



The *Guilt-Free* Times

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Happy New Year,

Happy New Year! On today, Martin Luther King's birthday, I'm reminded about his now famous speech where he spoke of **"the fierce urgency of Now."** He said, **"This is no time totake the tranquilizing drug of gradualism."** Below you'll find tried-and-true steps for Guilt-Free goal setting to overcome any "gradualism" that has set in for you or your business goals.

During the past several months I have met more and more women who are caring for ailing spouses or aging parents. I've seen the love given and the toll it takes on the caregiver first hand. There seems to be a need for "Guilt-Free Caregiving" and it's a topic I will be exploring more in the coming months.

With that in mind, I thought I'd start by featuring an article by my friend Karen Ryza. Karen is an expert on Long Term Care insurance. Now I don't often find insurance an exciting topic, but as women in the sandwich generation, and often caregivers for aging parents or ailing spouses, it's important to be educated. Her article will give you much food for thought.

Lastly, I have several speaking engagements coming up and I hope you will join me at one near you. You can find the highlights below or the details on the [schedule page](#) of my website.

Here's to an abundant 2007!!

Cheers!

Victoria

Guilt-Free Goal Setting

2007 is a clean slate!! Your past successes or failures DO NOT determine your future success!

Yogi Berra is often quoted for saying, **"If you don't know where you are going, you might wind up someplace else."**

Here are 3 keys to ensure you optimize your 2007 goals for success:

1. Begin at the Beginning

This starts with knowing where you're headed. Have a clear vision for what that looks like and what you WILL accomplish. Not what you hope or wish to accomplish. Then write out the "SMART" goals you will achieve in order to accomplish your vision. "SMART" goals are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ewarding, and **T**ime-based.

Author and psychologist Fitzhugh Dodson once said, "*Without goals, and plans to reach them, you are like a ship that has set sail with no destination.*" You will end up at the mercy of the winds of life without a well-developed plan, so once you have a clear vision and the goals to get there, develop a plan to put it all into action. This plan MUST be written down. Below you'll find a link to the Top Goals form many of my clients have used with great success.

2. Get Into Action

Start with some great daily habits that will assist you in completing the daily/weekly tasks you need to achieve your goals. Some ideas include:

- Spend 5 minutes reviewing your goals each morning
- Read 10 - 15 minutes from a book that motivates and inspires you
- Read aloud some affirmations about yourself and your business that will build your own belief in your success
- Make 5 calls each day to connect with your clients, staff, former customers, or people in your network
- Prioritize your day and plan appointments for the next day

"We sow our thoughts, and we reap our actions; we sow our actions, and we reap our habits; we sow our habits, and we reap our characters; we sow our characters, and we reap our destiny." What you do today will determine tomorrow's success!

Use structures that will help you keep your new habits and goals in clear sight. Timers or alarms can be used to remind you to do something specific like review your goals, make a phone call, or get ready for bed. Or, wear socks that don't match for a week to help you remember not to procrastinate. If you are a visual person, try putting an encouraging message to yourself on your screensaver marquee or post affirmations and inspiring quotations on your refrigerator or bathroom mirror. Play a favorite song in the morning to set the tone for your day. Be creative!

3. Maintain Momentum

Momentum is defined as strength or force gained by motion. Once you've started the actions and are in motion, it's important to keep that motion going. Easy ways to do that include:

- Regularly review your goals and your plan and make any needed changes or adjustments to the plan. Just as in sailing, one needs to "trim the sails" depending on the

winds. You may set your course but find you aren't getting the anticipated results. Take the time to make adjustments.

- Celebrate small successes and milemarkers along the way. We are often our own worst critics and can easily find our faults and failures, but it's even more important to recognize where we have succeeded, even in small ways. Ensure you reward yourself along the way.
- **Get accountable!** This is the most important step you can take. Share your goal and plans with a confidante or mentor who will help hold you accountable for getting done what you commit to doing. The ultimate accountability partner is a Coach! 😊

Most often when working with my clients I find they are doing most of the right things to reach their goals, they either don't do enough of it or give up just short of the finish line. Utilizing these 3 keys will ensure you reach the finish line GUILT-FREE. When you know where you're going, have a plan to get there, and diligently work that plan, you will have NO REGRETS or GUILT about the outcome at the end of 2007. Here are a few more resources to help you on your way:

[Top Goals Form...](#)

[7 Secrets to Overcoming Obstacles...](#)

[Top 10 Steps to Making SMART Goals a Reality...](#)

Why You Should Consider Long Term Care Insurance in Your Retirement Planning

By Karen M. Ryza

If you haven't already done so, now is an excellent time to consider adding long term care insurance to your retirement plan. Because long term care expenses can pose a significant risk to the assets you've worked a lifetime to accumulate, long term care insurance should be considered as part of a complete financial plan.

