

Taking Stock of your Year, Latest Research on Goal Achievement, and Wisdom from the Dalai Lama

Full of great holiday reading, welcome to the last newsletter of 2009 from Fresh Ways Forward – a journey through your year and into 2010. How exciting!

Taking stock of your year and looking ahead

As the end of 2009 approaches and a New Year beckons, many of us are simply head down and tail up as we tie up the loose ends of the year. At some point though (hopefully!) we'll get some down time, which is a great opportunity to really take stock and check in with yourself about where you've come this year and where you're going in 2010. I've created a simple format for you to do just that, just go to the resources page on this website and download 'WORKSHEET: Taking Stock of Your Year'.

Print it off, take it away with you and take stock of your year. Enjoy!

And it doubles as a **Christmas gift!** Forward on this newsletter and share this tool with your friends! Simply click the **Send to a Friend** link at bottom of this page.



Latest Research on Goal Achievement

Finally, the secrets to truly achieving goals – this is the stuff The Secret doesn't tell you! What do people who successfully achieve major goals in life do that the rest don't do? And what do they *not* do? Latest research findings from a number of studies outlined by Dr Richard Bolstad (Research on Specifying Goals, 2009) tell us just that. Find out what makes the difference between achievement and disappointment.

Some of the most recent research comes from Richard Wiseman in his book 59



NLP Trauma Recovery Team going to Samoa

I'm very excited to be part of a team of NLP Master Practitioners and Trainers who will be travelling to Samoa early next year on the invitation of the Samoan Ministry of Health to carry out trauma recovery work for victims of the tsunami and those helping them. We will be using ground-breaking techniques that provide profound and lasting relief from trauma and PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder).

The techniques the team employs have been shown to be the most effective solution to treating PTSD in war zones and following the 9-11 events in the US.

I'll keep you posted on our plans and let you know when our website will be up so you can see what we're up to.



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Seconds: Think a Little, Change A Lot (MacMillan, London, 2009). Wiseman studied 5000 people who had set themselves a significant goal of some kind; goals such as beginning a new career or relationship, that type of thing. He followed them over a year to monitor their progress. Of the 5000 participants, just 10% actually achieved their goal. That means a staggering 90% did not. Read on to find out what you need to know to be in the 10% category!

Before I go on, however, I want to make a distinction here; some people hate goals, or the word 'goal', or the very thought of goals! I used to be one of those people! If that's you, here's a hint. This isn't about goals. It's about your dreams, your vision, what you want to bring into your life, how you want to be, live and achieve. Use whatever word you want. Don't let the thought of pesky goal setting slow you down!

"A goal properly set, is halfway reached."

Abraham Lincoln

Secrets to Truly Achieving Goals

1. Tell someone

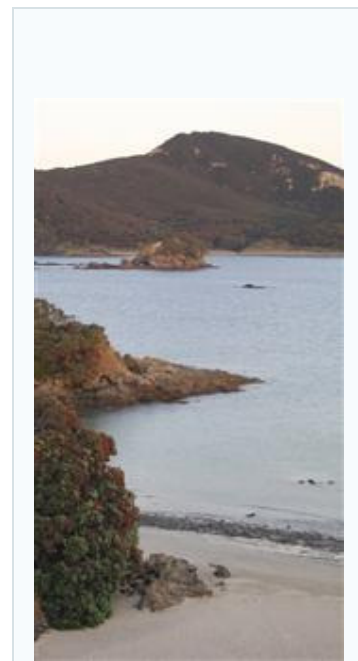
One of the things that the 10% did that the rest didn't was tell a significant other in their life about their goal. "Successful participants were far more likely than others to tell their friends, family and colleagues about their goals ... Telling others about your aims helps you achieve them, in part, because friends and family often provide much needed support when the going gets tough," Wiseman 2009, p91.

2. Think about *what you want*

Now I've talked about this extensively in previous articles, but it remains undeniably true. Where your attention goes, energy (and your brain!) goes. Wiseman found that when people focused on what they were aiming for (rather than what they were wanting to avoid), they were much more likely to get it. For example, if someone wants a better relationship, focussing on finding a happy, trusting and fun relationship will be far more effective than worrying about ending up in another stressful unhappy relationship. It's common sense, but you'd be amazed at how many of us get caught up thinking about what we don't want!

