



Application Readiness – The Core Enabler to Self-Development

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Nine out of ten people make a new year's resolution. Most recognize a need to change their behavior in some way and pick new year's day to start their new behavior because it represents a new beginning. Yet, only one in nine people keep their new year's resolutions. Why do so many people make commitments to change their behavior, yet fail?

University of Scranton psychology professor John Norcross conducted a study of two-hundred New Year resolution making adults over a period of two years which he summarized in the April 2002 Journal of Clinical Psychology -Vol. 58, No. 4. The ones who were successful in sticking to their resolutions employed a variety of strategies such as avoiding temptation laden situations and reinforcing their good behavior with rewards. Most interesting though was his finding that the best predictor of New Year's resolution success was the person's readiness to change. In other words, how prepared the person was to change was more important to their success than the characteristics of the behavior change itself. The nuances of the diet, the particular approach to marriage enrichment, the specific addiction support group or the type of training seminar they attended were less important than the mindset they had when they embarked on their self-improvement program.

In my own seminars, I've found the satisfaction scores in the participant evaluations have little correlation to how well a participant actually puts their learning into practice. If the participants are not ready upfront to make changes in their behaviors and put their learning immediately into practice following the seminar, their odds of success are low. The unfortunate reality is that people attend high quality seminars hosted by expert trainers with plenty of interactivity and loaded with content, yet not apply what they learn. The content is not the primary predictor of a participant's ability to put what they learn into practice. It is the participant's *application readiness* that determines how well they apply what they learn or stick to a new year's resolution.

Application readiness is being properly prepared to put your development desires into action. It is being motivated to change. It is having a genuine "I can do this" attitude. It is having a plan that sustains your application until your improvement is complete. It involves what you do before, during and after a learning event or self-improvement initiative. It is employing techniques that translate knowledge into practice. It is dealing with what has to be unlearned as well as what has to be learned. It is anticipating obstacles and having plans to successfully circumvent them. It is understanding what you are willing and able to do differently from that which you do now. It is crafting an environment that is conducive to application. It is fundamentally having the right mindset and ability to change throughout your development initiative.

Application readiness is the core enabler of self-development and the foundation of achievement. When pursuing a New Year's resolution or any self-improvement initiative, put more emphasis on your mindset and building your core ability to change. Achievement will soon follow.

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