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It's February, how are you doing?

So how are the New Year's resolutions coming? Are you one of the 8% who actually keep the resolutions you've set? Are you still on track with your goals? Goal setting and achievement is a scary process, and for that reason, most people don't even try. Only 3% of adults write their goals down. I have often shared with my classes that a goal you never write down is simply an idea and not a goal at all. Let's assume for the sake of space in this article that you already have a well-defined goal. So, what can you do to increase the success rate?

Don't go it alone - In VitalSmarts' Change Anything program, we learn that there are accomplices and friends who either hinder or help us in making desired changes in our lives. When approaching goal setting, we need to apply the same skills. Who in your life can and will help you achieve your goals? Are there people in your life that may actually be working against you? Not intentionally perhaps, but they still may be working against you. Do you have a thinking partner, coach, or mentor in your life? Most people try to keep their goals a secret for fear that they will look bad when they don't achieve the goal. What they fail to realize is that the process of bringing others in and discussing their progress dramatically increases the likelihood that the goal will be achieved.

Use Activation Triggers - By definition, an Activation Trigger is event-driven so when an event occurs, the corresponding trigger is activated. The trigger determines the desired subsequent event that occurs. I first learned about Activation Triggers from Michael Hyatt. Michael explains it this way, "By anticipating whatever behavior contingencies or obstacles we might face, we can cue the desired response." Rather than rely on willpower, which is likely to fail, we build in a contingency plan that says if "X" occurs then we do "Y." According to Heidi Grant Ph.D.

Senior Scientist at the Neuroleadership Institute, after 200 studies it was determined that the if-then planners are 300% more likely to reach their goals. Here are a few examples of using Activation Triggers.

I have a coaching client who struggled to disconnect from work at the end of the day. He has a wife and three small children, and he always seemed to be consumed with work when he should have been fully present with his family. I asked him a few questions, and he developed a routine to shut down his work life before going home. The plan is simple, at 4:30 PM a reminder pops up that he needs to shut down for the day. He then proceeds to review outstanding emails, return any necessary calls, and plan his agenda for the next day. Once completed, he can go home and enjoy the time with his family. His Activation Trigger is the reminder to start the shutdown. His response is to follow his routine. New neuro pathways are established to create a success habit of shutting down the day in a productive way, rather than going home stressed.

Another good example is the "do not disturb" functions on our smartphones. I am a person that struggles with disconnecting in the evening. During a training session at a member company, one of the attendees suggested that I activate the "do not disturb" feature on my iPhone between 7:30 PM and 7:30 AM. So simple and yet so powerful. I let the technology help me with my if "X" then "Y." If it is between 7:30 PM and 7:30 AM only my family's calls will come through. No emails or alerts, just family calls.

So how about you? Will you try to go it alone or will you allow others and systems to help you achieve your goals? For additional tips listen to The Next Page podcast episodes 28, 29 & 30 (available on Apple's Podcast app and Google play) where Marisa and I talk about goal setting.