3. Write goals and steps down

For a long time I didn't know why it was so important to write goals down. Although it might seem obvious to some, I wanted to know the reason behind it. An obvious reason is that like any good plan, when you put it on paper you can more easily see it, see what has to be done, and track it. What I've also



Find serenity these holidays



discovered is that when you write goals down, the reticular activating system (RAS) in your brain is activated.

The RAS system is the part of your brain that sorts for information. You may have noticed it working after you've made a large purchase of some kind – perhaps a car or a beautiful coat. Did you notice that after you bought the item, you seemed to notice it in lots of places? It may have appeared to stand out somehow - even though you no longer needed to keep looking for it! It's your RAS system sorting for the things you want, and it just hasn't caught up with the fact that you've already found it! That's a pretty handy piece of software to have running when you're pursuing the things you want in your life.

I recently saw Tony Adams speaking in Auckland (he's the world's fastest tap dancer - look him up!). Tony has achieved a lot in this life and he talked about how he approaches his goals. He described how he draws himself a mind map, which is essentially his goal written in a circle in the middle of a page, and then branching off that circle are all the things he needs to do in order to achieve his goal. For one of his goals he ended up with 63 tasks. That seems like a lot, but just do one thing each day. As he says, if you do something every day that's 365 things; that has to make a difference!

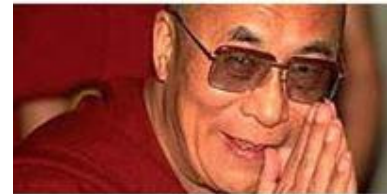
4. Do stuff, take action

If you've already written your plan of the steps you need to take, whether it's 6, 63 or 365, you're half way there. Now you just need to do those things! At least one every day! And if any task seems too big, you haven't broken it down into enough pieces or steps. I often remind my clients of this with a simple question: How do you eat an enormous elephant? ... One bite at a time.

Wiseman found that successful goal achievers were good at reflecting, even if only briefly, on "the type of barriers and problems they are likely to encounter if they attempt to fulfil their ambition" (p101) so that they knew what they would do if they encountered any difficulty. Any less than positive results from your actions are just providing you with feedback about what you might need to do differently or take into consideration.



5. Think through it as if you've done it (once)



Wisdom from the Dalai Lama

We were honoured to have His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet visit New Zealand again this year. Beautiful Tibetan singer, Yungchen Lhamo, opened the Saturday session. Later on in her performance she said to the audience in her quiet accented voice, "Life is funny you know. Our people must cross mountains, lose arms, lose legs, lose life, in order to see the Dalai Lama, and here we are... You pay for a ticket and come to this stadium, and the Dalai Lama comes all the way to you. How lucky you are." How humbled we were.

It was an uplifting afternoon, the highlight for many of us being just before the formal proceedings began, when Yungchen Lhamo invited the whole of Vector Arena to OM together. The feel of hundreds of people producing that same sound was incredible, I think it was one of the most extraordinary experiences I've ever had.

His talk was on *A Peaceful Mind*, which he said "doesn't come from medical injection but from practice". He went on to talk about the practices that are most important to cultivate a peaceful mind.

He talked of the importance of practising compassion through our



This is about getting the first (sometimes nerve-wracking!) time over with! Do you remember the first time you did a proper hill start when you were learning to drive, the first time you travelled overseas, or cooked a particular meal? Often the first time seems like a really big deal, whereas we usually find it easier and more enjoyable the second time round.

Simply imagine going on that first date with Mr or Miss Fabulous, or having an interview for your ideal job. Walk yourself through it and enjoy having a successful first experience! Then look forward to your second (real) experience of it.



6. Let the world around you help

Put simply, you are not alone. As well as telling your friends and family about your goals, be sure to keep an eye and ear out for opportunities that will support you. Ten years ago when I was visiting Bratislava, Slovakia, I set myself a goal to find a job there (as quickly as possible). I began by asking around. Through contacts there I ended up with three interviews in less than a week and was working within the month. It works!

In one of his recent trainings held in Auckland, Richard Bolstad pointed out that the fundamental cause of suffering in the world is the belief that we are each separate from each other and the world. Mathieu Ricard, translator to the Dalai Lama is a man often referred to as the happiest man in the world. He is a Tibetan monk who meditates for 6 hours every day. According to Richard Bolstad, when his brain activity is monitored, it shows he is "off the scale on happiness". As he meditates he feels love and compassion and sends this out to all living beings. He is experiencing a profound connection with the world.

