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HAPPY NEW YEAR ... NOW, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH IT?

It feels like one minute the champagne corks are popping, spirits are high as we share our hopes and aspirations for the New Year; the next minute we find ourselves two months into 2006 and wondering what happened to all those good intentions. Most people I know who make New Years Resolutions do not keep them, the rest don't even bother to make them because they've learnt from the past that it's better to keep your mouth shut rather than risk another year of disappointment. There are some people, however, who not only make resolutions, but keep them. My observations of these people are that they follow three simple rules:

RULE ONE ... *keep it real.*

If you are someone who finds you do not keep your resolutions, ask yourself how realistic they were in the first place. Whenever setting a goal, always do it in line with your 'big picture'. How does it fit in with your current reality? For example, if your goal is to save up to travel the world, but your income is small, perhaps you need to reconsider your goal and choose just one place you'd like to visit this year that fits within an achievable budget for you. Having goals that are too lofty can create the worst kind of obstacles: disappointment and self-doubt – or worse, I've seen some people who experience self-loathing because they view themselves as failures for not reaching a goal which was ridiculously high to start with. Be sure that your goal is realistic to *you*, do not base it on what others are capable of achieving but on what *you* are capable of achieving. This works both ways – we can sabotage ourselves for not being able to live up to the standards others set, but we can also hold ourselves back by using others as our yardsticks. For example, just because most people take three years of hard slog to set up

their new businesses, it doesn't mean you don't have the skills, motivation and contacts to do it differently and have your business booming in two years. Do not set your goals based on the reality of others, only you know what you are truly capable of achieving.

RULE TWO ... *have a plan.*

Many people set themselves goals without having any real idea how to achieve them. I've heard many people, for example, claim they are having their last cigarette on New Years Eve, the next time I see them they are lit up and making excuses about how hard it is to give up. In reality, however, they simply did not have a game plan. Will power is not a plan; it is simply what we apply in sticking to our plans! People who achieve their goals have sat down and worked out what strategies they need to apply to stay on track. They know what their obstacles will be and they have identified who and what they need on their side to help them hurdle those obstacles. They also have identified smaller steps and milestones to be celebrated in order to keep them motivated and feeling successful as they move towards their big goal.

RULE THREE ... *believe in the underlying purpose.*

Even when you are realistic and you have a plan, unless you understand your motivations behind your goal and are 100% committed to the good in that purpose, you will eventually lose interest. For example, both you and I could have the goal of losing 10 kilos. Your reason might be because you have your heart set on winning the next the next paddle boarding championship. The memory of seeing the winner cross the finish line, just a craft length in front of you is burned into your mind – you will do anything to avoid that feeling of defeat again. You know that you were carrying extra weight last year and if you could loose it you would cruise in the win. Meanwhile, the reason behind my goal is that I've got some clothes that are too tight on me and I'd really like to wear them again. Mind you, fashions change all the time, and who doesn't like an excuse for a new outfit?! Besides that, I notice that curves seem to be making a resurgence. And of course I have a bunch of other goals that limit my time to commit to loads of exercise and cooking low-fat meals. In other words my values are wrapped up in more important things than putting on last year's clothes. However, there is a deep desire in you, based on values you hold dear – values of competing and being your best – that will keep you committed and propel you towards reaching your goal. If I was going to place a wager, my money would be on you reaching your goal, not me!

So did you make a New Years Resolution for 2006? If so, are you on track? If you are serious in your commitment to achieving your goal, take a moment now to reflect deeply about it, grab a pen and get it on paper!

WRITE YOUR OWN UNIQUE RESOLUTION PLAN!

It should cover:

- What is the goal?
- When do you want to achieve it?
- What are the milestones along the way?
- Why is it realistic?
- What are the obstacles and how will you counter them?
- How will you measure your progress?
- Who needs to support you in order for you to achieve it?
- Why is it important to you to achieve your goal?
- Which of your core values does meeting this goal support?
- What is the end pay off for you in achieving this goal?

If you haven't made a New Years Resolution, it's not too late – there are still ten months of the year ahead for you to journey in 2006. That's 300 days – 432,000 minutes of pure possibility. Are you going to make the most of every moment on offer this year? Whatever you decide, may you find yourself welcoming 2007 with pride in yourself for achieving what you set out to achieve *this* year!