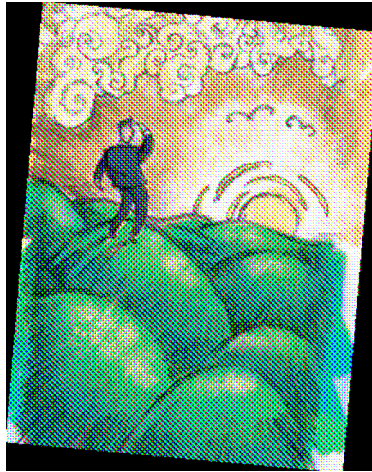


# Four Steps to Creating New Years Resolutions that Stick!

By Greg Giesen



**W**hy is it we don't take New Year's resolutions very seriously? Is it because the word "resolution" has become associated with superficial, lofty goals that fade almost as quickly as our hangover from the New Year's Eve celebration? Or could it be that there is simply no time between Thanksgiving and New Year's to do any serious goal-setting, given all the holiday parties, family obligations, and end-of-the-year work deadlines that must be met?

The answer is "yes" to both. The fact is New Year's resolutions get a bad rap because we don't take the time to do a thorough process of reflecting, assessing, transitioning, and goal setting. Instead, we latch on to any central theme that has been bothering us of late and turn that into some sort of half-hearted resolution. Is it no wonder that 80 percent of people who make resolutions on Jan. 1 fall off the wagon by Valentine's Day, according to Marti Hope Gonzales, an associate professor of psychology at the University of Minnesota?

So how do you make New Year's resolutions that stick, you ask?

Let me answer that in two ways.

First, let's talk about the difference between being interested and being committed. When you are interested, you do it when it is convenient. When you are committed, you accept no excuses, only results! In order to create New Years resolutions that stick, you need to be committed to the 4-step process outlined below. Being committed means:

- Spending quality time on Steps 1 – 4. This includes taking "alone time" with yourself (4 to 8 hours, away from all distractions) where you have time to think, to reflect, to laugh, to cry, to write, to journal, or simply to get back in touch with

yourself. Do not rush through this process. This is about your life. Aren't you worth a few hours?

- Enrolling others in your process, whether by sharing your insights and results with them or by doing the 4-step process together.
- Being willing to create accountability throughout the whole process, especially with your results.

Is this something you are willing to do?

Next is the four-step process itself:

**Step 1:** The end of the year is a perfect time for some personal reflection. It is an opportune time to look over the past year with gratitude and appreciation, noting the high points, the low points, and all the learning in-between.

Put together your own thought-provoking questions that will assist you in reviewing this past year. Example questions include:

What did you learn most about yourself this past year?

What would you do differently this past year, if given the chance?

**Step 2:** The end of the year is also a time for regrouping, recommitting and transitioning into the New Year.

Put together your own thought-provoking questions that will assist you in reviewing this past year. Example questions include:

What's the best advice you could give yourself for this upcoming year?

What would you like to be more disciplined about this upcoming year?

**Step 3:** Based on your insights from steps 1 & 2, identify five commitments that you would be willing to make for the upcoming year. Make sure these commitments are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-based. An example commitment would be:

*I will run on the treadmill for 25-minutes, three-days a week, at a 10-minute mile pace.*

**Step 4:** For any goal or commitment to be successful, it is critical that you create a surrounding environment that not only supports your efforts in achieving your commitments but holds you accountable as well. Examples include:

- **Create an Accountability Team.** Create your own accountability team (3 to 5 members) and get together once a month to share progress, updates, and challenges on each member's commitments.
- **Life Coaching.** Life Coaching is one-on-one coaching designed to help you achieve your commitments and work through any obstacles along the way with the aid of a coach.
- **Share Commitments with Those Most Impacted.** Very simply, sit down with the people that you impact the most in your life and share your commitments and action plans with them. Ask them to support your efforts and to provide feedback whenever you are not aligned with your commitments.

Every year of your life is like a chapter in your own autobiography. Make your life a best seller by capturing as much as you can from each and every year. It will not only give you a greater sense of self, but it will undoubtedly make each successive year that much better.

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Greg Giesen is a professional speaker, management consultant, talk show host, graduate school professor, and the author of *Ask Dr. Mac: Take the Journey to Authentic Leadership*. For a complete packet of Greg's 60 New Years thought-provoking questions, a workbook to walk you through the 4-step process, and access to the *members-only* section of our website where you can create accountability teams and receive coaching on your commitments, go to [www.newyearsresolutionsthatstick.com](http://www.newyearsresolutionsthatstick.com).