



I have a confession to make. While my friends and family give up chocolate, drinking, and swearing during Lent, I use the Lenten season to give up worrying, negative people, problem clients, and drama. A few years ago, I decided to give up the making New Year's resolutions for Lent. I did this because I consistently set myself up for failure. For example, I used to vow to lose extreme amounts of weight every year. The truth – I seldom lost the weight. While my friends strive to have six pack abs, I am content eating delicious food, drinking beer and living with abs that look a more like a beer ball. Hey! There is a foundation garment that can make my abs looking like Janet Jackson's with a mere swipe of my credit card. Why stress over such a minor life detail? Was this too much information? Sorry.

As I prepare for 2009, I decided to back track on my ideas about New Year's Resolutions. I was inspired to do so by reflecting on my work with many of the best and brightest emerging and established leaders in Central and Western New York during 2008. These leaders recognized their work was about far more than managing people and budgets. They came to understand that being an effective professional

leader is also about committing to a certain amount of personal work year round. With great intention they decided to think, speak and behave their way to confident, competent, and courageous leadership. These leaders resolved to do specific things throughout the year that enhanced their ability to lead. As you enter the New Year I offer a few resolutions for your consideration.

- Conduct an assessment of your leadership. Start the year by obtaining feedback about your performance in 2008. Identify people who will tell you the truth and ask - How did I perform as a leader last year and what improvements would you advise me to make in 2009?
- Read *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything* by Stephen M.R. Covey. This book makes a strong business case for building trust between leaders and employees. Covey suggests when leaders go to work each day building trust must be a priority. I encourage leaders to examine the connection between trust and business outcomes during 2009.
- Identify leaders outside of your business to meet with for the purpose of discussing the joy and challenge of leadership. Leadership is not a job to do alone. It helps to engage in authentic conversations about the unique responsibilities of leadership. Create an inner circle of colleagues to support your ongoing development as a leader in 2009.
- Build your leadership legacy by mentoring at least one high potential employee. Choose to use mentoring as your contribution to the development of the next generation of leaders in your business in 2009. This is important leadership work that is often overlooked. Be intentional about your leadership legacy by paying forward your wisdom to an emerging leader.

I leave 2008 knowing the most effective leaders are those who resolve to be intentional about their personal and professional development. It is my hope these resolutions encourage you to be resolved and intentional about being a more confident, competent, and courageous leader in 2009. Happy New Year!