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## The Examined Life, Get in the Game, Edition 13, January, 2005

A free, electronic newsletter brought to you by:

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Examine, Explore and Excel!  
<http://www.ExnerAssociates.com>

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The virtual book discussion group on *The Pathfinder* is a success! Want to experience a fun way to stay motivated, get tips and information on navigating your career change? See the details in Coming Events for discussion groups on *The Pathfinder* and books on organizing and prioritizing work.

It's January, so I couldn't resist the urge to write about resolutions. When I attended my last Toastmasters meeting, fellow member Karen DiDomenicis presented a wonderful speech on the topic so I asked if I could share it with all of you. And in case your resolutions are flagging, I'm offering a free two-session teleclass on setting and meeting goals to make 2005 your best year yet. Here is Karen's take on things

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### GET IN THE GAME

Aren't New Year's resolutions *fun*? Okay, maybe that's not the word you would have chosen...but aren't they fun in the *beginning*? When you first set your New Year's resolutions, you imagine the new you, and all that you can become in the coming year, and you set out to make your dreams come true. But your resolutions don't last long-- most are abandoned in a matter of weeks. I think we make them harder than they have to be, like a job that we would rather avoid. We'd be better off approaching New Year's resolutions as a game to play and enjoy.

So, with that in mind, I went to my bookshelf and reached for the bible of all games, *According to Hoyle*. On page 117, I discovered the rules of the *Game of New Year's Resolutions*. Here are some game tips, so you can win, too. The objects of the game are self-improvement and personal growth and, surprisingly, having fun is an object, too.

Rule 1: The *Game of New Year's Resolutions* is not to be confused with the game known as *All or Nothing*. In that game, losing a single hand means you lose the entire game; only a perfect game counts. In the *Game of New Year's Resolutions*, you'll win some and lose some, but rather than winning, the object is **to improve**. In fact, if you are not losing a hand here and there, you're probably playing too small raise the stakes. Don't let setbacks stop you from pursuing your goals.

Rule 2: You must play the hand that you are dealt. No discarding cards you don't like or trading cards with other people. The game will go much easier for you if you accept what you have and what you lack from the beginning. By accepting the good AND the bad, you'll have an easier time of it and you'll find that changes will actually come with time.

Rule 3: Cash in your chips along the way. That keeps the game fun and interesting and lets you reward yourself. Set goals that are easy enough so you can celebrate small victories often. Reward yourself with something that you enjoy go for a walk, listen to music, take a relaxing hot soak, or splurge on something special such as a massage or a nice dinner out. Your treat should not be something that counters the goals that you are trying to achieve. Want to lose 10 pounds? Don't choose a food binge as your reward. Another way of rewarding yourself is to ask for acknowledgment for your efforts and accomplishments. Having the people in your life acknowledge your efforts can really boost your motivation.

Rule 4: Show your cards; declare what you're up to in life! The game is easier if your resolutions are made public. Aside from the fact that people will support you and cheer you on, it's human nature to cheat on ourselves when we are not held accountable.

Use these rules, and your New Year's resolutions won't turn into a tool to beat yourself up with when you fall short. They are a tool for personal growth, and since I know that you are all committed to your personal growth, please join me in upping the ante and getting in the *Game Of New Years Resolutions!*

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### **TIP OF THE MONTH -- THIS YEAR'S SKILL**

What skill could you learn this year that would pay off the most? For the past several years, I've been considering this question, picking one skill and then taking steps to master it. Sometimes I even recycle skills not because I didn't make progress, I did! Just because there is more to gain.

One year I chose to get better at remembering names and faces. I hired Phil Bruschi of Mind Aerobics (a speaker and trainer on memory (609) 581-8142) to help me analyze my situation and develop better skills. I learned that, unlike many people who say they never forget a face just the name that goes with it, I actually have trouble noticing what makes one face distinctly different from another. So now I look for ways to train myself to notice and recognize variations of facial features. One fun way to do this is putting together a jigsaw puzzle that has lots of different faces in it (hmmm this eyebrow is a lot bushier than that one, this face is rounder, etc.). This year I plan to learn a bit about sketching faces to increase my awareness.

Another year I worked on developing a faster reading speed. I've recycled that skill for this year because a professional organizer I know, Jocelyn Coverdale ([the\\_organizer@ballantraesolutions.com](mailto:the_organizer@ballantraesolutions.com)) told me about a great book, *10 Days to Faster Reading* by Abby Marks-Beale. Its a quick easy read 20 minutes is enough to read one days information and do the exercises. I was pleased that my starting reading speed was faster than it had been last time. And now it's faster still. Jocelyn also told me about a free program called e-Reader (available at <http://kerus.com/>). You can cut and paste any text into e-Reader, set your reading speed by selecting the number of words/lines you want it to show you at a time and use some of those email newsletters you get as speed reading practice.

If you decide to pick a skill for this year, think about how it will enhance your life and look for ways to make the learning or practice fun!

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## **RELOCATION UPDATE**

When I wrote our August newsletter we were considering a move to Phoenix AZ. I forgot to write an update! We decided to move in the fall of 2005. To make that happen, we packed up our home of 13 years, sold our house and moved into a lovely rental house in Pike Creek, Delaware. While we eliminated a lot of stuff to accommodate moving into a house a third the size of our old house, we still have a basement and garage full of boxes. Now that were unpacked and the pictures are hung, we plan to go through a couple of boxes each week and make decisions about whether the contents are part of our new life and should be moved or not. Hmmmlets start with all the holiday stuff.

