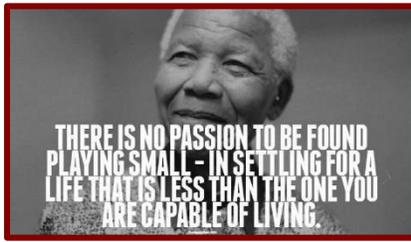


Top 5 Ways to Achieve Your New Years Resolutions

Every year 45% of all Americans will make New Year's resolutions. Only 8% of those 45% will succeed.¹ We live in one of the most ambitious countries in the world, yet only 3.6% of us *make and achieve* New Year's resolutions each year, why is that?

There are a number of reasons why we fail at resolutions and those same reasons are why we fail in goals either in the workplace or for personal reasons. Here are *the top 5 ways to achieve your New Years resolutions, personal goals and / or individual goals in the workplace.*

1. **Specificity** – Many times we resolve to *enjoy life to the fullest, be a better colleague or save the world*. Although wonderful and noble, these resolutions lack specificity in that they are too lofty or lack specificity as to what it means to “enjoy life to the fullest.” Goals need to be clear and simple: In 2016 I'm going to *live life to the fullest* by traveling to Spain in July to participate in the annual and Running of the Bulls.
2. **Accountability** – Increase the probability of success by sharing your resolutions with others, either people you know or complete strangers.



3. **Measureable** – Resolutions, like goals, need to be measureable. You need to know if you are on track or not, at a frequency relative to the goal. For example, if your resolution is to lose weight (the most common resolution), then you need to weigh yourself periodically to see if you are trending appropriately. If not, you can correct your plan as needed. If your goal is to live life to the fullest by traveling to Spain in July as mentioned in #1, your measurements

could be those activities you need to complete to make that happen: make travel arrangements, practice being chased by a very mean dog while wearing red, increase disability insurance, etc.

4. **Visibility** – Increase the probability of success by making your progress visible in your home or office. For example, as you are losing weight, plot the results on a graph that you can see every day. This criterion, like accountability above, can be accomplished through technology and the many apps available today.
5. **Achievable** – Your resolution must be realistic and attainable. A big reason why resolutions fail is that we make too many and / or unrealistic resolutions. An example of this would be to achieve a 4.0 GPA for spring semester when the highest grade you've had in any *course* has been a B+ (e.g., 3.3) and / or the highest *semester* GPA you've ever achieved was a 2.7. So this would be unrealistic and most likely will result in you quickly becoming frustrated and unmotivated. Start with something more achievable for you and gradually increase the goal over time.

For those 45% of Americans making New Years resolutions for 2016, you will increase your chance of success ten-fold by following 1-5 above. For those 38% of you who never make New Years resolutions, try it. “If you think you can, or you can't, you're right” said Henry Ford. Next year I'll then publish an article on how 80% of Americans are achieving their New Years resolutions and why there's a need to aim higher <wink>.

¹Source: University of Scranton, Journal of Clinical Psychology