

## Secrets to Better Goal Setting

Ho-hum, that time of year where everyone is asking about New Year's resolutions and lots of good posts on 'how to set goals'...but WHY DO WE KEEP BREAKING NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS!!!!?

That's what I wanted to know.

So I went looking for an expert.

And I found one...my wife! :)

Now wives are definitely experts on many things and us males would be far better off if we listened more to them...but Nicole is literally an expert in Motivational Psychology, she's an Associate Professor with over a hundred publications including books and national guidelines to her credit.

Nicole has given me some great little secrets that I haven't seen mentioned or discussed much that I think you will find very useful if you are in a goal setting mood (or they may help you get into a goal setting mood).

Here's my shortcut summary on the secrets of better goal setting and there is a link to a video we made at the end where we discuss them in a little more detail.

1. Is your motivation to achieve the goal bigger than your motivation to actually do the work to achieve it?

We can get caught up in the excitement of goal setting and the future rewards but forget to fully appreciate the work involved to get to it. Therefore when the going gets tough, we stop. Solution? Acknowledge you may have done this with your goal and if so, break it down into bite size tasks. Work with your business partner, team or coach to confirm all the steps and set those as mini goals.

2. Don't give up when you slip up!

Apparently the technical term is the 'change violation effect'. We fall off the wagon, miss a target, lapse back into a negative habit and as a result, give up on the goal and take it as confirmation we can't achieve it so quit. '*Stuff it, no point continuing*'.

We need to acknowledge that change isn't easy and we are human and there will be lapses.

We should not throw the baby out with the bath water.

For example smokers take 3-7 attempts to stop smoking according to the research. Changing our behaviour is like exercising a muscle and new exercise or increased exercise can feel hard, even impossible. Solution?

First and foremost don't quit just because of a slip up. Just get back into it and keep going.

Secondly, think of each slip up as a lesson. Why did it happen? What can you do to prevent it from happening again? What strategy can you have ready if you feel it's happening again? All of these are things you can work with your coach on.

Thirdly, look at whether you need to break the goal down into smaller goals and build gradually on them.

### 3. Support and accountability

Very important you have someone you trust and respect to help keep you accountable and support you when you slip up. This can be your coach for example.

Having support and someone keeping you focused will double or triple your success rate in hitting goals.

### 4. Rewards!

To maintain long term motivation you need to reward yourself and your team on the journey towards the goal.

If you have set smaller goals along the way, make sure you acknowledge hitting those. Doesn't have to be anything expensive or elaborate and can just be positive words, but make sure you do acknowledge progress made.

### 5. Goals must align with your core values

Another reason we can lose motivation and stop pursuing a goal is the fact that deep down it was never aligned to our core values.

Look at your goal and think about whether it is truly aligned with your business ethics, integrity, your vision for the business?

Your vision and mission statements if written correctly will basically articulate your core values and are great tools for testing your goals against (and your marketing material and your branding and even new hires). Will the goal take you towards your vision or away from it?

What about your own core values? Are you setting the goal for you or is it really a goal triggered by peer pressure or expectations of others?

I think this can be a common reason New Year's resolutions fail.

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So there you go. A few additional things to consider when goal setting.

You can hear more details in this interview with Nicole:  
<http://youtu.be/JkRpXM8srOY>

*Note: Nicole and I have produced a 'science of motivation' program for managers and directors that distils the latest evidence based research on motivation and shows you how you can apply it in the workplace to help motivate staff to adopt new policies, new*

*direction or even the existing direction of the business. Contact me for further details.*

Have a great week!

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