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**8 Ways to Jump Start the New Year**

**By Steven Gaffney**

*The following are 8 crucial actions you can take to Jump Start 2013 and make it your most meaningful year yet. These changes, though initially very small, can help to put your life on a different path. Good luck to you and we would love to hear about your successes.*

1. **Let go of the garbage that you are carrying.** Reach out to someone you have written off (but still think about) or to someone you have given up on or with whom you had a problem with. Talk to that person and do what it takes to reach some sort of resolution and put the situation behind you. Ask the other person, “What would it take for us to put this behind us?” Their input can help you create a solution that works for everyone. By reaching out and having a conversation, you are extending the olive branch. This can create a new beginning and trigger

conversations and events that can ultimately change your life. Remember: forgiveness is a gift you give yourself. Make 2013 the year you give that gift.

1. **Stop negotiating things that are not negotiable.** Are you suffering because you are being flexible and letting go of standards and principles that are important to you? Decide what is negotiable versus what

is really not negotiable to you. If you are not clear, how can others be? Then let others know and take a stand. Many people get inspired when boundaries are set because clarity gives

them power to focus their time and energy on areas of flexibility.

1. **Adopt accountability partners.** What is one of your behaviors that you really want to change?

The truth is that if you really want to achieve this change, you will. Set up accountability partners and consequences to help ensure that you will make that change. For example, if you find yourself repeatedly complaining about a particular issue and you want to stop being so negative, tell five people you are going to stop complaining about the issue.

Every time you complain about it, give them each a dollar.  The point is to send a message that your promises are not empty and you are committed to changing the behavior. Being accountable is one of the most important ingredients in lasting change.

1. **Use your strengths.** Your relationship with yourself and your talents is the most important one you will ever have. Appreciating yourself and your strengths is at the core of your ability to create and enjoy the life you want. When you appreciate yourself, you are also more likely to take action and make changes on things that are important to you. Focus on what makes you happy. Don’t overlook your talents and make sure to maximize your full potential. If you’re good at something, why not become great at it? This year, if you remember to appreciate yourself and foster your strengths, you will be more self-empowered and confident to face anything to come.
2. **Choose a coach or mentor.** Whether it is personal or professional, everyone benefits from someone who guides and advises them. Athletes don’t get better at their specific sports by simply playing on their own each day. They improve by employing a coach who challenges and inspires them to grow and achieve success. Athletes also don’t improve their skills by playing teams equal to or worse than they are. They advance the most quickly when they are challenged by a

better team.  It is important for your mentor to be someone who may be wiser, more experienced, or more successful than you are to help you reach the goals you have.

1. **Apply your personal method of success to a current problem.** What is the biggest problem you are currently facing, professionally or personally? Once you’ve identified that problem, change gears and take a moment to remember a specific moment of success in your life. What were the keys to help you achieve that success? Brainstorm a few ideas of why you think you were able to be successful in achieving the results you wanted.  Over a person’s lifetime, we develop a few “go-to” methods to help us achieve success in various situations. Many times, in problem areas, if you think about it, you are usually not applying one of your normal success methods to help you through it.  Now, return to that original problem. Of the ideas you’ve brainstormed, which are you currently not doing to help you tackle this issue? Apply them and you will see new direction to help you resolve it.
2. **Decide on your number-one goal and create a plan to achieve it**. Make sure your goal is measurable and that there is a deadline for completion. You might think this is simple - and it is - but people often neglect to set *clear* goals or create so many that they do not accomplish any. I see this frequently with organizations that have so many goals that people do not know

on which to focus. The result is they try to focus on many and often achieve little. Remember confusion causes delay and often failure. Clarity and focus gives us power and inspiration to achieve.

1. **Distance yourself from the dream crushers, naysayers, and negative influences.** Just like we are what we eat, we are a product of the people with whom we spend our time with and the information we digest from them. With whom are you surrounding yourself? Are those people negative or are they inspiring to be around? What kind of books and materials are you reading? How much are you dwelling on negative news stories? I am not suggesting that we put our heads in the sand. I am suggesting that we fill our minds with the influences that empower us. Take the time to clean house.

*If you run into challenges and need help or have questions along the way, send me an email* *steven@stevengaffney.com* *or give us a call 703 241-7796 at the office and we will do our best to help you.*