



Brain Science And New Year's Resolutions
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Motivational speaker Jim Rohn once said, "I find it fascinating that most people plan their vacations with better care than they plan their lives. Perhaps it's because escape is easier than change."

Success psychologists say that 95% - 97% of the people in the world do NOT have written goals and fail, while 3-5% have written goals and succeed.

If these statistics are correct, then Mr. Rohn's observation really IS quite fascinating isn't it?

Unfortunately for most people, the odds for success are actually even lower, because out of the few people who do set goals, most don't take goal setting seriously, they don't do it scientifically and they only do it once a year.

Goal setting is so important, that I always teach goal setting and mind dynamics first, and only THEN, do I teach nutrition and training second.

It doesn't matter how much you know about nutrition or exercise. Until specialized fitness knowledge is linked with goals and directions, the knowledge is useless and you won't accomplish very much or keep the changes long term.

In fact, I devoted the entire first chapter of my book, Burn the Fat, Feed the Muscle (www.burnthefat.com) to the subject of goals and constructive "mind programming" for successful, permanent behavior change.

I've also studied neuro linguistic programming (NLP) for many years and more recently spent many months researching the latest information about neuroscience to see just how much of the traditional self help and goal setting wisdom is actually backed by brain research.

As you start thinking about your goals for 2007 right Now, I'd like to help you start the year off right by sharing two very valuable, science based tips on achieving your goals:

SCIENTIFIC GOAL SETTING TIP #1: Repetition is an effective way to "plant" a goal in the non-conscious mind

Why don't most resolutions stick? Psychology and neuroscience today are giving us the answers.

Thanks to new technologies in brain imaging, such as PET scans, SPECT scans and functional MRI's, we can now actually see your thoughts as electrochemical impulses and we can see the formation of new neural connections in real time right before our eyes.

We can also see where, geographically, in your brain, a particular type of thought is occurring.

Most importantly, we can see how long it takes to form strong neural patterns and what types of stimuli cause the patterns to form more quickly

Here's what we've discovered:

Setting a goal once is a conscious activity. Willpower is also a conscious activity. But research has shown that at least 5/6 of your brain power is in the non conscious mind and that the information and instructions that reach the non conscious mind are responsible for your automatic behavior.

Some psychologists believe that 95% of our behaviors are unconscious and automatic... more commonly known as habits.

Long term behavior changes don't take place when you set goals one time as with most New Year's resolutions. There's an old saying in "self help" circles that it takes at least 21-30 days to form a habit. This has now been proven to be fairly accurate on a neurological basis.

New neural patterns begin to form only after they've been repeated enough times. They continue to strengthen with further repetition. If you make resolutions on January 1st and you don't continue to repeat and reinforce your desire for those "goals," no new neural connection is formed, no new habits are formed, no new behaviors are formed....

Your resolutions wither away and die and any results obtained through willpower (trying to force the new behaviors through conscious effort), are quickly lost when you slip back to your old ways.

What you repeat over and over again is programmed into the subconscious mind and begins to take root. On a practical level, this means RE-writing your goals everyday and thinking about them in positive terms and in mental pictures, every day, repeatedly until the habit is formed and turned over to "auto-pilot."

In 1956, when Earl Nightingale wrote "The Strangest Secret is that we become what we think about most of the time," we didn't know what we know now about the brain.

Nevertheless, Earl was right.

You don't change your body by trying to change your body. You change your body by creating new habitual patterns of thinking and visualizing.

Trying to force new behaviors with willpower while continuing with your old ways of thinking will always fail because your automatic behavior is mostly under non-conscious control.

Its not the resolution you set once... its the goals (mental thoughts and images) you focus on all day long that create the long term (and automatic) behavioral change... when you change your behaviors, you change your body and your life...

SCIENTIFIC GOAL SETTING TIP #2: Emotion is a goal-turbocharger

Is there any way around this tedious process of "mental programming" through repetition? Not really. The fields of NLP and hypnosis have given us some tools for creating more rapid changes, but ultimately you have to begin to "run your own brain" and change your habitual way of thinking. No one else can do it for you and there's no way around it.

There is however, a scientifically proven way to speed up the process and that is with the use of strong emotion.

Since modern imaging technology can see activity in the brain and scientists have located the seat of emotions in the brain, we know that the strength and number of neural connections associated with a thought or behavior are increased when you're in a highly emotional state.

The neuron connections are also stronger, longer lasting and it takes longer to lose a neural connection when it was formed with great emotion.

With this knowledge, we see another reason why new years resolutions fail: They are set casually with no emotion and no strong emotional "reason why" that gives you the leverage to you need to make a change permanent.

On January 1st, you may think you're setting "real" goals, but if you're like most people, you're not only doing it a mere once a year and then losing focus, you're also likely to be making flimsy, wishy-washy, emotion-less "resolutions."

Zig Ziglar once said that, "A goal casually set and lightly taken will be freely abandoned at the first obstacle."

You might want to back up and read that quote again, maybe even write it down or print it out, because this one hits the bull's-eye!

This truly explains why New Year's resolutions almost never work, and why so few people can keep off the pounds after they get rid of them.

Goal setting should not be casual or lightly taken. Goal setting is an important and serious matter. This is not a game - this is your life, and you only have one life to live.

Goal setting is also not a one time event - it is an ongoing process of literally "re-wiring your brain." With the discovery of brain plasticity, we now know that this is science fact, not self-help fiction.

Make the time to set REAL goals, today! Take it seriously, do it scientifically, re-write your goals every day, think about them constantly, and then take massive action

Do it and this will be the most successful year of your life!

About the Author:

Tom Venuto is a natural bodybuilder and author of the #1 best selling e-book, "Burn the Fat, Feed The Muscle," which teaches you how to burn fat without drugs or supplements using the little-known secrets of the world's best bodybuilders and fitness models. Learn how to get rid of stubborn fat and turbo-charge your metabolism by visiting:

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