

This is Lieutenant Roger McCort from The Salvation Army in Eureka with today's Community Comment.

In a dramatic moment last week, I found myself lying on the ground alongside a mud-slicked trail. As I was walking downhill, I'd slipped on a particularly wet patch. Trying to catch my balance, my next step came down squarely on a pile of soggy leaves which were hiding a tree root growing up through the path. After an all-too-brief battle between my desire to stay upright and gravity's pull towards the dirt, my wishes yielded to the laws of physics, and I went down hard. I lay still for a moment, considering my predicament, but once I'd assessed that the greatest damage was to my pride, I clambered awkwardly to my feet and continued another lap and a half around the park.

Why didn't I stop and limp my sorry, aging carcass back home? Because my accountability partner was right beside me, and I have made a resolution to walk for an hour every morning he is available. I didn't want to be one of the twenty-five percent of people who give up on their New Year's resolutions within the first week.

Almost half of all people in the United States make New Year's resolutions. Usually they are well-intentioned and health-oriented. The top three resolutions year after year are to lose weight, to exercise more, or to quit smoking. These are all admirable goals which leave us feeling better about ourselves and bring praise from our peers, but studies regularly show that less than one out of ten people keeps their resolutions.

So, for those of us who haven't already given up, and for those who just haven't quite started, what can we do to bring victory into our grasp? How do we become part of the successful ten percent?

First, you've got to start and stay simple. Sure, you might need to drop a few pounds, start exercising every day, and practice good money management and investing strategies, but if you try to do all of that at once, you are a lot more likely to fail. Instead, pick just one important goal to achieve, and make it something specific. If that goal is to lose weight, set a reasonable

and attainable goal – say two pounds per month. Then create a handful of small rewards for accomplishing that goal. Maybe a night at the movies or a weekend away to congratulate yourself on three months of success.

Next, you need to let people know what your goal is and be open with them about how you're doing. Why did I get up and go back to walking instead of limping home and swearing off walks in the park? Because I have someone I have committed to walk with. If I was alone, I might have talked myself into quitting. Let me tell you that my goal is to walk for 45 minutes to an hour every day that I have someone to walk with, up to four days a week. Now that you know that, you are welcome to ask me about it when you see me. You will help keep me accountable. You can even come along, if you wish. We all do better when we do things together.

Finally, expect setbacks and don't let them keep you from going on. Maybe you slip in the mud. Get up and keep going! Maybe you only lose a pound one month. That doesn't mean you can't lose two the next! I've got a few days where appointments or previous commitments mean I'm not available during my scheduled walk time. That's no excuse not to go the next day or next week. Keep on keeping on, as the old saying goes. That's how successes happen, after all.

Grace and peace to you. This has been Lt. Roger McCort for today's KINS Community Comment.