



Reflections and Goals

It is February, and the New Year is already well underway. Like most people, you probably took inventory and made plans for the coming year. Some of you probably even took the time to identify one or two New Year's resolutions. Yet, the experts say that 30 percent of the people who make New Year's resolutions have given up by Feb. 1 and over half will concede defeat by July.

Why does this happen? It happens because a resolution, by definition, is simply the expression of an opinion, will or intent. It is not a goal. Resolutions also tend to be very vague. Example: "This year I resolve that I will get a better job" or "This year I resolve to be a better person."

Let me give you an analogy. In some ways, a resolution is like the canvas of a tent, while the goals are like the poles and stakes. You can't expect to raise a tent without the poles and stakes to support it. Likewise, you can't expect to fulfill on a resolution without having goals to support them.

Using the tent analogy, those that are truly successful in raising a tent have probably also reviewed a list of instructions that told them in what order to complete specific tasks. In our resolutions and goals example, this would be the action plan. The action plan is the roadmap that will tell you what needs to be done and when to do it in order to achieve your goals and fulfill your resolutions.

Use this five-step process and you can beat the odds and achieve the success you deserve in 2004!

1. Analyze what you wish to accomplish. Think about what is most important to you. Look at where you are today and determine where it is you want to go.
2. Identify your key objectives. Rank-order them, and limit yourself to no more than three. (Five if you must.)
3. Create an action plan. This is where you say, "Here's what I plan to do and here's how I plan to do it." This must be written using SMART goals, which are "specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely." Ex. Resolution: I will lose weight this year. SMART Goal: I will walk for 30 minutes three times a week beginning on February 1.
4. Prioritize your plan. This is where you say, "Here's the order that I plan to do them in." Use the 20/80 rule and focus on the 20% of the tasks that will produce 80% of the results.
5. Implement your plan. This is where you say, "Here's how I will put my plan into practice." Then do it! This should include a regular review and celebration process. Weekly is best but no less than monthly.

If you follow these simple steps, you will not only to be able to make but keep your New Year's resolutions! Good luck!

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