

James Butler's Newsletter #27

Amuse, Inform and Inspire

November 2004

It never ceases to amaze me how I can sit down to write this newsletter each month and a suitable subject just pops into my head. Who knows, maybe one day amusing jokes will pop in too!

This month I would like to thank a coaching friend from Australia, Belinda Merry, who unknowingly prompted me to write about goal setting and review this month.

Whilst I don't want to alarm anyone, it is just six weeks until the end of the year. There can't be a better time to review what you planned to do this year - while you still have chance to complete any unfinished projects.



"Don't Look Back in Anger"

In issue 16 I invited you to review 2003 and plan for 2004. Surely you remember?

What have you managed to tick off on your list of goals for 2004, and what can you focus on completing in the next six weeks?

As you look back through 2004, what achievements can you be proud of? What lifelong ambitions have you achieved and what shorter term goals have you reached?

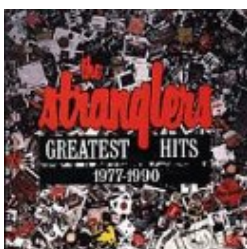
Write these out and reflect on what those achievements have brought you (perhaps more money, less stress, more opportunity, or just the knowledge you've done something tough).

Add to this list the various obstacles that you overcame to achieve those goals, the skills and talents you used and how the experience developed you.

Armed with all these positive vibes, now you are safe to look at the goals you haven't ticked off without beating yourself up (following the Gallagher brothers advice) and review them constructively. If you do find yourself beating yourself up, have a look at Issue 12 on Dobby.

What got in the way of you achieving your goals? Are the goals still relevant, or have you moved on anyway? Can you complete the outstanding ones before the New Year? What do you need to know, have and do to achieve those goals?

Of course, sometimes external factors get in the way and take things outside our control (at least that's my excuse, sorry, reason with at least one of my own unachieved goals for 2004). But can you overcome those external factors in 2005?



"Something Better Change"

Now, I am going to make an assumption that you didn't achieve all your goals this year (if you did, I would love to celebrate with you!).

Is it then fair to assume you would like something to change in order for you to achieve them in the future?

If something had better change (cue the Stranglers!), what is it? Will it be about your attitude, your skills, your motivation, or something else? Below your review of achievements for 2004, write out what you want to change. Do these make reasonable goals in themselves (or can you adjust them so that they do)?

What goals can you set for the next six weeks, and beyond? What will increase your chances of getting them done? How will you ensure you keep track of your progress? Can you make space for a weekly or daily review?

My recent research for the book I am writing introduced me to a lady who had written down her goals regularly since her teens, some of which were quite audacious. Now, at 26, she has achieved most of them and is building a high-growth business in the job she loves. I wonder if that has happened by accident?

So, by now you should have a list of your achievements for 2004, including the obstacles you have overcome. Below that you will have identified what you have left to do and what you want to change to achieve that.

What audacious goals can you set for next year?

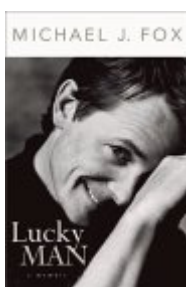
Painless Business News

One of my goals is to finish the first draft of the book before Christmas, so a lot of focus is going on that at the moment, but the normal business of working with small business clients carries on. So, if you know anyone in small business who is finding it a struggle and wants professional support in getting to the next level, give them an early Christmas present by getting them to call me!

There are still some places available for the next Painless Business Workshop on November 24th. We will be considering Taking the Fear Out of Money, and my colleague Helen Krag will be helping to debunk a number of money myths. These events are a great mix of hard work by participants, some good fun (if you like my jokes) and some informal networking.

Thanks to those of you who have been forwarding this on and suggesting to others that they subscribe. I still have a little way to go to gain 30 new subscribers (one of my 2004 goals!), so any help greatly appreciated.

Book Review



My reading time has been restricted this month, as I have been very focused on my own writing, but I have enjoyed Lucky Man – the autobiography of Michael J Fox.

I expected an inspiring story of battling early-onset Parkinson's disease, which I got, but I was pleasantly surprised by the rest of his story.

He has obviously benefited from the luxurious lifestyle that accompanies success of the sort he achieved and which we all might wish for. Yet, he eloquently demonstrates how hollow this can be, even before it is placed in the context of his debilitating illness. A very inspiring book! Thanks to the subscriber who recommended that one!!

I have also been reading the lyrics to Osmonds songs, desperately trying to accept subscriber and self-proclaimed laughologist [Anne McDonald's](#) challenge to work them into a newsletter theme. Sorry Anne, I have yet to be inspired! Crazy Horses has limited application to small business coaching – unless anyone else has any ideas?

Painless Puns

My two-fish-in-a-tank pun seemed popular last month, which has only served to encourage me further. But first, some quotes to encourage you as you review 2004 and set goals for 2005.

We are much better than we know. Lance Armstrong

Regret is an appalling waste of energy; you can't build on it, it's only good for wallowing in.
Katherine Mansfield

Rather than actual puns, I have chosen two thought-provoking questions this month:

How do you know when your pen is running out of invisible ink?

and

Ever wondered why fur is more despised by animal rights campaigners than leather? If you had to choose who to protest against, would it be rich women or Hell's Angels?

Believe me, these are the searching questions of our time.

Final Words

It has been an interesting experience to write this issue, largely because it has been done in airport departure lounges and on trains as I travelled to and from Edinburgh on business. I have discovered a whole new side to my Palm Pilot.

Whilst this newsletter has focused on 2004 and 2005, the idea of goal planning and review works just as well over longer periods. I am due to return next month to the scene of my first real goal setting exercise as a trainee coach (in 2002). At that time, I pictured a coaching business by 2006. It looks like I am ahead of schedule!

Warmest regards

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