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KEYSTONE HABITS AND SMALL WINS



As we plan for the new year, it's time to reflect on 2016 and put in place some simple ideas to help get 2017 off to a fresh and productive start, both personally and professionally. I just finished reading *The Power of Habit* by Charles Duhigg. This book is based on thousands of interviews and studies, all aimed at analyzing the science and benefits of habit formation. It is a fascinating look at how habits are formed and how they can be altered to turn our negative routines into positive experiences. According to *The Power of Habit*, we all have cues, routines, and rewards in our habit-forming activities, or "habit loop."

For example, an alcoholic may have a stressful event or "cue" that triggers a craving to drink, which results in a "reward," and in some cases, an escape

from reality. The book chronicles how famous athletes, coaches, CEOs and members of Alcoholics Anonymous have been able to create new and positive routines while the triggers/cues and payoffs/rewards essentially remain the same. It's pretty exciting to know our bad habits don't have to remain negative and that they can actually be transformed into benefits. Moreover, we can develop simple new habits to transform a weakness in our lives into a strength. For example, did you know Olympic swimming legend Michael Phelps was overly emotional and had issues coping with stress? Fortunately, Phelps had a great coach who taught him at a young age how to create the right routines to make him the strongest mental swimmer in the pool. Rather than stress over an upcoming event, Phelps' coach implemented a series of pre-programmed routines that helped him to dominate the swimming world. Simple routines, combined with visualization of the smallest of details in a race made all the difference.

The whole idea of sticking to a New Year's resolution can be a daunting task for any of us who are stuck in a long-term habit that may not be healthy or positive. Going completely "cold turkey" in our attempt at transformation or taking an all-or-nothing approach undoubtedly leads to resolutions that are destined for failure. Instead, try picking a few "small wins" to get one area of your life back on track. As Duhigg notes in *The Power of Habit*, "A huge body of research has shown that small wins have enormous power, an influence disproportionate to

the accomplishments of the victories themselves."

A Cornell University professor interviewed in Duhigg's book notes, "Once a small win has been accomplished, forces are set in motion that favor another small win." Small wins fuel ... patterns that convince people that bigger achievements are within reach."

Over-eating and subsequent weight gain is one of the most challenging habits that many of us have. At one time or another, most of us have tried to remedy this ever-challenging issue, and weight loss continues to be one of the most popular New Year's resolutions. Rather than a drastic new diet or an extreme fitness plan, why not try taking a "simple step" to change that habit loop. If boredom or stress send you to the fridge or nearest pastry shop in the afternoon, why not simply change the routine? When that afternoon urge hits you, why not take a five-minute walk outside or just drink a full glass of water. The resulting "small win" after this simple routine change is set in motion may only be that you succeed in dropping a pound or two, but that subtle positive reward can set you on a positive new path. A little reward can provide that dose of momentum needed to stick with a small routine change in behavior and put in motion an even greater transformation. Be patient, identify the negative routine, and create a simple plan to reshape it.

Happy New Year!

- *Bryan VanMeveren*

A NEW YEAR'S HABIT

WHY RESOLUTIONS FAIL AND HOW TO BEAT THE ODDS

If you're one of the 50 percent of Americans who view the new year as the perfect time to make a positive change in your life, the odds are stacked against you. Research from the University of Hertfordshire in the U.K. found that 88 percent of New Year's resolutions fail. But don't feel discouraged! You can be successful by knowing why others fail. Here are three steps you can take to help your New Year's resolution beat the odds:

DON'T BE ABSTRACT

According to Dr. BJ Fogg of Stanford University, New Year's resolutions tend to fail because "people aren't picking specific behaviors. They're picking abstracts." This means we're identifying vague destinations we want to reach without creating a map for how to get there.

While the abstract is a good place to start when determining a New Year's resolution, you must also ask yourself, "How?" What action steps will you take to achieve that abstract resolution? "I'm going to enjoy life to the fullest and see a new play every month," or "I plan on getting healthier by no longer drinking soda." Start with tiny steps that you can build on for better habits in your life.

TAKE IT ONE RESOLUTION AT A TIME

Professor Baba Shiv from Stanford University states that people can suffer from "cognitive overload." That is, our prefrontal cortex, the part of our brain responsible for staying focused and handling things like resolutions, doesn't do well with too many tasks. Pick just one resolution you care about, and you'll be more likely to succeed.

REMEMBER, SETBACKS AREN'T FAILURES

We're only human, and we're going to make mistakes. Just because you broke down and ordered that double cheeseburger, skipped a workout, or bailed on going to that new swing dancing class doesn't mean your resolution is finished. A New Year's resolution only fails if you stop trying.

There's a reason New Year's resolutions have become a tradition. There is something very poetic about starting good habits on the clean slate of a new year. By taking these steps, you can make sure those new habits stick.



