



## Cathy Alfandre's E-Letter

*Create greater joy and fulfillment in your working life.*

January 2008

### **Greetings!**

"Energy is the essence of life. Every day you decide how you're going to use it by knowing what you want and what it takes to reach that goal, and by maintaining focus."

-- Oprah Winfrey

### ***Setting Good Goals***

Happy 2008 to all of you! This is a time of year when many of us set personal and professional goals, but have you ever wondered whether your goals were good ones? Years ago, I learned a helpful acronym for goal-setting and I've used it ever since. You may be familiar with it, but if not, I pass it on today in the hope that it works for you too.

The idea is to make your goals **SMART**:

**Specific** - What, *specifically*, do you want to achieve? If you're not sure, or you don't articulate it, you're less likely to achieve it. Saying "I want to manage my time better" is not nearly as specific (or useful) as saying "I want to use x and y time management practices every week so I can be more productive and leave work no later than 5:30 every day." Saying "I want to start looking for a new job" is not as helpful as saying "I will extensively research these two possible career directions to determine which would be a better fit for me."

**Measurable** - How will you know if you're making progress or have achieved your goal? Ideally, goals include a way of measuring your progress. You might be able to identify the number of hours per week that you will do something, or the number of people you'll talk with, or the dollars you earn, or a variety of other quantitative measures. Or you may need a more qualitative way of assessing (e.g., you feel a greater comfort with networking, or you have developed a more trusting relationship with a key client).

**Attainable** - Can you really achieve the goal you're setting? This is a tricky question because you want to stretch yourself (possibly beyond your comfort zone), but you also want to set yourself up for success, not disappointment. It may help to take big goals and break them down into a set of smaller goals. Factor in upfront the obstacles that may slow your progress. I find it useful to keep the long-term vision lofty and to make the goals practical and doable.

**Relevant** - How important is this goal? Does it really move you toward the most important things you want for your life and work? If not, then scrap it. Better to have a short list of 3-4 really important goals than a laundry list. Keep your vision for your life and work firmly in mind as you develop your goals.

**Time-Specific** - Can you give your goal a limited timeframe (days, weeks, or months)? Timeframes help make the goals more attainable; you're much more likely to set a realistic goal if you know it needs to be done by the end of March than if you leave the completion date open-ended. And for many of us, a deadline not only motivates but also helps us plan the day-to-day tasks/action steps that are necessary to achieve the goal.

There's one other thing that makes a SMART goal even smarter: getting it in writing. Your attention and commitment to each goal will go up dramatically if you take the time to write it down.

May you achieve all the goals you set this year!

All my best -

Cathy

### ***New Resume Writing Course***

At the request of many of you who have taken my other courses, I've developed a new course which I am offering locally: "Writing a Great Resume." The course is intended to be helpful whether you want to create a new resume or update an old one. I'll share 5 key strategies for writing a top-notch resume as well as tips for writing each section of the document. We'll also take time to provide individualized resume ideas for each participant. Please bring a few copies of your current resume or an outline of your job experience and education. Upcoming dates and locations:

- **Tuesday, February 26**, 7:00-9:00 PM, Fairfield Continuing Education
- **Tuesday, March 25**, 7:00-9:00 PM, Norwalk Continuing Education
- **Thursday, April 3**, 7:30-9:20 PM, Greenwich Continuing Education

Please visit [Current Happenings](#) for information on how to register for the course. I hope to see you there.

This bi-monthly e-letter is intended to offer ideas, tips, resources, and questions to ponder on careers, fulfilling work, and career-life decisions. I welcome your reactions and your suggestions for future topics.

To my new subscribers: Welcome! If you would like to see copies of my previous e-letters, please go to my website where they are posted in the "Contact" section.

To all readers: Please feel free to share this e-letter with anyone you think may find it helpful. (Rest assured, though, that I will not share YOUR email address with anyone!)

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