

Annual Opportunity

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This EKTIMIS article represents the first of the New Year—2009. What would be more appropriate than a topic that deals with a New Year resolution, a popular tradition in many parts of the world? Over the past years I have known and met many people who have set a New Year resolution. Some were able to keep their resolution while many simply abandoned the effort before mid-year.

Some people set a New Year resolution because they choose to, some set one because they are told to, and others set one because many around them are doing the same and they wish to join in. Whatever the catalyst for setting a New Year resolution, the initiating factor is a contributing and vital component to one's chances of success—this is my belief.

What is a New Year resolution anyway?
The truth of the matter is that a New Year resolution is a personal expression of an intent. When you make a New Year resolution, you are making a personal expression of an intent—a commitment—to fulfill something. The key components of this definition are the three words—*personal*, *intent* and *fulfill*.

New Year Resolution
A personal expression of an intent to fulfill something.

A New Year resolution is an annual opportunity and a very important and wonderful practice—and a great tradition to engage. Why? There are many benefits and good reasons, but the one primary reason that I wish to stress in this article is discipline. A New Year resolution is a great way to cultivate and maintain personal discipline.

Discipline is a personal quality—a character attribute. John C. Maxwell, one of the foremost thought leaders on the topic of leadership, lists discipline as one of the qualities of an effective leader. Many of the great leaders of all time exhibited qualities that include discipline—Winston Churchill, Martin Luther King, Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, Ronald Reagan, and many more. Many business leaders, considered some of the greatest, also demonstrated qualities including discipline—business tycoon, Warren Buffett and former General Electric CEO, Jack Welch, promptly come to mind.

Earlier I alluded to the three key words in the definition of a New Year resolution—*personal*, *intent*, and *fulfill*. First, *personal* implies that you are pursuing the resolution because you choose to, and not because someone makes you; this implies a personal decision. Second, *intent* implies a commitment or a promise. Lastly, *fulfill* refers to completion. In essence, and put another way, when you make a New Year resolution, you are challenging yourself to complete a personal task. You are challenging yourself to start and complete a personal journey. The journey may take you through places that you have never been—within and without yourself; the journey may present challenges and barriers that will test your will and strength. Ultimately the journey will come to an end—in success or failure. And when it does, the important question will rest on the quality of the ride.

If you have not considered making a New Year resolution, I suggest that you give it serious consideration. If you ultimately decide to establish one, be thoughtful about it and use the following guidelines. Consider a resolution that provides a benefit—either to you or to someone else. If you elect a personal benefit, be sure that it is consistent with a personal goal that you may have set as one of your life aspirations; make it meaningful. Secondly, be sure to make it very specific—the more specific, the better. If it is too broad, break it up into manageable components and start with one piece. There are many more years ahead of you to take on the other components. Thirdly, be sure your resolution is measurable; that is, be sure that you will know exactly how to determine that you have accomplished it. Finally, be sure your resolution is attainable—in other words, be realistic. If you pursue a resolution that is not attainable, it will amount to a waste of time, energy, and perhaps money or other resources—remember we are in a global economic recession!

If and when you have established your New Year resolution, prepare and plan. Do not embark on your journey until you have adequately prepared yourself. Then, plot your course—create your game plan—and prepare for an interesting ride! Your ability to maintain self-discipline will be a contributing factor to your eventual success. And your ability to cultivate or strengthen self-discipline will enhance your leadership and your management effectiveness. Happy New Year.

About the Author



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