



New Years Resolution Report

How many times have you disappointed yourself with big promises on New Years Eve with small or no results a month later, with an imminent return to status quo or worse after a quarter?

'This time I am going to lose 20 kgs, give up smoking, eat healthier, make a career move and save more \$\$s.' A month later, that old feeling of having let yourself down sets in and you wonder when you learnt the artful skill of self-sabotage so well.

The problems with New Years' resolutions are multifold, and extend beyond the obvious such as lack of will, lack of time and lack of convenience. In fact, it is a strange phenomenon that within Western societies, this is the only time that the tall poppy syndrome actually allows you to state your personal goals to a group of friends and to commit all of your seeming resources to it.

After numerous flutes of Champagne and perhaps a Cuban cigar we promise the world, yet tend to deliver very little. Perhaps it is just this realization that allows your otherwise cynical friends to be optimistic and supportive of your dreams for an evening. Unfortunately we have gotten used to sarcastic responses as soon as we utter anything that seemingly resembles ambition, and thus our neurons tend to calcify with the passage of time, leaving little room for the pursuit of dreams and goals.

While this may sound as a bleak observation, it is regrettably the reality for too many westerners. The purpose of this article though is not provide a sarcastic pat on the back – it is to enlighten you as to how to make New Years' resolutions and set goals that you can actually achieve. It is my ambition that these insights go beyond and above the old-school American 'rah-rah' seminars of the past, and provide you with some fundamental skills that you can pragmatically implement as you set the course for 2007 and beyond.

Let me return to the state of affairs for a moment. As you will find out in the course of this article, it is important to know where we are in relation to where we want to be in order to find a path there. Sound circular? It is not.

In the west, most people who make New Years' resolutions have very poor goal-setting muscles and little understanding of the power of their unconscious mind. This is a shame since it is the unconscious mind which is the seat of all achievement, accomplishment and fulfillment. An excavation of this powerful force within will give you a feeling of what you are ultimately capable of when you harness it.

Ultimately, New Years' resolutions and goal-setting is about behaviour, learning and change. Your personal management division of achievement is located in your unconscious mind. This is the 90% of your mind which you may not presently be aware of – it is the part of you that breathes you, dreams you, and heals you. It is the part of you that wasn't aware until right now, that with every breath you now take, and with every blinking of your eye, you are becoming more and more relaxed. Aside from the last sentence which contains an old hypnotist's trick, the unconscious mind is the seat of all emotion, creativity and imagination, and holds the key to you truly moving toward your resolutions in a congruent and profound way.

Change is quite easy when you have a proper understanding, grasp of and communication with your unconscious mind. However, when you set goals consciously, logically and in an inebriated state, dark clouds of doubt usually gather on your horizons within weeks of the New Year's party. Most exclamations during the count-down to 24.00 are simply vacuous, last-minute hopes that by a miracle one's life and habits could change by the time we wake up on January 1.

By the time we have finally beaten the hang-over from the previous night with health snacks such as bacon and eggs, a smoke instead of a jog, or even for some another beer instead of a healthy drink; change, betterment, and learnings seem elusive. Too many revert back to the conditioning of the past with a sigh of relief that they did not have to do what it took to get there.

The good news in all of this is that there is a more long-term cure, and a method that promises the very results we are after.

The first premise is that all change, all learning and all behaviour is unconscious. To be effective in our New Years' promises to ourselves, a basic understanding of how we communicate with this mysterious part of ourselves is needed.

In our seminars, we say that the conscious mind is the goal-setter while the unconscious mind is the goal-getter. This means that most people understand a fundamental premise on December 31 – the fact that we need to set goals. Setting goals consciously (even after too many flutes of champagne) is an entertaining and often reflective process that contains all of the right intentions.

However, it is not the part of the goal-setting equation that delivers the goods. Communicating the goal, or the resolution, to the unconscious is where the true art of achievement lies. Our unconscious landscape is where the potential to actually fulfil our promises to ourselves is lying dormant and waiting. It is only when we realize how to nurture this landscape that we can fully tap this potential and achieve the lofty dreams of December 31st.

To begin with, I believe that the time around January-February is a great time to set goals. It is a positive time for reflection, insight, fresh perspectives and unique thinking. It is a time to be grateful for the experiences from the last year and it is a time to set the course for the year to come. In other words, it can be the perfect time to build some goal-setting muscle.

Before you set goals, it is important to go into the process with an attitude of gratitude. This means that in order to make room for more accomplishments and achievements in our lives, we need to acknowledge, appreciate and give thanks for the special people in our lives, the things we have, and the beautiful experiences our lives bring us. This is a fruitful exercise and one that usually brings a great deal of joy and love and provides us with the right mind-space to then set a course from. What we appreciate tends to appreciate.

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So why should we even bother to set goals, or to make New Years' resolutions? Oliver Wendell Holmes said that 'a person's mind, once expanded by a new idea, never returns to its original dimensions'. A goal is simply an idea of a place or a person we want to become or be in. In this regard, a goal stretches us and allows us to tap into our hidden resources, and to become more than we currently are. This may take the form of a slimmer body, a fatter wallet, more connected relationships, or a healthier lifestyle. As a consequence, they become an internal yardstick by which we can measure our performance. Most importantly though it is who we become in the process of achieving them that becomes our lasting personal assets.

