



'Tis the Season to make Jolly Good Friends with your Gremlin

Christmas spirit is everywhere, which means that a new year is just around the corner. January is notorious for New Year's resolutions

How many times you have set yourself goals which you never followed through? "Next year I want to spend more time with my family, work on integrating into my new environment and lose some weight."

Here goes another line-up of well meant resolutions down the drain, because you are taking on a bit more than you can chew and are not specific enough. Not surprisingly, your Gremlin loves this. That's the little guy who smugly chuckles every time you announce your New Year's resolutions. He loves this. You're making him happy when you declare you are determined in the New Year to go more often to the theatre, work out regularly at the fitness club and cook healthier meals.

If you still think no, that's not me, let's try this one. You are driving to the health club after a strenuous day at work. It's mid-winter and pouring rain. You are thinking to yourself, boy, today was tougher than usual. Maybe it'd be better after all to stay home tonight and work out tomorrow. As soon as you get home, you already feel some energy returning. You kick off your shoes, open a bottle of wine and warm up the leftover macaroni in the fridge. Then you get comfortable in your favourite lounge chair and switch on the TV. Your Gremlin hands you the remote control with a big grin, knowing that he has won again! No sports...no pushing your comfort zones....no veggies!

Should you start a wrestling match with him or just give him a friendly wink and wave him away? Actually, the best thing to do is simply to accept him. If there's a constant struggle going on, we are in fact fighting a part of

ourselves. All this does is create guilt, is poison for our self confidence and makes it difficult to move forward.

In fact, our Gremlin has two sides. He also wants the best for us, and often acts like a small child. His simple wisdom can help us. We can learn from him to be more patient with ourselves.

Our Gremlin also looks that we don't overdo it. Your friends probably got you to join them for the "Stadtlauf". Of course you will participate! Even if you only very occasionally go jogging and have had no time to prepare for the event. You WILL run that 10 km next week, come heaven or high water.

A couch potato suddenly wanting to run a half marathon? Now hold on a minute! Your Gremlin now starts to get active because you want to change a habit. If you are going to do that, then by gosh he wants to be a part of it. He will help you by giving you concrete instructions: "Before the race, practice. Start with two kilometres. If you run the 10 km, you will probably break down half way into it and never take part in a race like this again!" We need to listen to this little guy with our sensitivity radars on to determine whether he's being reasonable or mischievous.

Track him down, learn his language. Is it diet and fitness or work challenges that you find daunting, which push you beyond your comfort zone? Write them down so you clearly see where you have to take action. Remember the bigger the pressure, the bigger the Gremlin. He might help you to set boundaries, but don't count on him to help you follow through on your New Year's resolution. Our little buddy wants to avoid all experiences that are uncomfortable. As he

has no perception of the future, he will hinder us in our personal development and in achieving meaningful results.

"I can't" in Gremlin-speak really means "I do not want this." The classic "I have no time" actually means "I'd rather do something else" and "I have tried" means nothing other than "it wasn't important enough to me." The more honest you are with yourself, the faster you can decode his language and the faster he will give up this tactic. Change the "I should or I have to" to "I want to" and "I can" and the inner pressure immediately vanishes.

Face the challenge. The next time you are tempted to say "I cannot do this – that won't work" ask yourself, "what's my best approach, what alternatives do I have?" Look at problems as opportunities, mistakes as lessons learned and so-called failure as nothing other than a step along the way in your own personal growth and development.

Set positive, specific, measurable, achievable, result oriented and time bound goals. To motivate ourselves, we need the feeling that we can do/accomplish something. With every little success the resistance of your Gremlin diminishes and your readiness to tackle the next one grows. Make it one of your New Year's resolutions to make friends with your Gremlin and begin the process of positive-change in your life now!



Dieter Zwicky

is a life coach and a member of the international coach federation. Each month he offers advice on assimilation and integration issues.

Please e-mail your questions or to set up your free 30 minute coaching session at dieter.zwicky@i-coach.ch, or contact me on 079 542 27 29. Homepage: www.i-coach.ch