



JANUARY

“Don't dwell on what went wrong. Instead, focus on what to do next. Spend your energies on moving forward toward finding the answer.”

— Denis Waitley

RESOLUTIONS NOW!

Happy New Year!

It's the start of a New Year...Just think, you have before you a beautiful blank canvas where you can create your masterful year. Enjoy this time in January to set your priorities and goals for what you want and need in the coming year.

Focus on ensuring you'll have **Balance** and **Gratitude** in your life. As an integral part of this goal-setting process, be sure to give some thought to the balance that you want in your life and how you can live more fully by incorporating gratitude into your everyday life, both personally and professionally.

January is about setting yourself up for success. You can determine what you want to do and achieve. To provide further clarity and direction about how to get started, I am going to suggest an approach for setting meaningful goals that also let you live with gratitude.

It all starts with your **VALUES**.

I believe in reflecting and learning from the past and then moving forward into the future. You owe it to yourself to take a step back and spend a few moments thinking about what you really want in your life. To do this, you have to understand what you want to accomplish this year in all areas of your life.

The New Year offers you the opportunity not only to look back but also (and perhaps more importantly) to look forward. Let's start by considering the following questions:

Will this be "Your Year"?

- What are you going to do to make this year different from other years?
- What actions are you going to take to ensure that you are happier, healthier, and more satisfied with your job and your life?
- Are you ready to make transformational changes in your personal and professional life?

Many people think about resolutions for the New Year, but few ever follow through. Studies show that you can be much more effective if you set goals for yourself. It also helps if they are SMART Goals, and I like to tell people about the double meaning of SMART¹ Goals:

Specific
Measurable
Attainable
Realistic
Time-bound

¹ George T. Doran, November 1981, Management Review. "There's a S.M.A.R.T. Way to Write Management's Goals and Objectives."

Then, there's also this: One of the very wise things I remember learning during my coach-training days is that the additional ART in SMART means:

Accountable
Resonate
Thrilling

If you want change in your life, you need to take action. You need to be willing to address and create change. The first step in that process is to set goals and start your year off with a plan.

Typical New Year's resolutions include tasks of self-improvement or advancement. Here are some popular ones:

- Eating healthier
- Start working out
- Spending quality time with family and friends
- Getting more organized
- Reading more for enjoyment
- Becoming more grateful and happy
- Volunteering and donating more
- Increasing savings
- Traveling to a new country or a new state
- Saying no sometimes (You just have to do it.)

Now the hard part is to follow through with your resolutions during the year. The challenge is to translate your resolutions into action; do this using the concept of SMART (with ART) Goals. It is important to make realistic goals and then get a friend, partner, or a coach to share your goals with. This "Accountability Partner" is the key to your achieving success. It is an excellent way to stay motivated as well.

How would it feel to convert your resolutions into actionable goals, kickstart your life, and take charge of your destiny?

But let's not forget about last year. It is one thing to say that you set goals or that you made resolutions last year, but did you celebrate achieving them on New Year's Eve? If not, why not? What will you do differently in the coming year, and how will you reward yourself for your achievements? If you aren't good to yourself, who will be?

I love what I do each and every day; do you love what you do? My work is rewarding and fulfilling; is yours? I am so thrilled when I see people who are empowered to take control of their lives. When people succeed in doing that, they can live the life they want to live by setting meaningful goals and celebrating their success.

This year could be the most productive and satisfying year of your life, but it's up to you to make it happen.

Vacations Are Vital, Too!

Yes, taking two vacations in one month is possible! I know, because we did it—in one memorable January a few years back.

We started off in Orlando, Florida. On New Year's we walked around Sea World as a family (see photo, right). Then we met up with my college friend and sorority sister Roxanne and her family. We had a blast together. We actually stayed in Florida six days, conveniently managing to miss the first big snowstorm of the year back home. Perfect timing! What a great way to start the new year!



My husband and I were back to work the following week and our son was back to school. The next weekend we left for a four-day getaway to Las Vegas. By leaving over the weekend we only missed two days of work. The main objective for our trip was to celebrate my mother-in-law's upcoming 80th birthday. She didn't want a big party. Instead, she was clear that she wanted to go to Las Vegas in the winter, see shows, and gamble. Well, we satisfied all her requests and she was quite lucky as well.

If you haven't started to think about planning your vacations for the year, you really need to do that right away. This is important, since this is time for you. Vacations help revive us and give us energy. Most importantly, vacations clear and refresh our bodies as well as our minds.

How did we manage that wonderful "two-vacation January"? First, we planned ahead for flights. Second, we stayed at our timeshare property in Florida. Lastly, we exchanged points for a timeshare in Las Vegas. We had specific vacation goals that we wanted to achieve—with fun and relaxation topping the chart.

Specifically:

- My vacation goal was to avoid cooking, cleaning, and doing laundry. This was accomplished on both vacations, and my basic vacation goals were achieved.
- Our son wanted to swim in a pool every day; he was able to do this during our Florida vacation and he was thrilled.
- My husband was able to sleep late, relax, and read science fiction books, so he was also satisfied.
- As a couple neither of us gambled; however, we enjoyed our hot stone massages and shows. We came back to Boston well rested and ready for work (and the next snowstorm!).

I always book our next vacation as soon as I return from a vacation. I would recommend this strategy, since it will give you something to look forward to and to plan on. Realize anything is possible if you want it bad enough!

Isn't your vacation worth scheduling? You put all of your meetings and engagements on your calendar, right? Isn't your time off a necessary step to bring you back to producing your best work and feeling on top of your game?

REFLECTIONS
