

What's Your Mindset Newsletter

from **Helena Radeson - Your Partner to GET YOU WHERE YOU WANT!**



## January, why is January such a big thing?

I guess it has to do with being the first month of the year. The start to the new. New beginnings. New opportunities. The possibility to start over.

To me January is definitely a big thing. Very practically because it's my birthday month and I absolutely love birthdays. They're such spectacular opportunities to celebrate, it's like that extra year is such a win, such a celebration to life – I'm here, I made it, I'm going strong! I love them.

But besides that I think Januaries are strongly overrated.

You can have a new beginning whenever, right? You don't have to wait till once a year to give yourself, someone else or something a new chance. The rest of the months aren't lost if you don't spend enough effort in January, right?

We can always start over. Otherwise it would be unbearable. And kind of impossible. One chance out of twelve to get the right start is not a lot. Times adult years life expectancy, meaning the amount of Januaries you'll live through, and the equation will give you odds that are quite low if you think about it. Nothing I would like to depend on.

In my world that's plenty reason to let all the twelve months of the year be the possibilities to new beginnings. Not just January.

With that said I acknowledge that January has a special connotation, not only the emotional one as in actually being the first month of the year, but also the quite practical one. It's very often the business month when our annual goals start counting. In our private life it's kind of a trigger month because it makes a nice ending to be done with whatever you wanted by the end of the year, so you start in the very beginning of it.

In both cases, it means that if you don't perform well in January, you're going to have to make up for it for the rest of the eleven months. I guess that's why January is such a big thing. To me that seems an unforgiving, limiting and de-energizing angle to start from.

To make things worse, my business experience is that in many companies, budgets often aren't set or to mention approved in January, meaning that the likelihood of achieving the correct monthly goal is slim to none. Additionally, people tend to have a few days of in the beginning of the year, meaning fewer days in the month to achieve the goals, and who knows when your customers are back? Plus, there's so much social reconnection and catching up going on after the holidays, that even more time is lost and getting off to a quick start can prove really challenging. And that's not being negative, just realistic.

So what can we do to take the heat of January?

Well, as they say expectations is the mother of all disappointment, so rather, what can we do about the expectation?

A common tip from goal setters is to start early in order to avoid the vacuum of January. That would mean being clear on objectives and setting goals already in the end of the year so that when January hits, you are theoretically already started. While super smart, I see two issues

with that approach. First, again, in business you yourself may not always be able to influence when budgets are set and approved, it's something that is allocated. Second, come on, think about reality, seriously, what is the busiest time of the year, in business and in private life? Yes, you nailed it, the pre-Christmas period. Why is a totally different story, but did you talk to anyone, or read anything posted on-line not related to how busy everything is, what with ending the year, taking some time off, holiday celebrations and all?

Really, sorry to spoil it, but what's the likelihood of finding the time for goal setting in December? And even if you would, what are the odds those goals would be smart and not stressed through, steered by what you didn't achieve in the current year?

Nope, I would not put my trust in that approach. Unless of course you work with goal setting.

So how about changing the time aspect of the equation? How many months per year do you allocate to reach your goals? And how many quarters? Realistically, how many months are 'dead'? Is January one, is December one? How about vacation, can that be counted? What's real? What's left? Are there 12 or 9 countable months per year? Are there 4 quarters or 3? If we're being totally real, how many weeks are there really in a month? Days in a week?

My guess is most of us already know this argument pretty well and can kind of relate to it. But I dare emphasize the 'kind of' relate to it. Because it's different to kind of know that 'yeah sure I can't be working on my business goals when I'm on vacation', or 'yeah, right, I'll miss some work out sessions when travelling or tired or sick'. But. It's different to make an assumption in real numbers and put it into the equation. If your goal is to sell 100 something per month that means 25 per week and if one week every month is gone for planning or conferencing or general meetings or administration, you are going to achieve 75 sold somethings per month and that's 25% below budget already there. Provided you succeed in all your 75 efforts. Likewise, if your goal is to work out 3 times a week and you average on 2, your monthly goal is going to be 33% off. After the first month! Add holidays to that and see where that takes you...

So, in my experience, the most influential action you can do to reach your goals is to set radically lower time expectations. That way you'll open up space for all the other things that can happen while the year is moving forward. Expect the unexpected. Change is the only constant.

Again, I know most of you know this already. In fact I'm pretty sure you're reading this thinking to yourself 'yeah yeah tell me something new'. And I'm not! What I am telling you is that you

have to DO something new. Not be told something new. And that is to count differently.

Count so that you give yourself a chance, count so that you don't fail already on your first measure point. Count so that you start with the feeling of possibility to keep the right pace, with the feeling of knowing how to make it all the way. Which you will because you know what is out of your control and have taken into account the simply mathematical failures which will inevitably lead to motivational disaster. You count so that you set yourself up for success.

And what does this all mean?

Well, it means that by using a realistic perspective in combination with real maths, January can be your Joker month. Everything you do in the first month (whenever in the year you choose the first month to be) is sugar on top, because it's additional, it's something that makes you go into your year stronger, you're giving yourself the possibility to hit the ground running.

So in effect, whether or not January is the biggest month or not, it can be the smartest one. Your choice really. What's your mindset?

**HELENA RADESON**

PERFORMANCE COACH & CHANGE CONSULTANT

+41 79 284 25 31 | [hallo@helenaradeson.com](mailto:hallo@helenaradeson.com) | [www.helenaradeson.com](http://www.helenaradeson.com)



