

# Professional Learning

## Keeping New Year Resolutions

Richard Koestner, a professor in the Psychology Department, McGill University, has conducted a great deal of research related to the selection of goals, as well as on the strategic processes designed to help people reach them. Based on one of his publications and a recent interview on CJAD, the Montreal radio station, I have tried to summarize some of the key strategies that he and his colleagues have shared on how to keep one's resolutions.

If you are like me, as well as many others, keeping New Year's Resolutions is not easy! The following 3P System of Purpose, Plan, and Partners based on the ideas of Richard Koestner might be helpful in trying to actually keep your resolutions.

**Step One - Purpose:** Selecting a meaningful purpose is the first step. For example, in trying to enhance your leadership expertise, you may wish to consider the various leadership topics addressed on [theleadershipwall.com](http://theleadershipwall.com) website and select a skill that you might decide to enhance over the next few months.

It is important that the purpose you select is important and meaningful to you. Hence, you might wish to review the topics on the [Direct Access Index](#) and select one that is clearly of interest and relevance to you. Let us assume that you decide to make a resolution to improve your skill at chairing meetings.

**Step Two - Plan:** Once you have selected a purpose that is relevant and motivating, the next step is to ask three key questions:

When will I do it?

Where will I do it?

How will I do it ?

Considering the above three questions in relation to the resources on [theleadershipwall.com](http://theleadershipwall.com) website may be of help in your planning. For example, you may wish to begin by completing the [Chairing Meeting Questionnaire](#) and identifying your strengths and areas in which you feel you need to improve.

Based on the results of your personal reflections, you may then wish to consider the ideas and strategies related to the process of chairing a meeting described in the following two documents: [Basic Chairing Practices - Opening the Meeting](#) and [Basic Chairing Practices - During the Meeting](#). You may also wish to print the ideas in [CHAIRING - An acronym on Basic Meeting Chairing Skills](#) and use them as skill prompts when you are actually chairing a meeting.

**Step Three: Partners:** One of the most effective ways to actually carry through a New Year's resolution is to have a partner or partners work with you or support you on the journey. Are there friends or colleagues who might help and support you? Partners can

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provide positive, that is, encouraging and “warm” feedback. Or during difficult times, they may encourage you to continue in trying to reach your goal of chairing meetings more effectively. If you are like me, you will at times lose your resolve; however, Dr. Koestner strongly recommends re-setting your goal and keep trying to reach it.

I hope that the 3 P System of Purpose, Plans and Partners, along with the resources on the website can help you to enhance your leadership expertise.

**Good Luck on your journey!**

**Best wishes for a Happy and Healthy New Year.**

### **Sources and References**

Informative interview of Dr. Richard Koestner by James Mennie on CJAD Radio 800, Montreal, Quebec, January 2, 2014.

Deci, E. L., Koestner, R., & Ryan, R. M. (1999). A meta-analytic review of the effects of rewards on intrinsic motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 125, 627– 668.

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