

The Worst Day of the Year

I have great news! According to some expert who appears to be the keeper of all useless knowledge, we have already experienced the worst day of 2006. That's right! Only one month into the New Year, and the absolute worst is out of the way.

Apparently January 23rd was the day. According to Cliff Arnall, a health psychologist at the University of Cardiff in Wales, it was on this date that a series of variables collided to make one really lousy day, including: we began seeing debts from holiday spending gathering in our mailbox, we saw work as boring because there aren't many events and holidays in the near future, we were down because the weather was bleak, and we felt like losers because we've already broken our New Year's Resolutions. I hadn't even thought of those things, but now I'm really depressed.

First, let me say I hope that's the worst it gets all year long. We all should be so lucky. Second, if you're buried under a mountain of debt from Christmas, be glad you have the job so you can work on eliminating the debt. Third, if you let the weather determine if you have a good or bad day, brace yourself for many more lousy days. And fourth, you're better off without those silly New Year's Resolutions.

For some of you, it may seem odd for a guy who has dedicated his professional life to developing leaders to praise someone for giving up a New Year's Resolution. For me, it's simple. I have one word for the whole concept of New Year's Resolutions. Worthless.

You see, I'm not much interested in things that don't work and are universally unsuccessful. I've made dozens of New Year's Resolutions over the years, and have seen many, many people do the same. I'm not certain I've ever seen someone truly change their long-term behavior because of a New Year's Resolution, or any other goal driven by a calendar instead of a true resolve.

It has been proven time and time again that the only thing that will change long-term behavior is a change in lifestyle. If you want to lose weight, the likelihood of a diet helping you get there is very small. The short-term mentality of a diet can't compete with the long-term mentality of a change in lifestyle.

Regardless of your resolution and how you work to achieve success, there are some basic ideas that will be required.

Be personally accountable for the outcome

We live in a blame-oriented society, so it's easy to find someone to blame for our lack of success. "If I didn't have to pick up the kids everyday, I could get to the gym every evening." Or, "If my spouse were just more supportive, I would be able to commit more effort to my

goals.” Don’t even consider blaming something or someone if you have trouble changing your lifestyle. If you do, you’ve given yourself permission to fail.

Be flexible with the plan

When we make plans to change something about our life, it’s easy to “reschedule” when things don’t go as planned. “I know I started my new diet this month, but it’s my birthday this week,” we tell ourselves. “I’ll go back on the diet next week.” No you won’t. If you’ve ever been on more than one diet, then you know what I mean. It may seem like tough talk, but I want you to succeed, and if you use a change in your plan as an excuse to “restart” at a later time, then you are lessening your chance of success.

Don’t give up

To make a change in lifestyle requires considerable effort. It’s hard. If it were easy, everyone would complete their New Year’s Resolutions. If you truly want to succeed, commit to not giving up, regardless how difficult it becomes.

It is my sincere hope that you do things that enhance your personal and professional life by resolving to have a better future. Even more than that, it is my hope that having to pay a credit card bill, work a job and let go of a New Year’s Resolution is the worst day you have in 2006!

God bless!

© Verbalocity, Inc. 2006 (Author: Clint Swindall) Clint is the president & CEO of Verbalocity, Inc., a personal development company with a focus on leadership enhancement. He focuses on enhancing the way people lead themselves and those around them, and delivers his message through the Engaged Leadership™ and Engaged Living™ platforms of Verbalocity, Inc. He is based in San Antonio, Texas, and can be reached at (877) Verbalocity (877-837-2256), www.verbalocity.com, or clint@verbalocity.com.

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