

LIFE&TIMES **FAMILY**

Make it happen

What's the formula for success?

Aneeta Sundararaj finds out more

HAVE you fallen off the wagon in terms of keeping your resolutions? Do not worry. Here's your chance to wipe the slate clean and start over. After all, it is still early days into the Chinese New Year.

"It is not just about making a resolution but also making it happen," says John Kam Lup Yong, CEO of D'Jungle People, a training consultancy based in Kuala Lumpur. "Resolutions are like goals. They give you a direction to head for. Otherwise, you're a wandering soul."

Having a background in forestry and mastery over the "Science of Recreation", it's no surprise that the 39-year-old has a formula — Desire. Decision. Drive and Discipline — to achieve success.

"They must be followed in that sequence," he insists.

Starting with 'Desire', John explains: "Humans are not designed to be forced into doing things. Some may succumb to the pressure. Instead we give them the opportunity to have a desire to do something. It's like a kid who wants to be No. 1. It's easier if the kid desires it. Otherwise, it's a struggle."

To elaborate, he recalls a story from his childhood. "I have been swimming since I was 4 or 5. I had an old-school swimming coach — the kind who would throw you in the deep end and make you learn to swim. Each day, my siblings and I would be in the pool by 7.30am. At that time, the pool is freezing. But my mother would hear nothing of it. 'You get up and you swim,' she said. There was no negotiation. We had to do something like 30 laps in an Olympic-style swimming pool. If we stopped to chat or finished early, she would say, 'If you can finish 30 laps, you can swim some more.'"

The important aspect of this is that while he was still a child, it was his mother who held the power. She enforced his "desire" to learn to swim even if he didn't want to because she thought it would be good for him. He adds that whether or not a desire cultivated by a parent is better or worse for the child can only be determined in hindsight.

"Personally, the ability to swim, and swim well, has come in handy in my work. Some of our activities include taking people one kilometre out into the sea. They jump overboard and have to swim to shore from there. As facilitators, we need



to be in the water and guide them through the thinking process."

Once children become teenagers and adults, they become the person who has to cultivate a Desire. That is when, John insists, that people should "choose to be passionate about the things they're doing rather than only doing things they're passionate about."

Next comes Decision. "For many in the workforce, the main reason they fail is because their decisions don't resonate with their desires."

John says many young people are not willing to wait 10 years (like their forefathers did) to earn a better salary.

"What they often say is that they want everything and they want it now. So, when someone who is just starting out says that he or she wants to earn what the manager is earning in two years, I ask them: 'What are you willing to do to achieve this?' And, if they're not willing to do what is necessary, then they should stop wanting it."

The next component is Drive. As John explains: "The question to ask here is this: when tomorrow comes, are you still going to be doing it?"

This equals taking action on your decisions. He adds: "And, you must act within 24 hours of making the decision. The magic number is 24 hours. For example, if you want to lose weight, your decision may include cutting out nasi lemak, going to the gym and speaking to people about nutrition. But, you try to do this all in one day, you're doing too much; you'll be miserable and quit."

The success of this resolution to lose weight hinges on the difference between making an excuse and giving a reason.

"When someone keeps saying, 'I want to be healthy, I want to feel good and I want to impress people,

these are all reasons and this person will exercise regularly," insists John. "But when they say things like, 'It's too hot, no parking, gym fees are too expensive or no *kaki*', they're giving excuses. If you look for a reason to stick to your resolution, you'll find it. If you look for an excuse to not keep your resolution, you'll find that as well."

Finally, 'Discipline'. "Will you continue to do the things you've decided to do even when you don't feel like doing them? All successful people have the ability to do it even when they don't want to. They achieve success through hard work," says John.

Ultimately, his philosophy is that you should mix with people you want to be like. To illustrate, he goes back to his story about his swimming lessons. "Yes, we had to go to the pool every morning. But my mother was in the pool with us. Parents are the biggest role models for their children. If they want their children to eat healthy and lose weight, they should do the same."

Continuing, he says: "Furthermore, there is no need to wait until December or Chinese New Year to make resolutions. Looking thoughtful, he concludes: "This is mainly traditional and symbolic. I believe that tomorrow is the beginning of a new year. When you're serious about fulfilling your resolutions, you can't wait for the next New Year or Chinese New Year to fulfil your resolution. Frankly, if you can wait until then, you're not serious."

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