



Letters on Leadership #16: Goals and Passion (The New Year's Edition)

Originally published on January 3, 2017.

It is the New Year and the gym will be packed. New faces will abound and there will be a twenty-minute wait for a treadmill or a bench. By mid-February, the vast majority of those new faces will be gone and you can have your pick of open treadmills and benches. Why? Most people who set goals or resolutions fail to see them through. Most people who wake up on January 1st and resolve to lose weight or save money will not succeed.

One of the things that I enjoy the most about working at The Program is that I don't spend much time with "most" people. I work with great leaders on the football and softball fields, amazing coaches, and true visionaries in the corporate world. These people have no interest in being "most" people, in being average. My teammates at The Program have no interest in being average, either. They climb mountains, compete in triathlons, run 100-mile ultra-marathons, and



graduate from the toughest schools the Department of Defense has to offer. They have achieved – and continue to achieve – goals that “most” people wouldn’t dream of.

What makes them different? All of my teammates are *passionate* about what they do. It is their passion that allows them to attack their goals day after day after day, even in the face of adversity and setbacks. We don’t view “passion” as simple enjoyment, though. The word “passion” comes from the Latin root *pati-*, meaning suffering, enduring, or sacrificing. Nothing good in life comes easy. When we say we are truly “passionate” about something we aren’t just saying that it brings us pleasure, but that we are willing to endure and sacrifice for it. I’m passionate about my family. I’m passionate about my faith. I’m passionate about the United States Marine Corps. I’m passionate about The Program and our Mission to develop better leaders and create more cohesive teams. I’m willing to suffer, endure, and make sacrifices for all of these. Many people claim to be passionate, without truly meaning what they say. Whom and what are you willing to suffer for, to sacrifice for?

When we apply passion to our goals (including New Year Resolutions), it is important that we think about our motivations. Why do we want to lose weight, or get in better shape, or save money? You are going to have to suffer to lose weight – and frankly, if your gym trips don’t feel like suffering, you are probably doing it wrong. Getting bigger, faster and stronger will require you to endure, and saving money will also require you to make sacrifices. Are you willing to do so?

When we make goals based solely on desire, achieving them is a flip of the coin. When our goals are rooted in and backed by true passion, it is amazing what we can achieve.

Keep attacking,

Jake “Mac” MacDonald
Lead Instructor

"Letters on Leadership" are published periodically by The Program, a leadership development and team building company that works with the nation's leading corporations as well as professional and collegiate athletic teams.

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