

## **Best friends might be worst enemies when it comes to keeping New Year's resolutions**

*Research shows having even one "accomplice" is enough to guarantee failure at changing bad habits*

Provo, UT – November 18, 2009 – Latisha grew up on the east side of Detroit surrounded by drug dealers and violence. Her sister was pregnant at 15. She had horrible grades and no social life. She had never even heard of college or a career. Determined not to become a product of her environment, Latisha joined the Air Force and they helped her enroll in a summer trial program at Eastern Michigan University. Against all odds, she excelled.

Today Latisha is finishing a Master's Degree in Human Resources, is mentored by executives at Comerica bank and has jumpstarted her career—working directly under the CHRO at her current employer.

But what was the secret behind Latisha's phenomenal success?

"In order to be successful, I knew I had to create a personal network filled with successful people," she said.

According to new research, Latisha's instinct to surround herself with active supporters—and distance herself from those who would hold her back—is exactly what people who are looking to keep resolutions, break bad habits and achieve goals in 2010 should do.

A study conducted by the authors of *Influencer: The Power to Change Anything*, a *New York Times* bestseller about behavior change, found that people who surround themselves with friends who actively encourage or support their efforts are significantly more likely to succeed at achieving new goals (up to 38 percent more likely).

But that isn't all that's necessary to change. Joseph Grenny, author of *Influencer*, says that while the number of friends you *include* in your network is important, an even more important factor to success is who you *exclude*.

The survey of 3,400 respondents revealed that more than 50 percent of people who are trying to achieve a personal goal have one or more active accomplices—someone who enables their bad habit or whose attitude and behavior impedes their success. Shockingly, this 50 percent are significantly less likely to succeed at changing their bad habits as a result of their accomplice.

"Our research shows our friends have enormous influence over our success—whether for the better or worse," says Grenny. "The trick is knowing who to spend time with and who to ignore as you try to accomplish your goals."

For example, Michael Emeheiser lost 82 pounds after he spent more time with a couple of regular exercisers and less time with those who regularly fed his Dutch pastry obsession. A.J. Wagner finally quit smoking after spending less time visiting with her father in person and more time with her new friend Robin, from her exercise boot camps.

Grenny shares four recommendations for activating your friends and kicking out accomplices to achieve goals and break bad habits in 2010.

- 1. Take an honest inventory of friends and accomplices.** Are your close friends and family accomplices or active supporters? What activities do you do together? Who models, encourages or enables your bad habit? Who could you spend more time with that would do the opposite?
- 2. Convert or push back accomplices.** Sincerely share your goals with those who are impeding progress. Ask for their support and help with changing your behavior. In extreme cases, distance yourself from those people whose actions draw you back to your old habits.
- 3. Surround yourself with supporters.** Find as many active supporters as you can. Turn passive supporters into active supporters. Ask these friends to hold you accountable for your behavior and provide coaching and encouragement when you succeed.
- 4. Be aware of distant acquaintances.** It's fine if distant acquaintances share your bad habit, so long as they don't actively oppose your efforts to change. If they do, kick them to the curb until you have your habit under control.

#### **About VitalSmarts**

An innovator in corporate training and organizational performance, VitalSmarts is home to award-winning training products that deliver powerful tools for enriching relationships and improving end results. The company has three *New York Times* bestselling books, *Crucial Conversations*, *Crucial Confrontations*, and *Influencer*. VitalSmarts has taught more than 2 million people worldwide.  
[www.vital-smarts.com](http://www.vital-smarts.com)

**Note to editor:** Author Joseph Grenny, Latisha, Michael, and A.J. are available for interview. Copies of *Influencer* are available upon request. Contact Brittney Maxfield at [bmaxfield@vital-smarts.com](mailto:bmaxfield@vital-smarts.com).

**About the research:** Responses collected via an online survey from 3,424 individuals in October of 2009. Margin of error is approximately 3%. Full survey results available upon request.

**CONTACT:** Brittney Maxfield of VitalSmarts, L.C. +1-801-724-6272, or [bmaxfield@vital-smarts.com](mailto:bmaxfield@vital-smarts.com).

##