



CHIROPRACTIC (GENERAL)

## 6 Steps to Make 2017 Your Best Year Yet

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People often ask me what defines success. Success, for me, is simple: doing exactly what you want to do in life. Whether it's the kind of practice you run, your life at home, your hobbies or something else, it's achieving anything you put your mind to.

But getting there takes more than picturing it. You've got to map out your road to that destination, enlist the help of others, and *push, push, push*. As 2016 comes to a close, now is an excellent time to dust off that road map (or maybe you need to create one from scratch).

For the purpose of this article, let's focus on your *practice success* in 2017. But really, the lessons that follow can be applied to any area of life. They've worked for me and for countless of friends and colleagues over the years. I promise that with the vision and hard work, they'll work for you, too.

### 1. Take Stock of 2016

The typical New Year's resolution looks forward: *What do I want to achieve in the New Year? What would I like to change about my practice to improve patient outcomes and promote practice growth?* While looking forward and setting goals is important (it's crucial, in fact, and we'll get to that soon), evaluating what came before is the starting point.

Sit down with your staff and start a guided discussion about the successes - and challenges - of 2016. Make sure to keep notes. What changes did you make that excited your patients? What skills did you learn that improved your care? What technology did you acquire, or staff did you hire, that helped to really deliver that "wow" experience? What excited (or annoyed) your staff?



A great deal can happen over 365 days, especially in a busy chiropractic office. One way to jog your memory is to review your calendar appointments or scan through old emails from the prior year. Ask your staff to do the same so everyone comes ready for a constructive conversation.

Don't avoid discussing your mistakes. Failure is like fertilizer: If you learn from it, you grow and become bigger, stronger and better. If you don't, well, you're just standing in a pile of the stinky stuff.

## 2. Be a Patient: What Is Your Office Like?

Your patients are the heart of your practice. Without them, you *have* no practice. So, I suggest you make the patient experience a central discussion point of the meeting we just discussed.

Come to the meeting armed with a little "reconnaissance." Call your office from a number your staff won't recognize, or have your spouse or friend do so while listening in. How was your [CA's greeting](#)? Did they make you feel welcomed and important? What information did they request? How many times did the phone ring before your CA answered? Did you feel like making an appointment? Set up a temporary email account and repeat the exercise with email.

Go through the intake process with your staff from start to finish, acting as if you are a patient. Always be asking yourself, *Am I / my team giving patients the very best experience possible?* Now enlist a very detail-oriented friend to visit, playing the role of patient, but *don't* tell your staff you're acquainted. Have the friend go through the intake and exam process A-Z, and then give you an honest, thorough critique over lunch or coffee. Present what you learned with your staff. Discuss what could be tweaked or improved.

### 3. Set Goals: The First Step to Winning

Now that you've taken stock, it's time to set goals. As Tony Robbins' mentor, [Jim Rohn](#), said, "The true purpose of goals is to compel you to become the person it takes to achieve them." When you choose a goal, your life immediately improves because you have become aware of a new, promising direction. Remember the rule: Where awareness goes, energy flows.

Visualize what you want your practice to look like - the number of patients, the number of staff, the décor, the ambiance, and yes, even your paycheck. With these big goals in mind, break down each one into the mini, shorter-term goals needed to get there. These are your stepping stones, and ideally, they can be realized within 90 days or less.

Now break down these "stepping stone goals" into the "stepping pebbles," if you'll indulge me: what you can achieve within 30 days. Then create your weekly list, your daily list, and so on. Achieving smaller goals builds the confidence and momentum you need to pursue the bigger, longer-term ones.

Write down your "big" goals in a place you can see them. Review regularly. Read them out loud to yourself three times each day so they become a part of your psyche. Nothing can stop you now.

### 4. Share Your Goals and Have Fun!

No man or woman is an island, and you must unite to "conquer" 2017. One of the greatest ways to build, gain and maintain your enthusiasm is to share your vision with your staff and colleagues. Your "2016 take stock" meeting should be followed up with a "2017 vision meeting." Share your vision and the goals to get there with your staff. Ask for their input and revise where it makes sense. Help and encourage them to set their own goals.

And when you and your staff cross a milestone, celebrate it! Perhaps everyone gets a half-day off with pay, a gift card or a catered lunch. But the real payoff is much more than perks - it's the team bonding experience and feeling of empowerment.

And when you feel stuck, which is bound to happen from time to time, keep on pushing. Remember Newton's Law of Inertia from eighth-grade science class? "An object in motion tends to stay in motion, and an object at rest tends to stay at rest unless affected by an outside source." Your life, your practice; everything around you revolves around this fundamental law. In other words, your practice isn't going anywhere unless *you* affect it. *You* are the source that makes things happen.

### 5. Seek a Mentor

"A lot of people have gone further than they thought they could because someone else thought they could," said [Zig Ziglar](#). From Steve Jobs to Oprah Winfrey, Richard Branson to Sheryl Sandberg, the world's most successful people have counted on mentors to bring their game to the next level. Call up a doctor in town who you know is doing well; ask to take them for lunch to discuss the profession. The most successful doctors out there are not going to be threatened by you as a "competitor"; those who are secure in their success will be flattered by the invitation.

If the two of you hit it off, propose the idea of more regular meetings. Be upfront that you are seeking a mentor. Then use these meetings wisely. *You* are in the driver's seat and this relationship is an investment. It's your job to come prepared, lead the discussion, and nurture the relationship.

Listen - really listen - without being defensive. You don't have to act on every piece of advice, but your mentor can serve as a sounding board as you evaluate decisions affecting your practice.

## 6. *Be* a Mentor

Return the favor by mentoring someone who is up-and-coming in the field. Mentoring not only feels good; it's a great way to give back to the profession. Others can learn from your own successes and failures; in fact, just by recounting them to another person, you gain a deeper understanding of your own journey, too.

As your mentee uses you as a sounding board for their ideas, you are likely to pick up on some great ideas for yourself, or at the very least be inspired to get more innovative with your practice. That's never a bad thing!

With enthusiasm and a planned course of action, you *will* move forward. But don't let procrastination be your downfall. The secret of success is to do it now! With diligence, teamwork and the right attitude, I have no doubt you'll see your practice flourishing in the New Year.

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