

## By this time of the year most people's New Year resolutions are a distant memory. It is a sad commentary on our lack of ability to follow

3 WAYS TO HELP SUSTAIN COMMITMENT TOWARDS GOALS

through on our good intentions. Most of us can start well but sustaining commitment and progress on new goals is a difficult challenge. Old habits are hard to break; our general busyness becomes just too much of a pressing need to deal with so that anything not urgent just goes to the bottom of the list. Life just gets in the way. Yet the ability to push through, sustaining effort and motivation towards our goals is an important element in the coaching process. It

is this very reason why we at Growth Coaching like the H for Habits part of the GROWTH model. Making explicit the issue of sustaining momentum towards goals in the coaching process is one small way of helping to ensure that. There are other ways to help do this. Here are 3 strategies that we can use with those we lead and coach that will help them to

continue to strive towards achievement of their goals. 1. Peter Gollwitzer's research into 'Implementation Intentions' 1 uncovered an important principle.

When people were able to look into the future and anticipate challenges to ongoing goal achievement and put in place ahead of time some alternative actions in response to the anticipated 'trigger' they were much more likely to maintain

commitment to the goal. For example, if you have decided to get fitter and exercise regularly, one way of maintaining commitment to this goal would be to anticipate a trigger that might derail this intention and plan an alternative goalconsistent response before the trigger occurs. Something like...' If it is cold and wet on a jogging morning then I will go to the gym.' When this 'lf...then' formula was used goal achievement was much higher. 2. Richard Ryan and Edward Deci's work on Self Determination Theory and 'intrinsic motivation' 2 highlights the importance of linking goals to values and deeper meaning.

When goals are 'should' goals our commitment can fall away easily. We are much more likely to sustain commitment to a goal when it is linked to our own chosen values. A question such as, 'Why will achieving this be important to you?' can be a helpful and significant coaching question when

reviewing a goal. For some, this simple question has been deeply moving. 3. Marshall Goldsmith's focus on inviting colleagues to become partners with leaders seeking to implement goals and

behaviour change, highlights the value of harnessing the social environment to assist in goal achievement. In a paper, Leadership is a Contact Sport <sup>3</sup>, he describes a strategy that involves leaders sharing the goals on which they

are working with their colleagues. He then outlines a simple way in which leaders can get targeted, regular feedback on how they are progressing towards the identified goals. When this process was implemented colleagues became allies and

supporters of the leader's success, creating a highly motivated support network and accountability mechanism. So "while sustaining commitment to goals in the face of life's changing priorities and pressures" skilful coaches and leaders can deploy a range of evidence-based approaches to help increase the chances of success. Try integrating some of these strategies into your leadership and coaching conversations and let us know how they work for you.

Have a great month!

By John Campbell, GCI Founding Director

Gollwitzer, P.M. (1999) Implementation intentions: Strong effects of simple plans. American Psychologist 54 (7) 493-503. <sup>2</sup> Ryan, R.M. & Deci, E.L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development and well-being. American Psychologist. 55(1), 68-78.

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References:

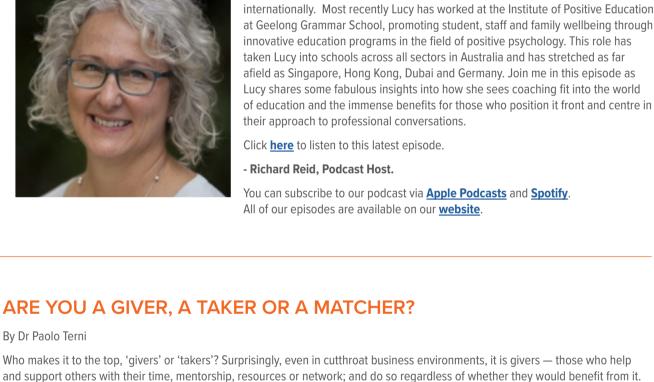
<sup>3</sup> Goldsmith, M., & Morgan, H. (2004). Leadership is a contact sport: The 'follow up factor' in management development. Retrieved July 2011, from http://www.marshallgoldsmithlibrary.com/docs/articles/LeaderContactSport.pdf

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