

# President's Corner

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It's that time of year where we all beat ourselves up about how defective we are – yes, I'm talking about New Year's Resolutions. People have been setting (and breaking) New Year's resolutions for centuries – the Babylonians celebrated New Year's (resolutions included) over four thousand years ago. Resolutions reflected their belief that what you did on the first day of the year would set the stage for the rest of the year.

The idea behind resolutions is simple – it is the beginning of a new year, therefore it's time for a fresh start. Unfortunately, instead of thinking in positive terms about what we would like to accomplish, what typically happens, is we focus on all the ways we have failed in the past year – “I wasn't patient enough”, “I smoked too much”, “I didn't spend enough time with the kids” and the list goes on! Maybe that's why so many people over-indulge on New Year's Eve – they're just too depressed!

Over the years I have made all the typical resolutions that thousands of people make all over the world – to be a better mother / wife / daughter / sister / friend; to lose weight, to eat better and exercise regularly, etc. One year, after several years of being at home with 3 small kids, I began talking like I belonged in a Dr. Seuss book.

One of my resolutions for that year was to read a classic every month. January started good with “Wuthering Heights”. February was a tougher go when I waded through “Moby Dick”. Great – now I was ready for the classic that defines the phrase “classic literature” – “Ulysses” by James Joyce. That brought the “Classics Resolution” to a screeching halt – not only did this resolution join his brothers and sisters in the back of my “Unresolved Resolution Closet”,

I actually regressed as April brought on “Going Too Far: Legal Briefs”, Harlequin Romance #73. (And I thought it was about trial documents!)

This year, to ensure a higher percentage of success, I am going to try a couple of different things. First of all, I am going to focus on professional improvements only. As my ever-expanding “Unresolved Resolution Closet” has shown, I haven't had much success in fixing myself! I'm also going to change my way of thinking towards resolutions. Instead of thinking of it as “a need to change a shortcoming”, I am going to think of it as “a desire to improve”. Will it make a difference? The first mindset is “backward focused” and the latter is “forward focused”. One has negative connotations; the other has positive. Here are my five resolutions (and please feel free to use any of these if you have successfully fulfilled all the usual resolutions). Just make sure you let me know at the end of 2004, how successful you were!

- 1 Strive for continuous learning with subjects that relate to our industry. This should be no problem as we are fortunate to be in an industry that is ever-changing. (Commercial break! If this is also one of your resolutions plan to attend our TEC conference in April for a wide range of topical sessions! And if this isn't one of your resolutions, plan to attend TEC anyway, to see why it should always be on your list!)
- 2 Focus on the big picture of our I.T. infrastructure – Disaster Recovery, Security and Integration.
- 3 Finish that last 10% of at least one of many projects that I started last year (okay maybe I should also include the “almost finished” projects from 2002 as well!)

- 4 Get off my soap box as far as how great the iSeries is. I need to recognize that there are other computers and operating systems out there besides IBM and the iSeries. I mean, really what is the big deal that when recently one of our drives failed on our iSeries, not only did IBM call to tell us but they replaced the drive within hours with absolutely no lost data and no disruption to our users? Surely, some of the others companies can do the same?



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- 5 Look for the positive aspects of some of these “other” operating platforms/companies. When the database on our email server reached its storage limit (ironically during the same week of the drive failure in #4), we actually did get a warning message. Unfortunately it showed up a scant 5 minutes before the server crashed. (Not even Superman could ward off an Exchange database crash in 5 minutes!) So maybe the warning was a little late – after all it took 12 hours of downtime before our email system was up and running again. But it's a step in the right direction, right?

Resolutions will only work if they are realistic, have timelines and are reviewed constantly. Glancing over my resolutions, I can see how this will work for the first few on my list. By the time you read this column, it will already be the first or second week of January. I'm willing to bet that I have already given up on resolution 5 due to its unrealistic nature! Happy New Year! And.....

**“May all your troubles last as long as your New Year's resolutions.”**

– *Joey Adams*