Nearly one-half of consumers say they have given "a lot of thought" to the potential impact of rising healthcare costs on their retirement savings. Only one out of five indicate they have not given this any thought at all. Baby Boomers are almost three times as likely as members of Generation Y to say they have given the potential effects of rising healthcare costs "a lot of thought". Married consumers are also more likely than those who are not married to have given a lot of thought to the impact of rising healthcare costs.[\[1\]](#)

The likelihood that you may need long term care is high. An estimated 42% of those who reach 70 will need some form of long term care, says the federal Agency for Health Care Policy and Research (Barron's, 3/22/2004). And while long term care includes a broad range of services, from in-home care to nursing home care, each comes at a cost. Those costs could be substantial, and could have a significant adverse effect on your retirement portfolio.

Why? Most forms of health insurance focus on medical expenses, not the

custodial care and non-medical expenses associated with long term care. Generally, Medicare only covers nursing home care after a related three-day inpatient hospital stay and Medicaid doesn't kick in until one has spent down a significant portion of their assets. Therefore, if either you or your spouse needs long term care, you may have to pay for that care out of your accumulated assets ... unless you have long term care insurance.

Early last year, a study showed the average cost of a private room in a nursing home met or exceeded \$80,000 annually in ten major metropolitan areas of the U.S. (The nationwide average was \$69,400.)^[2] If one partner needs such care, the cost could quickly and substantially erode the assets acquired over a lifetime.

Let's use a hypothetical couple living off the interest of \$500,000 of invested assets to illustrate how serious an impact long term care expenses could have. For the sake of this discussion, assume the couples' investments are earning approximately eight percent annually, generating about \$40,000 per year in income. Let's also presume this couple needs all of this income to support them while they're living together in their home.

Based on an \$80,000 annual cost for nursing home care, it may appear that this couple has enough for a little more than six years of care. However, that basic calculation does not consider the living expenses of the spouse who remains in the community. If this couple is using all of their investment income to provide for their living expenses, they may soon need to start withdrawing from the principle for a portion of those living expenses *as well as* for the long term care expenses of the partner who needs care.

In circumstances like these, it's easy to see how the assets accumulated over a lifetime could soon be completely exhausted.

Long term care insurance can help provide the funds to pay for the care you may need, while simultaneously protecting the assets you've worked a lifetime to accumulate. Long term care insurance may also help preserve financial independence, choice, and dignity, and those can be priceless.



^[1] "Genworth Retirement Readiness Survey Topline Report." Conducted by Alan Newman Research. Released by Genworth Financial. October 2004

^[2] Genworth Financial 2005 Cost of Care Survey conducted by the independent research firm of CareScout and issued May 25, 2005

Karen Ryza is a Long-Term Care Insurance Specialist with Genworth Financial, the leading long term care insurance company in the United States.

Karen resides in Crystal Lake and specializes in customizing long term care insurance solutions for individual, families and small businesses. She often volunteers to conduct seminars about Long-Term Care planning for community and civic organizations.



If you have an interest in contacting Karen to learn more about Long-Term Care insurance options, she can be reached at: (815) 245-4230 or kryza@genworthltc.com.

[Learn More....](#)

Schedule Highlights for The Guilt-Free Coach

January 2007

January 24, 2007

"Ask the Experts" Panel

McHenry Area Chamber of Commerce Sales Roundtable
1257 N. Green Street, McHenry
11:45 AM - 1:15 PM

The Sales Roundtable discussions are designed for the success oriented sales professional. Victoria Cook, The Guilt-Free Coach, will be one of 3 on a panel of sales and marketing experts who will answer your questions about the challenges of growing your business.

January 29, 2007

Claiming the "I" in Time

Hosted by Mothers & More
7 PM

Tired of trying to be Wonder Woman, running at break-neck speeds yet feeling like the important things never get done? Do you feel depleted and long for more time for yourself but feel guilty about taking it? Then join this informative and interactive session and leave with steps to slow down your hectic schedule, get done what really matters and Claim the "I" in your TIME - - Guilt-Free!

February 2007

February 28th

"What's on your inner MP3 player?"

McHenry Area Chamber of Commerce Sales Roundtable
1257 N. Green Street, McHenry
11:45 AM - 1:15 PM

Inner dialogues can sabotage your success. Whether you call them Gremlins, saboteurs, or the inner critic, the net result is the same. At this Sales Roundtable Victoria Cook, The Guilt-Free Coach, will teach some simple techniques to assist you in getting out of your own way and changing your playlist

[Find out more....](#)

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