Not only does it make us feel better to remember we are connected to the world around us, it helps us tune in to the world more thoroughly. When we're tuned in, we are better able to spot opportunities available to us, and make use of them.

care for others, to sometimes sacrifice our self to help others, and to not hold onto quarrels. He talked about how children will usually quarrel and then forget about it and go and play. Ducks are the same; after an altercation with their mate, they flap their wings energetically and go on with their day. We can learn from this.

"Compassion is not religious business, it is human business, it is not luxury, it is essential for our own peace and mental stability, it is essential for human survival."

He pointed out that there is a biological basis to peace of mind. He talked of how fear causes anger, both of which cause the body to go into fight or flight response; blood goes out to the arms to fight and to the legs for flight. He explained how scientific findings show that "hatred is eating our immune system, whereas a peaceful mind strengthens the immune system". He explained how quickly he recovered from a recent gallbladder operation and how impressed his doctor was. His explanation: "it comes from having peace of mind".

His Holiness the Dalai Lama explained that our actions determine what we create. One's own behaviour can cause pain or pleasure. It is simple cause and effect. He said this causes us to be our own creator, since what we do (what action we take) has an effect of some kind. So positive action causes a positive effect or outcome, and therefore a positive influence on others. This helps us cultivate a



The Essential Don'ts; What NOT to Do

A key finding that Wiseman discovered was that those 4500 people who did not achieve their goals were often thinking about all the bad things that would happen if they didn't achieve their goal and fantasising about how great their life will be when they have their goal.

Don't think about what you don't want

Again, please! Don't spend time and conversations thinking and complaining about what you don't want in your life. If you're focusing on what you're fed up with, redirect your attention to what you want instead. Refer to point two above!

Don't fantasise that your goal has already happened

Yes, see the possibility. Imagine what it will be like. Let yourself dream. But don't imagine it has already happened – it is a future event and you need to be working towards it! Wiseman found that people who achieved the least, imagined it had happened and therefore didn't do anything towards it.

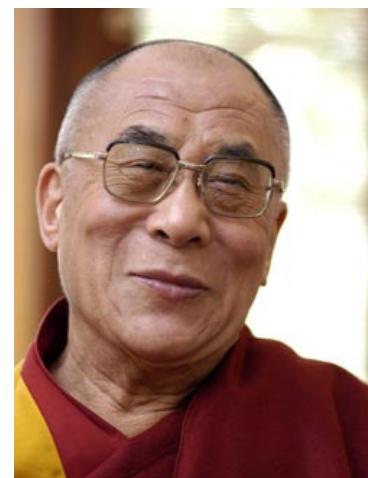
Wiseman explains that "this type of exercise has been promoted by the self-help industry for years, with claims that it can help people lose weight, stop smoking, find their perfect partner, and enjoy increased career success. Unfortunately, a large body of research now suggests that although it may make you feel good, the technique is, at best, ineffective." He further explains that this is because achievement of goals relies on motivation, and fantasising something has already been done reduces (conscious and unconscious) motivation. Wiseman found that the more fantasising people did, the less action they took.

So get to it. Make your plan, tell someone about it, take action. Go for it!

peaceful mind.

"This is my simple religion. There is no need for temples; no need for complicated philosophy. Our own brain, our own heart is our temple; the philosophy is kindness."

Finally, he highlighted the great need for compassion in the whole of the world. He touched on the immense bloodshed that has marked the last century, following the rise of male domination and increased wars and power struggles as population has grown. He said "let this century be a century of dialogue. We must make more attention to promoting compassion". He explained how women play a very important role in this as they have more sensitivity about other's pain. He talked of how important women are in influencing the cultivation of compassion in the world. He chuckled as he mentioned that former Irish President, Mary Robinson, recently described the Dalai Lama as a feminist!





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“We can never obtain peace in the world if we neglect the inner world and don't make peace with ourselves. World peace must develop out of inner peace.”

His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Wishing you a very happy Christmas. May you have all the rest, companionship and fun you wish for these holidays. All the best for the New Year.

Look out for the February newsletter to get you energised for 2010.



The Eckhart Files

We can get very caught up in the drama and story of situations, often creating unnecessary despair and concern.

In *The Power of Now*, Tolle says “be present as the watcher of your mind - of your thoughts and emotions as well as your reactions in various situations. Be at least as interested in your reactions as in the situation or person that causes you to react.”



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