have a balanced life throughout the year, not just during the holidays. I know how difficult it is to balance all

of our activities and roles that we play in life. It is the number of competing roles in our lives that cause us to become unfocused. How can we live up the expectations of all of our roles?

First, we need to prioritize the areas of our lives that are important to us. Then we need to assess the health and well-being of those areas. This reflection is an important part of maintaining balance. If changes are needed, we develop an action plan to achieve our desired change. Finally, we take time to reflect on our progress along the way.

Many of my clients, when I first start working with them, are too busy to set goals or take time to reflect on their business or other aspects of their lives. We all need to slow down, reflect, and think about what is important to us. We need to focus on what I call the “Vital Few”, not the unimportant many. I believe it is especially important for business owners to learn how to **write** effective goals, **set** priorities in their business, and **learn** strategies to balance their life at the same time. Do the goals have to be written down? My answer is an enthusiastic YES! There is a high correlation of success for those who do so. The motto of my business is Driving Success and Balancing Life. Let us resolve to set clear and reasonable long and short term goals, which is one of the few traits that separate the successful people from those that are not successful.

Have a great year. Learn how to set goals and take the time to focus on meeting them.

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