It has been said that 'nothing breeds success like success'. Performance heightens our idea of self-worth and frequently flows from being 'in the flow'. Moving towards a goal means moving towards a vision, your true north, an end in mind, and gives meaning and purpose to your life. Fundamentally, at a time when more and more people search for purpose in their lives, meaning becomes the motivational fuel that powers our existence.

So, how do we actually accomplish our previously elusive New Years' resolutions from times gone past and the new ones for 2007? The first thing we need to do is to think.

Remember that 3 pound meat-loaf that is heavily trained in logical and linear thinking. It is time to engage in some deep reflection. 'There is no expedient to which man will not go to avoid the real labour of thinking', Thomas Edison used to say. It may seem like an arduous task, but truly it is where all of the results in life are. Einstein agreed by saying that 'imagination is more important than knowledge'. And I think he knew a thing or two. Thinking is simply the process of asking and answering questions. The following questions serve as a convenient and powerful guide in making your resolutions and setting your goals.

To set your goals and fulfil your resolutions, please answer the following questions and follow the prompts.

1. Stated in the positive:

"What specifically do you want?"

"What is the one thing, which if you magically made it work for you, would positively transform your life in 2007?"

2. Specify present situation:

"Where are you now?"

3. Specify the outcome:

"What will you see, hear, & feel, when you have it?"

The outcome should be specified.

"As if now." Write the outcome in Present Tense.

Make it compelling.

4. Specify evidence procedure:

"How will you know when you have it?"

5. Be sure it is congruently desirable:

"What will this outcome get for you or allow you to do?"

6. Is it self-initiated & self-maintained?

"Is it only for you?"

7. Is it appropriately contextualized?

"Where, when, how, and with whom do you want it?"

8. What resources are needed?

"What do you have now, and what do you need to get your outcome?"

"Have you ever had or done this before?"

"Do you know anyone who has?"

"Act as if you have it."

9. Is it ecological?

"For what purpose do you want this?"

"What will you gain or lose if you have it?"

"What will happen if you get it?"

"What won't happen if you get it?"

"What will happen if you don't get it?"

"What won't happen if you don't get it?"

"What are the implications within your sphere of influence?"

The goal-setting process is similar to designing a piece of extremely powerful, cutting-edge computer code that re-defines your future. We design and engineer it consciously, and build it unconsciously. Your life is canvas, and you are the painter – sure. But in the 21st century in the context of goal-setting, you are the computer coder, web designer and software developer and the world around you are your pixels, html code, and graphics. The key distinctions to grasp is that we write the goal consciously, communicate it to our unconscious, and leave it to our unconscious minds to achieve the goal. This involves a pinch of faith and surrendering to the process. For anyone accustomed with spirituality you will know that this is a rewarding mind-set and leads to an adventurous journey. Results flow where emotions go.

Once you have completed the exercise above, here are the specific steps for writing a goal and projecting it into the future, to make sure that you achieve it.

1. Be sure the goal is stated so it is S.M.A.R.T (specific, measurable, achievable/present tense, realistic, timed)

2. Get the last step:

“What is the last thing that has to happen so you know you got it?”

3. Make an internal representation of the last step:

A visual representation, or auditory representation, or kinesthetic representation.

4. Step into the internal representation and experience it.

5. Adjust the submodalities (like the buttons on a TV screen):

Adjust them for the most positive kinesthetic or for the most “real” feeling. A submodality is a sub-set of the major modalities of our senses: visual, kinesthetic, auditory, olfactory, and gustatory as well as auditory-digital (self-talk) – in other words a submodality may be the location or size of the internal picture, the volume of a sound, or the direction of a feeling for example.

6. Step out of the internal representation:

As if you are holding the internal representation in a polaroid-picture in your hand and you are looking at your body in the picture.

7. Take the internal representation and imagine yourself floating above now:

This is a process of active imagination. Imagine your past stretched out in one direction below you and your future stretched out in the other direction below you.

8. Energize the internal representation with four deep breaths:

Breathe in through the nose, out through the mouth, and blow all your energy into the internal representation. This is a metaphor for the unconscious mind which brings the internal representation to life and makes the outcome even more compelling for you to achieve.

9. Float out into the future:

Take the internal representation and float above the time line out into the future.

10. Insert the internal representation into the time line:

Let go of the internal representation and let it float right down into the time line at the specific date when you have set the outcome for.

11. Notice the events between then and now re-evaluate themselves to support your goal.

12. Float back to now and come back into your body.

Now, is that not different from screaming out your resolution at the top of your lungs to the sound of fireworks on 31 December? When we understand this process now, goal-setting and achievement becomes an art and a science for sculpting one’s life in the shape we want it.

Epilogue

To find out more about goal-setting, the art and science behind it (Neuro-linguistic Programming) or to enroll in one of Thinqe’s seminars or certification courses, please call us on 02 9969 36 27 or visit <http://www.thinqe.com.au> right now. We are looking forward to connecting with you personally, and helping you achieve your resolutions.