

President's Column

Resolutions and Goals

by **Scott Levine**

*Scott Levine is CASD's President for 2010. He is a partner in the law firm of Silldorf & Levine, LLP. He represents homeowners in construction defect actions and also practices business litigation, employment and franchise law. Mr. Levine received his undergraduate degree from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and his Juris Doctor degree from California Western School of Law. Mr. Levine was the Tort Law column editor and then the Legislative Law column editor for **Trial Bar News**. He was awarded the 2002 Legislative Champion Award by CAOC and the David S. Casey, Jr., Consumer Advocate Award by the CASD for 2003. He may be reached by email at: slevine@silldorf-levine.com.*

How many of you in late December 2009 or early January 2010 decided to set some New Year Resolutions? Alternatively, who set some goals? Do you remember your resolutions or goals? Now that the year is moving forward and March is here, maybe it is time to look back at your resolutions and/or goals and see if you can put some spark back into them so that you can achieve them all!

The first step is to take a look at the goals that you set. If you did not set any then this is a good time to set some. If you don't plan your life, someone else will do it for you. That will lead often times to an unhappy result.

The second step is to make sure you are in the right state of mind to set some goals. Don't do this in your office where you are interrupted by your staff or the phone. Don't review your emails while you are doing this very important exercise. If possible, do this away from your office and put your cell phone away. You want to make sure that you are truly able to think about what matters most to you.

Third, reflect upon the last year and think about what went right. Write it down in your journal or on some paper. Think about what you liked about the last year. This list should have you reflect upon the various aspects of your life. Some categories could be: Your Physical Body; Your Finances; Your Career/Work/Job; Your Relationships; and Your Contributions.

Think of these like a wheel. If you are spending most of your time and energy at your job, odds are that the rest of the wheel is pretty jagged and therefore your overall wheel is not moving very well. This leads to dissatisfaction amongst attorneys and often times this has more to do with the choices we as attorneys make than to the career path that we have chosen

Fourth, think about what went wrong in these areas over the last 12 months. Are there some things that you don't want to repeat? Write them down.

Fifth, think about the things that you would like to accomplish in your lifetime. Surely it is not simply to get through the next eight or nine months! Write them all down so that you can refer back

to them in a few minutes. Remember to include things that are in all of the categories of your life, not just work related!

Sixth, look at the list and identify the things that you wish to accomplish this year. Place a "1" by them. For the things that you wish to accomplish in the next three to five years, put a "2" by them. For the things that you would like to accomplish in the next 10 or 20 years, put a "3" by those.

Pick the top four goals of those that you set to be accomplished in the next year. Describe in a short paragraph why these are MUSTS for you to accomplish this year! Get some energy behind these goals. If you have strong enough reasons, you will accomplish your goals. If you have weak reasons, you likely won't achieve your goals. If you picked goals to achieve this year that do not have strong MUSTS, then pick something else to replace that goal.

This next step is the most important: you need to take action NOW! If for example you decided that you were going to workout at a gym but do not have a gym membership, do some research NOW and join a gym NOW. No matter what your goals are, make sure that before you get up from this exercise you have taken some action toward completing at least one of your goals! Don't wait until tomorrow or next week. By then, you will have forgotten your goal (and/or resolution) and be back in the same place you were when you started this exercise.

If you are reading this article and not in a place or a state of mind to set some goals, decide when you can sit down to do these exercises.

For those of you who attended the S.M.A.R.T. Seminar in 2009, you will already know this acronym. Here is what the letters stand for and you should use them when setting goals:

S is for "Specific" goals. Make sure that your goal is specific. For example, "I want to lose weight" is not specific; however, "I want to fit in a size ___" is specific.

M is for "Measurable" goals. Make sure that you can actually measure your progress toward your goal each week, month and year. I want to save some money is not measurable. I want to fully fund my retirement plan during 2010 is measurable and can be tracked and charted throughout the year to keep you on course and make sure you reach your goal.

A is for "Attainable" goals. Make sure that your goals are attainable. Don't set goals that are completely out of your reach.

R is for "Realistic" goals. Make sure that your goals are realistic for you to achieve. A realistic goal is something that you have both the energy and desire to achieve.

T is for "Time" to achieve your goal. Make sure that your goals have a deadline or they will remain goals and never become accomplishments.

Again, take some action toward both setting your goals and achieving them so that you will look back on 2010 and feel that it was a very successful year!