



### **TOPIC: GOAL SETTING AND STAYING ON TRACK**

### **TITLE: TURNING RESOLUTIONS INTO REALITY**

Once again we embark upon a new year. A time when we all have high hopes for what's ahead and a goal we intend to meet. This is the time when we feel we can do anything, and nothing is too lofty. But as the weeks glide by, this feeling often dissipates. Our motivation slips, challenges arise and our once-high hopes turn into doubt, fear, discouragement and sometimes failure.

I'd like to help you avoid new-year's resolutions that fail. We all have the opportunity to make changes in our lives, but not without help and support along the way. My goal is to help you set yourself up for success and see your resolutions and goals come to fruition through the year. Here are some tips to help turn your goals into reality:

1. Create a clear vision of what you want.

If you don't know where you're going, how can you expect to get there? Create a vision for your entire life: What do you want for your career, your family and friends, your health, your finances and your spiritual life? What is truly achievable?

2. Have clear, measurable goals.

Set a realistic target for each of these areas. Your goal should be specific, measurable, actionable and time-specific. Make sure each goal is realistic. All too often, we set our goals too high — and set ourselves up for failure. Answer these questions: What will you do, how will you do it, when will you do it, and how will you measure success?

3. Create success habits to help you achieve your goals.

Success habits are the things you need to accomplish every day to keep yourself on track to achieve your goals. For example, if you want to eat healthier or lose weight, a success habit might be to exercise three times a week, or cook a healthy meal once a day. These are the daily/weekly behaviors that, if you do them consistently, will achieve the results you want. Post these behaviors some place where you can see them, set aside a time in your day to do them, and track them every day.

4. Declare your intent.

Tell everyone who's important to you what your vision and goals are. We're often tempted to keep our goals to ourselves, so no one will know if we fail. That's one reason why we do fail. Tell those around you what you want to achieve and how they can support you. Ask them to hold you accountable and remind you of the big picture when they see you veering off course.

5. Say yes to what supports your goals and no to what doesn't.

This task is difficult but important. Make a list of what you want to say "yes" to and what you need to say "no" to. For instance, with the weight-loss example, you might say yes to exercising during lunch, and say no to lunching with friends at unhealthy restaurants. Although it's hard, it's absolutely necessary to your success.

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6. Identify your vices.

We all have bad habits that interfere with our new goals. Answer these questions: What's most likely to get me off track? What will I do when that happens? Once you're aware of those interferences, you're more likely to recognize and overcome them.

7. Give yourself permission to veer off track.

Changing behavior is a big commitment, and you're likely to have setbacks. Acknowledge that and get back on track when it happens. Expecting perfection is a sure recipe for failure.

8. Measure progress — and success — regularly.

Focusing on success isn't enough. Take a look on a regular basis at the progress you're making toward your goals. If you're not seeing enough progress, determine why and adjust your plan. If you are seeing progress, reward yourself. All too often we focus only on the end result, and although that's important, progress helps us focus on the end result.

My challenge for you this year is to keep all your resolutions and realize all your goals. Set clear, realistic objectives and turn them into reality by setting up a structure and a support system for success.