

BY JEFF DAVIDSON, CMC

A NEW YEAR: ARE YOUR GOALS CHALLENGING ENOUGH?

Clues that suggest it's time to up the ante

Abraham Lincoln did all he could to win a seat in Congress. He lost far more elections than he ever won. In fact, in 1858, two years before he won the presidency of the United States, he lost a senatorial bid in his own state. Obviously, he felt he was up for the challenge of running for an even higher office than the one he had just lost. History proved him to be correct.

Richard Nixon, who probably could have won the 1960 presidential election but might have lost it because of alleged ballot box stuffing on the part of Mayor Richard Daily of Chicago, then went on to lose the 1962 gubernatorial election in California. He was, however, triumphant in 1968, and again in 1972, in his bid for president of the United States. Despite his downfall via Watergate, Nixon won some big elections.

So when should you decide to make your goals more challenging? The answer isn't the same for everyone, but here are some common indicators:

When you reach your present goals at warp speed. If you did your gut-level best to set challenging but reachable goals that were quantifiable and within specific time frames, and you ended up reaching them in a fraction of the time you originally allocated, that's definitely a clue. It can and does happen.

When Magic Johnson entered the NBA in the 1979–1980 season, along with other rookie superstars, he probably had a dream of making the NBA finals and winning a championship or two. Although he was the starting point guard for the team, during the championship series when Kareem Abdul-Jabbar had to miss the sixth game in Philadelphia due to injury, Johnson filled in at center, scored 42 points, and became the series MVP.



Thus, when Johnson's Laker team won the NBA championship in his rookie season, one championship wasn't going to be enough.

As your power and influence begin to soar. Ralph Nader took on the entire automobile industry in the early 1960s through the courts and with his best-selling book, *Unsafe At Any Speed*, which documented identifiable and known risks in popular selling automobiles. Nader was rapidly hailed as a consumer advocate.

Early on, Nader learned that one well-developed case intelligently presented in the judicial system is more effective than 10,000 protesters clanging on the fences outside of General Motors. He did not rest on his laurels, however, initiating Public Interest Resource Groups in every state (PIRGs), a national magazine titled *Common Cause* (in juxtaposition to special interests), and much more.

To this day, he's been a tireless advocate of environmental protection. In many respects, Nader's entire career has been one of upping the ante to further the progress of causes that he sees a need to support.

When every fiber in your being says "move on." Whether you reach chosen

goals quickly or experience expanding power and influence, you still might choose to up the ante if a little voice inside you says, "I can do more." So, even in the absence of evidence in the pursuit of some long-term goal, sometimes you realize on a profound level that it's time to go back to the drawing board.

There's always the danger of running into the barrier of biting off more than you can chew. If you've already racked up a number of significant achievements, however, having the self-confidence—or having otherwise proven to yourself—that you do indeed intend to finish what you set out to accomplish, I say full speed ahead.

By setting challenging goals and taking risks to achieve them, you will open new doors for yourself, enjoy life more, and accomplish what you had previously thought impossible. **PM**



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