

the solopreneur zone

the resource place for solo-entrepreneurs

Will You Be Pushing or Pulling This Year?

Have you set your goals for this year?

Ahh...it's that time of year again. A time for new starts. A time for looking toward the future. A time for new year's resolutions. If you are like most of the population, you've probably resolved to do something better this year than you did the last.

Punishing Yourself for What You Didn't do Last Year isn't Very Motivating

Though not all of us do this, many of us create goals based on some sort of a penance for our shortcomings. We quietly hope that this will be the year we finally get that website up or begin making 20 cold calls per day (even though we hate cold calling). While there's nothing wrong with improvement and getting things done, most of us set goals that we have to push through instead of ones that draw us toward them.

What if your goals were so compelling, you jumped out of bed every morning to work on them? Doesn't that sound better than forcing yourself to work toward a goal that doesn't excite you?

What Really Motivates You to Get Things Done?

Do you sometimes catch yourself striving, pushing, bargaining, guiltting or trying to otherwise coax yourself into taking the steps necessary to achieve your goals? Do these techniques work to motivate you? Some of us can be motivated by negative consequences and get things done. But if you could choose, do you really prefer that technique?

What *really* motivates you? Is it accomplishment, completing things, or knowing you've done something new? What if you tied these motivators to your goals instead?

Copy That Formula!

Think for a moment about a time that you easily achieved your goals -- with very little effort, and maybe even enjoyed yourself. What was different about that time? Did you set the goal differently? Did you plan differently? Did you have a different attitude toward the goal or achieving the goal?

Copy that formula! It's amazing how often we forget what works for us personally and instead try to do things that work better for others. If it works for you, do it. There's no such thing as a right way to achieve your goals.

Maybe it's the Goals Themselves...

Think about the types of goals you are setting. For each goal, stop and consider why you want it, what it entails, and how it fits with where you want to be in the next 1-5 years. If you have a few goals that don't fit with your values or what you truly want for yourself and your business, why are they on your list?

Treat Yourself Like an Employee

Many of us hold ourselves and our businesses back because we don't separate ourselves enough from the business. If your identity is tied up with the business, it will be held back to your personal development level. If you can see the business as its own entity, you'll be more able to pursue the goals that are right for the business without letting your personal fears get in the way.

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When you identify too much with your business, you often end up pushing through your goals because they are put through your personal filters and worldview. Setting goals for the company instead can often bring your vantage point up a little higher and make it easier to be pulled toward your goals.

It's best if you see yourself as an employee of the company. That doesn't mean you have to be the copy person -- you can still be the CEO, but even a CEO is an employee of the company -- they care about the company, but do not inextricably identify with it.

Flexibility is Key

Even when you're comfortable that you've set goals that suit your values and future plans, leave room for flexibility throughout the year. Remember that goals are just that, and may change or evolve as the year unfolds.

If you catch yourself pushing toward a goal, stop and re-evaluate it. Ask yourself why you feel the need to push and what could be adjusted to have the goal pull you forward.