

Happy New Year! What are you going to do with it?

Well, it's another year.

If you were reading last week, you've already dissected your last year by figuring out what you did and what you didn't do. This week I'd like to take it deeper.

Project into the future.

Here's the question. Who are you trying to become?

Here's another question. What are you trying to achieve?

These are questions about purpose and fulfillment. And through the years I've found that if you concentrate on purpose, the detail tends to handle itself.

The paradox is most people concentrate on the detail. They have endless lists of "things to do." You probably have some kind of electronic device that lists everything you need to do everyday of the week for the next year.

Is that helping you on your quest of who you want to become? Or is it simply about meeting your deadlines and commitments and making "quota"?

One of the big differences between me and you is that I have not had any kind of day planner or appointment book since 1998. Oh sure, I have a calendar online that tells me what I have to do and when I have to do it. And yes, I'm fortunate enough to have someone else make a schedule for me, but I didn't start out that way.

In 1998 when I decided not to have a day planner, I didn't have anyone do anything for me. I did it myself. All I had was a database of all the people that I knew and their phone numbers (it now has their email addresses as well.)

Now I'm not saying that's THE way, I'm just saying it's MY way. Some of you are saying, "*Oh Jeffrey, I could NEVER do without my palm pilot.*" That's the problem. You spend more time fiddling around with that thing than you do with your own success -- much less writing about your own success.

Why don't you browse through your day timer device and note how many times you recorded the word "think" or "read". My guess is probably none.

Next question: How important is thinking and reading to your success? Let me answer that rhetorical question for you; 100%.

Fatal question: How many entries do you have for think and read in your 2004 calendar? Answer: None or not enough.

Want to know why your New Year's resolutions fade to dust on my birthday (February 11)? Because you have not set aside the time for personal achievement.

So here's what to do, and it has nothing to do with the way you've been doing it.

1. Start with the big things. Who do you want to become? What are you trying to achieve? The answer to those two questions will set the stage for your actions.

2. Start at the beginning. Before you can take an action, you have to have a philosophy and an attitude. It took me 10 years to develop what I consider to be a philosophy that I can "live". You don't have a philosophy, you live a philosophy.

Attitude took longer. That's taken me 35 years but only because I work at it everyday. Whatever success you are trying to achieve, attitude will be at the fulcrum point of it. Whatever failure you encounter along the way, attitude will help you emerge from it with the proper frame of mind.

3. Think more and read more. Why is it that the things you put off due to "lack of time" are the very ones that will create time?

3.5 Find one good mentor this year and begin building a relationship with him or her. You have heard the statement, "don't reinvent the wheel." So why do you continue to try? Find someone successful, wise, and willing. Figure out a way to build a friendship without asking for a handout. HINT: "Will you be my mentor?" is asking for a handout.

I have issued you the challenge.
I have asked you the hard questions.
I have given you the answers.

All you have to do is take the actions. Come on -- it's a new year. Turn over a new leaf. One that leads to your oak tree -- not someone else's.

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Jeffrey Gitomer is the author of *The Little Red Book of Selling* and eight other business books on sales, customer loyalty, and personal development. President of Charlotte-based Buy Gitomer, he gives seminars, runs annual sales meetings, and conducts Internet training programs on sales, customer loyalty, and personal development at www.trainone.com. Jeffrey conducts more than 100 personalized, customized seminars and keynotes a year. To find out more, visit www.gitomer.com. Jeffrey can be reached at 704.333.1112 or by e-mail at salesman@gitomer.com

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704/333-1112