When we visited Phoenix last February I trained with the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society Team in Training (and enjoyed every minute of the 12-mile walk in balmy weather instead of the previous weeks 9 degrees!). I met a couple that had moved from Pike Creek a few years before and told them we were thinking about moving to Phoenix. They asked, What's to think about? and went on to describe their deciding moment it involved slipping on the icy steeply pitched driveway, losing control of the car and crashing into a truck parked on the street. When George and I came to look at our new beautiful house, I took one look at the driveway and said, I bet this was the house! It can't help but notice that every single person who has stopped by (movers, friends, Fed Ex delivery person, etc.) has said something like You're counting on a winter with no snow and ice?

I'll keep you updated on our relocation progress!

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## **COMING EVENTS**

### **Free Teleclass: *Make 2005 Your Best Year Yet!***

Tuesdays 2/22 and 3/1, 7-8 pm by phone

Join me for this free two-session teleclass and discover the keys to setting and achieving the goals you really want in 2005. You will:

- Identify the goals you really want (and are most likely to achieve!)
- Create your own personalized 3-Step Success Strategy
- Get into action and create huge momentum to keep on going
- Learn 4 easy ways to overcome any obstacle that arises
- And much more!

Contact me to reserve your spot.

### **Whats a teleclass?**

Interactive, informative and fun, a teleclass is just like attending a workshop but instead of driving, parking and making sure your hair is combed, all you need are two free hours and a phone! The class above meets for two consecutive weeks, one hour each week.

### ***Jump Start Your Career Change The Pathfinder Book Discussion Group***

Dates: Mondays 3/7, 3/14, 3/21 and 3/28

Time: 7-8 pm Eastern Time

Group Size: 8-10 people

Fee: \$49 (Includes the book which will be mailed to you upon registration!)

The book, *The Pathfinder: How to Choose or Change Your Career for a Lifetime of Satisfaction and Success*, by Nicholas Lore, has three sections:

- Living the Life You Love
- How to Get There from Here
- Designing your Future Career

In our introductory call we will discuss goals and some reading shortcuts and strategies. Then, we will read one section per week for the next three weeks. Each week we will have a one-hour group discussion (via phone conference) about that section. Not only will this group get you reading, but you will also be encouraged to do many of the exercises in the book!

Ready to take a big step forward towards more satisfying work?

Contact me today to sign up! Email: [dexner@exnerassociates.com](mailto:dexner@exnerassociates.com) or call: 302-478-5919

### ***Making Work Work Book Discussion Group***

Dates: Mondays or Tuesdays in April

Time: 7-8 pm Eastern Time

Group Size: 8-10 people

Fee: \$49 (Includes the book which will be mailed to you on registration!)

I have long been a fan of Julie Morgenstern's books on getting organized. This book, *Making Work Work: New Strategies for Surviving and Thriving at the Office*, begins with an Introduction and Self-Assessment and then covers Nine Competencies, which run the gamut from *Embrace Your Work/Life Balance* to *Leverage Your Value*. You can use the process taught in this book to:

- Prioritize your work
- Make the best use of your time
- Feel less trapped and more in charge
- Evaluate how good a fit your current job is for you
- If you are a manager, learn ways to help your staff work more efficiently

On the discussion calls you can bring home how the information in this book applies to you and brainstorm ways to implement the suggestions. Contact me to sign up!

### ***80/20 Principle Book Discussion Group***

Dates: Mondays or Tuesdays in May

Time: 7-8 pm Eastern Time

Group Size: 8-10 people

Fee: \$49 (Includes the book which will be mailed to you upon registration!)

Many of us have heard of the Pareto Principle that 80% of results, outputs or rewards comes from 20% of the causes, inputs or effort. This book, *The 80/20*

*Principle: The Secret of Achieving More With Less* by Richard Koch, helps you identify the 20 percent that will bring you the greatest benefit. The book has four parts:

- Overture (an introduction to the principle)
- The principle applied to Corporate Success
- How you can use the principle to work less, earn and enjoy more
- Crescendo arguments to the nay-sayers and ideas for how to apply this principle to the ills of society at large

A quick look at reader reviews on amazon.com will show you that reactions to this book are mixed, though the majority is highly favorable. Once you get past all the quips about how the author could have conveyed the same information in 20% of the time, you'll read how many feel the book changed their lives.

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Many of my clients come to me because they want to increase their satisfaction with their work they want to transition to a different career, their job has ended and they need to find new work, they want to start their own business, they want their current business to stop running their entire lives or they may be in a life transition that has them thinking about what's next (i.e., the kids have grown, they want to partially retire, etc).

If you are ready to make changes in your business and personal life or know someone who is, I'm looking for you. I work primarily with people in career transition and with self-directed individuals and business owners who want to maximize their effectiveness and satisfaction at work while maintaining a healthy life/work balance. Curious? Email me at [DEXner@ExnerAssociates.com](mailto:DEXner@ExnerAssociates.com) or call 302-478-5919 to schedule a complimentary 45-minute coaching session.

If you are enjoying this newsletter, please forward it to your friends and colleagues! Or direct them to the subscription form and past issues at [exnerassociates.com](http://exnerassociates.com)

Thanks,

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Examine, Explore and Excel!  
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Books are the quietest and most constant of friends; they are the most accessible and wisest of counselors, and the most patient of teachers.

-- Charles W. Eliot (1834 - 1926), *The Happy Life*, 1896

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