

IMPRESSION: a characteristic, trait, or feature resulting from some influence, a telling image impressed on the senses or the mind



It's time for positive

CHANGE

Make Your January Shine! On Setting Your Goals and Keeping Them

UXL, January 2013



It's January and you're already sick of gray skies and bone-chilling winds. You'd rather stay in bed than get up for your eight o'clock meeting or your six o'clock date with the treadmill. How do you overcome your lethargy and lack of will power? How do you start the year off on the right foot when you would much rather put on your slippers than your business shoes? I won't lie to you, it's not always easy. However, with a little direction and a bit of motivation, you can make your January shine!

The "Clean Slate" Mentality

Yes, it's cliché. Yes, you've heard it time and again: "January is a clean slate. It's the beginning of a new

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Becoming a Better Community-Builder



At our very core, we are designed to be social creatures, reliant on others for base survival needs. Today, it is easy to forget those

year. Time to put 2012 behind you!" But, do you truly believe it? You should.

The "Clean Slate" frame of mind is a powerful one and it can help you accomplish great things this year.

However, you need to fully embrace this mentality in order to make it work. Focus on what is ahead of you instead of what lies behind. That's not to say, "forget the lessons of the past," because that's certainly never a good idea. Yes, learn from the past, but don't dwell on it. Think of that big empty year ahead of you and how you're going to fill it. Sound daunting? Read on.

Guide Yourself

Once you've gotten yourself in a positive frame of mind and you're ready to take on the challenges of the new year, sit down. Get out a pen and paper. Think. Write. This is *your* year and right now you have the freedom to map out exactly how you think it should go. Think about and take notes on the following things:

- What do you want to accomplish this year?
- When do you want to reach those goals?
- What steps will you take to get there?
- What kind of support will you need?
- Which goals are the most important to you?

Think realistically, but don't be afraid to dream big. If you want to write a novel this year or run a marathon, now is the perfect time to start. Or if you simply want to eat more vegetables this year, now is also the perfect time to start! All you need to do is give yourself a little kick in the pants.

Motivation

You've got your goals. You're thinking about the big, clean slate that's in front of you. But it's still cold outside and you're still feeling the allure of your favorite easy chair. For times like these—when your motivation is lackluster, at best—it is essential to keep your goals and ambitions at the front of your mind. Easier said than done, right? True, but there are several small ways you can keep focused on your goals.

One great way to stay focused is to make up a calendar and write down what steps you would like to take every

roots. [Read more](#) for my thoughts on community-building

Making New Years Resolutions?



Let me help you simplify your goal-setting this year. Step One: Keep your resolutions attitude-oriented, not goal-oriented. For steps two and three, read on [here!](#)

How the "Gift of the Magi" Still Resonates Today



Some of you are probably familiar with "The Gift of the Magi," a classic Christmas story which beautifully illustrates the true meaning behind holiday gift-giving. It is important to keep its lesson in mind as we travel through the holiday season and through the new year. [Read More.](#)

day or every week that will eventually lead to achieving your goal. Be realistic and leave some wiggle room for yourself. If your plan is to lose twenty pounds, schedule gym days, but also schedule rest or recovery days. It is best to build up your fitness rather than plunge into a routine that is over your head. Additionally, it is a good idea to make up a new goal calendar every month. That way, you can evaluate your progress on a monthly basis and rework your plan if necessary. Don't forget to put your calendar somewhere visible! It won't do you any good in the junk drawer.

Another way to stay motivated is to let others in on your plans. If your friends or family members know about your goals, they can help hold you accountable or even join you in achieving them. For instance, if your goal is to eat more healthily, your family can help you by fixing nutritious meals and skipping the snack aisle when they go grocery shopping.

Also, don't forget to reward yourself! Go back to your handy goal calendar and pencil in some "reward days." If you reach a milestone in your progress or if you were simply able to make it to the gym four days this week, give yourself a little reward. Thinking about your reward—whether it be a dish of ice cream or a movie night with friends—can help keep your motivation up and renew your focus. You're accomplishing great things; you deserve a few treats!

Again, the Clean Slate

It is important to start the year off right and set fitting goals for yourself, but it shouldn't end there. After all, there are eleven long months that come after January and you have to make your way through them as well. As you maneuver your way through another year of meetings, deadlines, car trouble, late bills, and sick days, call upon the clean slate mentality whenever you need it. Was February a rotten month? Start over in March. Was Tuesday littered with trials and troubles? Let Wednesday be your clean slate. Summon your clean slate state of mind whenever you need to—whenever you feel the need to make a fresh start. That way, you won't be discouraged if your day or month turns rotten and your end-of-the-year goals get temporarily derailed.

And don't be afraid to re-work your goals. It is better to modify them than scratch them completely. Be realistic, be practical, but do not give up. As early American writer Elbert Hubbard once said, "There is no failure except in no longer trying." I completely agree.

Here's to starting your year off right and maintaining your January optimism all year round!

Best of luck,

Margaret Smith

Founder, [UXL: Creating Successful Leaders](#)



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A great opportunity for all business-minded women



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Margaret is a career coach, speaker, licensed Insights Discovery practitioner, and adjunct professor at St. Kate's University with 27 yrs experience as a Senior Leader for 3M.

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