



10 Tips to Make 2015 Your Most Powerful Year Yet

By *Sylvaine N. Hughson*

Yes, it's that time of year again when some of us will feel compelled to create a long list of New Year's Resolutions. Regardless of where you fall on the goal-setting spectrum, whether you're enthusiastic, bypass it entirely or fall somewhere in the middle, choosing how you wish to begin 2015 is a very personal and powerful decision that can set the tone for the rest of the coming year.

Will you start 2015 with a bang and then fizzle out or will you build consistently and surpass even your most challenging objectives mid-year? Assuming you'd prefer the latter, below is a list of 10 helpful tips as you begin to think about your needs, wants, and desires for the coming year. Ready to move the needle? These steps will help empower you to achieve the goals you set for yourself.

1: Evaluate Your Goals – Creating a long list of goals because it's what you think you're "supposed" to do, simply isn't worth the effort and can lead to frustration and disappointment in no time at all.

On the other hand, creating a shorter, more focused, and personalized list will deliver greater long term inspiration and satisfaction as you pursue your goals.

So what's the trick? It's actually remarkably simple – write it all down. Literally write down everything that's on your mind in terms of your goals – nothing is too big or too small. The key here is to go from macro to micro. Empty your brain of everything that is on your mind and get it onto paper - this will free you up mentally and help you prioritize.

Once you've written everything down, you can revisit your list and get strategic and clear around what you really want to work on in 2015. As you begin to cull your list take notice of how many of these goals are for other people and not really what you desire... How many of these goals are you less-than-enthusiastic about pursuing? Now is the time to take a hard look at where you think that you should be spending your energy in 2015 and decide if that's really what you want to be doing.

Another point to consider is are your goals "big" enough that they will challenge you, inspire you, and stretch you to grow in new and positive ways? Or are you somewhere selling yourself short? It is also important to remember that sometimes accomplishing smaller goals can lead to dramatic shifts as well – this is the concept of small hinges swinging big doors. Sometimes aligning small goals and lifestyle changes is enough to lead to dramatic improvements and results.

2: Evaluate Your Stress Level – As you review your list of goals, notice any shifts in your body – sudden feelings of physical discomfort, anxiety or resistance that may pop up. Oftentimes, feelings of resistance may be an indication that that goal is part of your “growing edge,” meaning it lies outside the bounds of what feels comfortable and that accomplishing it will stretch you and force you to build new muscles. The key here is to strike a balance between being challenged versus feeling overwhelmed. Feeling challenged, unsure of how you are going to pull off accomplishing a very large and ambitious goal is quite different from feeling like you’re in a state of danger or distress. Stress can at times have a very positive effect on the body – it can keep you sharp from a performance standpoint and make you creative and resourceful. The key is to tap into the positive type of stress, not the negative one that shuts you down.

3: Evaluate Your Degree of Life Satisfaction – Where are you currently happy, fulfilled, and intellectually stimulated? What areas of your life are more evolved and well-rounded than others? Consider this a phenomenal opportunity to acknowledge and recognize your accomplishments to date. Take the time to get clear on what you’re craving more of in your life and make a point of incorporating more of those activities on a regular basis.

4: Change the Question, Change the Outcome – As you fine tune your resolutions list this year, instead of asking “What do I want to do or accomplish this year?” – try asking yourself, “Who do I want to be this year or what do I want to experience?” This may appear to be a subtle shift, however the answer may surprise you.

5: Figure Out Where Your Roadblocks Are – Now is a great time to get clear on what is not working for you in your life. Are you feeling stuck? Frustrated? Uninspired? While mentally revisiting these areas of your life may not be overly pleasant – emotional insights and treasures lie hidden within. Resolving to address what is not working in your life can free up tremendous energy for you to focus on what you really want to be accomplishing, as well as the areas that are working.

6: Clear the Decks and Make Space for the New – Now that you have some clarity around what is working and what’s not working for you in your life – it’s time to take a broader look at the physical space around you. What, literally, is taking up space unnecessarily? Do you have old clothes in your closet that you no longer wear? Old furniture that you no longer use? Creating physical space in your environment and getting rid of items that no longer serve you and your goals is very powerful. This is a great time to take inventory of your efforts and make sure that the work you’re doing is supporting the goals that you have set for yourself.

7: Set Yourself up for Sustainable Success – Creating your New Year’s resolutions list is not about sprinting out of the gate and running out of steam a month or two later. The key here is to set yourself up for success over time and have your accomplishments build one on top of the other. Think slow burn rather than crash & burn... Herein lies the secret to achieving your greatest results.

8: Give Yourself Permission – Constantly striving for perfection can become exhausting over time – try striving for excellence instead. Allow yourself to make mistakes as this will be your fastest path to continued learning and growth. Remember to recommit even in the face of a stumble — imperfect action is always better than perfection paralysis.

9: Kick Back and Watch the Magic Happen – Now that you’ve built the foundation for the year ahead that you wish to create and set your intention, it’s important to remember that not everything will go as planned. As once stated by Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Life is a journey, not a destination...” so will it be when it comes to accomplishing your goals for 2015. Allow yourself to be flexible and embrace the opportunity to course correct as you go – doing this will allow you to achieve your goals much faster.

10: Enjoy the Process – As you set out to accomplish all of your goals for 2015, remember to enjoy and savor the experience. Give yourself room to breathe. And as a gentle reminder — don’t take yourself too seriously... There is tremendous value in maintaining and cultivating a sense of “play” in your life. This will help you achieve the results you desire more quickly. ■

Please see Sylvaine N. Hughson’s CWW profile on p. 33.