

Accomplishing Your Goals: Identifying and Eliminating Roadblocks

By Peggy L. Ferguson, Ph.D.

It is a new year. You have New Year Resolutions and you have already left your identified new path. Those resolutions could involve anything from quitting smoking to redecorating your office. The type of resolution does not matter. You decided you wanted to make changes and decided exactly what kind of changes you wanted to make. You may have even developed a plan to enact those changes. You may be discouraged and wondering what happened. To get back on track, look at what happened. Identify the obstacles that have either already been encountered or ones that could get in the way of your goals. The following are typical obstacles that can interfere with making changes in your life:

1. Lack of belief in your ability to do something. This is called self-efficacy. It is a cognitive distortion that tells you that "you can't...",
2. Other components of low self-esteem that tell you that you are not good enough. These distortions in your thinking tell you that you are unworthy of the changes in your life and the positive things that will happen because of those changes.
3. Habits and old behavior patterns that serve as self-sabotage. Some people sabotage themselves with procrastination, habitual lateness, impulsive behavior, acting out emotions, etc.
4. Prematurely giving up when results are not immediate. Unreasonable expectations derail many life changing plans.
5. Conflicting demands or tasks that sap your interest or re-direct your time, energy, and attention away from your goals.
6. Relationships with saboteurs. Relationships and interactions with others that either openly oppose your changes or covertly sabotage them can derail efforts to change.

You can probably identify some obstacles to making changes that have occurred at other times in your life. Add them to your list.

Take each obstacle, consider it a problem to be solved, and identify possible solutions to each obstacle, along with a plan of action for enacting at least one solution for each one.

Review your goal and the steps involved in accomplishing your goal. Make a flexible time table for accomplishing each step of the goal. Write it all down. Keep track of your efforts and your progress. Identify and write down any new obstacles that appear. Keep track of how you resolve the problem of those new obstacles.

Keep suiting up and showing up. Sooner or later, you will accomplish your goal.

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