CLIENT TESTIMONIALS

“ Very classy law firm with an outstanding staff. They took on a very difficult case for me and were able to attain a substantial judgement in my favor. It was difficult for me to even make the phone call after my accident because I really wasn't sure what to do. In fact, I waited three months before deciding to make the call. When going in for my first appointment, I was nervous as well as confused. I was greeted as soon as I walked through the door with a smile and a "how are you doing today, Mr. Kersey? We have been expecting you," followed by, "is there anything I can get you?" I felt at ease right away. Bryan, Jolene, and Katie were a class act from start to finish. I was treated more like family than just a number. I would highly recommend VanMeveren Law Firm for your needs. ”

- Russ Kersey

“ We received great customer service from the start and they directed us in the right direction according to what our needs were. We would highly recommend this firm's services. ”

- Julie Lewis

“ Amazingly helpful, courteous, dedicated, honest, kind, and professional! ”

- Patrick Hollen

Do you have a good story about our practice? Please visit our Google Plus page and tell us about it!

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Frontier Mediation Services, LLC, was founded on and is dedicated to the philosophy of resolving disputes between parties in an efficient and cost-effective manner. Litigation almost always involves an expensive, burdensome, time-consuming, emotionally draining, and unsatisfying process that can take years. At Frontier Mediation Services, LLC, we believe that alternative dispute resolution, when used properly, can be an invaluable tool to resolve disputes amicably short of long and protracted litigation, discovery, and trial.

Founder Troy Ukasick is an attorney, licensed and actively practicing in Colorado and Wyoming (and California — inactive status) with 25 years of extensive, exclusive, and relevant experience litigating serious personal injury lawsuits, assessing case value and issues, attending settlement conferences, negotiating settlements with attorneys and insurance adjusters, and receiving successful jury trial verdicts for his clients on significant matters.

Troy has a unique background, having advocated on **“both sides of the bar”** for decades. Not only has he served as insurance defense counsel to some of the largest insurance companies in the world, but he has also represented numerous seriously injured victims of the negligence of others on the plaintiff’s side of the table. This broad perspective, background, and experience provides the credibility, compassion, understanding, and trust needed by both sides of a dispute to create a suitable environment for settlement.

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Good Old-Fashioned Chicken Soup

Ingredients:

- ¼ cup coconut oil or ghee
- 1 cup onion, chopped
- 1 (14-ounce) can diced tomatoes
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 1 teaspoon garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 4 cups potatoes, diced
- 1½ cups carrots, sliced
- 2 cups boneless, skinless chicken breast, chopped into 1-inch pieces

How to Make It:

1. In a large pot, heat oil and sauté onions until tender.
2. Add tomatoes, broth, garlic, thyme, bay leaf, salt, and pepper and bring to a boil.
3. Add potatoes, carrots, and chicken.
4. Simmer until vegetables are cooked through, about 30 minutes.

Recipe Inspired by kitchme.com.

		6	2			3	
	5			6	1		2
9		3			8	1	
			8	9			6
5		4	1				8
8	7	2					4
4	6	1		5			

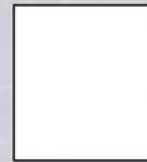
Sudoku

1	4	6	2	9	5	8	3	7
7	5	8	3	6	1	4	9	2
9	2	3	4	7	8	1	6	5
2	1	7	8	4	9	3	5	6
5	3	4	1	2	6	9	7	8
6	8	9	5	3	7	2	1	4
8	7	2	6	1	3	5	4	9
4	6	1	9	5	2	7	8	3
3	9	5	7	8	4	6	2	1



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"Once"

January 12-14, times vary

Lincoln Center
417 W Magnolia St.
Fort Collins, CO 80521

Tony Award-winning musical "Once" is coming to Fort Collins. See why this Broadway story of music and love captivated audiences and swept the 2012 Tony Awards with eight wins, including Best Musical. The cast plays double duty, not only acting and singing, but orchestrating the accompanying music through each scene (and to the side of the stage). It's a delightful experience you don't want to miss! For more information, as well as times and tickets, visit www.ictix.com/once.

One Man "Star Wars"

February 9, 7:30-9:30 p.m.

Lincoln Center
417 W Magnolia St.
Fort Collins, CO 80521

You've seen the classic trilogy, now see it retold by one man, Charles Ross, in 60 minutes. With no costumes, no props, no sets, and no green screen, Ross brings all of your favorite characters (and space battles) to life. The show has wowed audiences all over the world — and now it's landed at the Lincoln Center. What makes this show even more remarkable is support from Lucasfilm Ltd. For tickets to this one-night event, head over to www.ictix.com/one-man-star-wars.

Old Man Winter Bike Rally & Run

February 12, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sandstone Park
Between Broadway and Railroad Ave.
Lyons, CO 80540

Are you ready to get your heart rate up as you run or cycle through scenic Colorado country roads and mountain terrain? If that sounds like fun, the Old Man Winter Bike Rally & Run is for you. Choose from three epic courses: the Long Course (100-kilometer bike rally), the Short Course (50-kilometer bike rally), and the Run Course (5.8 miles). Consider it the ultimate outdoor "choose your own adventure." To learn more about the Rally & Run, or to sign up, check out oldmanwinterrally.com!