

New Year Resolutions Made Easy

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I want you to have no struggle New Years Resolutions. I want you to try out the notion of easy progress. Yes, that's right, I want you to easily achieve your dreams and goals. My last column dealt with finding goals that would ultimately make you happy in 2007.

Today I want you to select goals that are fun, forward moving challenges you can dive right into, easily.

Why do we easily achieve some goals and not others? Why do some people have greater success at achieving certain kinds of goals, like making money or having great relationships, while we stumble? We have values for just about everything in life. Some we were raised with, others we created through our own experiences. Let's take a minute and look at how values impact the success of our goals. Of the following pairs of statements, which ones most reflect your values?

- I must work hard to achieve my life goals. vs. Luck is on my side.
- Achievement means struggling. vs. I go with the flow.
- I need to set goals to correct my faults. vs. If I build on my strengths, my faults will disappear.
- I should meet my goals by myself. vs. I get by with a little help from my friends.
- I'm too old to change. vs. I can be anything I want to be.
- Money is the root of all evil. vs. I will have the best, be the best and give the best.
- Happiness is hard to achieve. vs. I naturally move toward people, places, things and jobs that make me happy.
- My New Years Resolutions are unrealistic. vs. I can fulfill my dreams and desires.
- If I don't achieve my goals, I'm a failure. vs. I learn from my mistakes and even need them to improve my performance.

Now why would we even want to set goals if we felt discouraged from the start? If we believe that life is hard work, goal attainment will also be hard. This is the old self-fulfilling prophecy; we become what we believe. But luckily, we also have values that reflect hopefulness. Sometimes we are lucky. So that's why we struggle between "I can do it" and "I can't do it." What a battle that can be. This struggle definitely does not lend itself to easy progress. Thus, I am asking you to try to reprogram yourself, challenge those discouraging values and move to encouraging values.

Let's look at some examples. Many New Years resolutions center on love and money. More precisely, we want more of both. Now if we think money is hard to get, evil, or love is out of our reach or only for the young, we're apt to fail. If we think the path to better character lies in correcting our faults, our negative focus may actually lower, not raise, our self-esteem. If our goals begin with "should" or "ought" toss them; they won't make us happy. If we expect perfection or feel like failures at the first setback, we need to be more supportive of our precious efforts. Take a look at nature. Trees don't grow

straight, yet we expect a straight upward path to meet our goals. If we select a physical fitness goal of three gym workouts a week and end up going two days, does that mean we're doomed to fail? Let's go easy on ourselves; let's start fresh every day.

When we focus on learning new things, developing new talents, doing more of our strengths, many of our faults disappear. It works like magic. When we are happier we are naturally more loving, kind and patient. Of course there is effort, but not necessarily hard work. When we are really enthused by a goal or project, we can become lost in it. We might even say, "Where did the time fly?" Easy. I think if our goals are right for us they can be that easy.