



Your New Year's Resolutions

If you were too busy to write them down, allow me.

Aren't the holidays exhausting? When you think about all the energy devoted to buying just the right gifts, pretending to like the gifts you were given, returning some, re-gifting others - it makes you want to take a nap, doesn't it? So, if you haven't gotten around to writing your New Year's resolutions yet, I'm here to help. Just print out the resolutions below, stick them on the nearest bulletin board, and you'll be all set for 2011!

I resolve to tell more stories.

Ever since human beings began talking to each other, telling stories has been the most powerful way to capture attention, engage an audience, and motivate them to act. Steadily advancing technology keeps handing us shiny new tools to communicate faster and farther - think iPhones and Twitter to name just two - and while that trend will undoubtedly continue in 2011, I hope you won't forget your oldest and most reliable ally. Let others scramble for the Next Big Thing. When you can tell stories that people remember and want to retell, you have the original - and still most potent - form of social media working for you.

I resolve to be less modest.

Even though you are actively involved in changing the world - and I'm pretty sure that means *you*, dear reader - too often, you use the passive voice to describe your work. "Housing was found for the homeless



family," your direct mail letter reports. "The child benefited from one-on-one attention," says your website. Everywhere I turn, good things are happening, but it doesn't appear that anyone in particular is making them happen! And when I finally locate the unnamed do-gooders, they usually insist on remaining anonymous.

January 2011

Your New Year's Resolutions

We've made them for you.

And One More: Better Webinars!

Our popular online class returns January 27th.



About Us

free-range thinking is written by Andy Goodman and edited by Lori Matsumoto. To read back issues, download free publications, and to learn more about our work, please visit www.agoodmanonline.com and www.thegoodmancenter.com.

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"It's not about us," they say, and while I admire their modesty, I must remind them that the passive voice makes for lousy storytelling. "The dragon was slain and the damsel was freed from the castle keep." Doesn't sound quite right, does it? Stories need a champion to drive the action towards the dramatic conclusion, and your audience needs to know that real flesh-and-blood people are behind your good works. The nonprofit sector is filled with remarkable individuals, and I'm pretty sure most of them have names. When telling your stories, use them.

I resolve to be more emotional.

Don't get me wrong: I'm not suggesting you burst into tears like John Boehner every time you get in front of a microphone - nobody wants to see that. Just be more mindful of the fact that human beings are emotional creatures, and no matter how dispassionate we may pretend to be, our emotions are always in play, *especially* when we make decisions. A rational case supported by rigorously collected data may be entirely accurate, but it only speaks to half of the brain. If the other half is thinking, "I don't like his tone of voice," or "The other presenter made me cry," your audience may already have their minds made up against you. So keep collecting the data, but when it's your turn to talk, make sure you connect with your audience's emotions as well. (And if you haven't already read *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain* by Antonio Damasio, resolve to read it in 2011.)

As a presenter, I resolve to show more images and use less text.

The best advice I can offer presenters can be summed up in one sentence: show the pictures, say the words, and for heavy-duty data transmission, provide handouts (*after* your presentation, if possible, so your audience isn't flipping through them while you talk). No matter what you're talking about or whom you're talking to, one rule holds true: *you* are the most important thing in the front of the room. If you use PowerPoint (or other visuals), it's there to support you and not the other way around. When you put gobs of text on the screen, your audience will instinctively want to read it - assuming it's large enough to read - and they will tune you out as they do. So when you do need to include text, keep it short enough that your audience can absorb it in a glance and return their full attention to you. And if you do nothing else, resolve in 2011 (and forever after) that you will never *ever* read the slides aloud to your audience.

I resolve to exercise more.

Actually, this resolution is from my list, but after all that holiday "cheer," is there anybody out there for whom this *doesn't* apply? And besides, I want you to have a happy and healthy New Year so we can do this again in 2012!

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One More Resolution: Better Webinars!

Our popular one-hour class returns on January 27th and spaces are limited, so register now.

To save time and money, more organizations are conducting trainings and meetings online, but most of us have not been taught how to run a successful "webinar." As a result, these virtual gatherings are often boring, plagued with technical problems, and waste the time they're supposed to be saving.

So get some training! Join us on January 27th from 11a-12n PT (2-3p ET), and we'll show you:

- How to keep participants engaged from beginning to end
- The fine details of creating a good online experience
- How to use your two assets (voices and visuals) to maximum advantage
- What we learned from talk radio that makes webinars better



Tuition is just \$125 and discounts are available to organizations that register three students or more. To get additional information about ***The Webinar on Webinars*** and to register online, [click here](#).

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