

Setting Goals and Finding Blessings in the New Year

by Shirley Fine Lee

It is that time of year when so many people set unrealistic resolutions for the New Year. Instead we need to think rationally about what we really want to achieve this year and what is happening in the world around us right now and in the near future. We must recognize that many of us in performance improvement and organizational development are being unpleasantly hit by the recession. Due to budget cuts, corporate training departments may be cutting back on internal or outsourced training programs. The current recession may mean consultants and contract training professionals have had 4th quarter cancellations and some are still waiting to hear whether contracts may be renewed for the coming year. However, these current situations may also present opportunities for personal and professional growth. We must all find our opportunities by re-evaluating annual goals and looking at the potential blessings we may receive or give.

Thanks to some late year changes in my speaking and training calendar, I found some extra time to read two books that helped me to prepare for the existing economic climate and plan for future changes I must make. Both books explained that it is important to not give up our dreams; we must set goals for ourselves; and reach out to others as part of our own growth - no matter what the environment around us might be.

After reflecting on what I read in Carl Youngberg's book "Make Yourself Matter", I decided to make a list of a few simple goals for myself that I knew I could have an impact on. I then converted them into the [SMART goals format](#) so I could determine when they were met. My main business growth goal was specifically spelled out, easily measured, attainable if I was willing to do the required work, definitely relevant to my personal source of income and business growth, and easily track able on a time-basis of year, quarter, or month. Then I picked a professional growth goal for myself that had to do with my passion for writing that helps others to be more productive in their personal and professional lives as well. I also wrote this goal out in the SMART format. I then developed an action plan to achieve each of these goals.

If we need to have organizational goals that are meaningful, then ask we must ask ourselves and our teams that will help us achieve those goals the following questions:

- What must we do to remain competitive and profitable in the coming year?
- Who does our business impact and how might our plans affect our relationships with them?
- Where will these goals take us and why would these goals be important to our stretching ourselves at this time?
- When and how will we know if we have met our goals?

In looking at the original list I had made and understanding what I wanted to achieve, I determined there was one I really wanted but could not achieve by myself even if I threw lots of marketing muscle and money at it. So I decided to write that wish or goal as a blessing I would have faith for. After writing this blessing down and repeating it daily, as recommended by Joel Osteen in his book "Your Best Life Now", I also began to think about how I could use my talents in ways that bless others. So I thought about my talents and listed several people or organizations that I could help with those talents. Then I picked a few and began to plan how I could help. Some examples could be to offer to speak at or provide articles for more non-profit associations and community groups in order to share my expertise and help others to improve their productivity in

their organizations. I've already seen a few positive results in my being blessed by helping to bless others and we are less than one month into this year.

If we want to be blessed, we should be a blessing to others. For this reason, we need to ask ourselves these questions:

- What would I really like to have, learn, or do this year that requires faith?
- Is there some talent, skill, or ability that I have which may be used as a blessing to others?
- Who can I be blessing to in the coming year and how will I know that I have made a difference?

Whether we are facing budget cuts or contract negotiations, we should think about what we need to achieve this year as well as what is going on in the world around us. Then we can explore our opportunities for personal and professional growth by looking for ways we can be a blessing and reviewing how we set our annual goals. By doing so, we not only plan for and receive what we desire but we will find that giving is a reward that helps us to become what we want to be as well.



About the Author: Shirley Fine Lee is the author of "[R.A.I.R.A! A Meeting Wizard's Approach](#)", a guide to planning and conducting meetings for productivity and effectiveness, and smoothly run. She has considerable training and expertise in leading effective meetings herself, as well as training others to do the same. Shirley has worked as a training and development specialist since 1986, and an independent consultant since 2000 when she joined Dallas ASTD. She has extensive experience helping organizations with their team building, training development, meeting facilitation, presentation delivery, and other communication needs. You may read many business articles by Shirley (some of the e-articles may be reprinted in company newsletters) from her website or on the multi-contributor productivity tips blog at <http://2bproductive.blogspot.com/>. If you want to find out more about Shirley, sign up for her newsletter, or contact her, please see her website at www.ShirleyFineLee.com.