

MEMBERS ONLY

DECEMBER

INNER  CIRCLE

12

THIS MONTH

THE POWER OF REWARDS FOR
SMASHING YOUR LANGUAGE
LEARNING GOALS

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You don't have to fail your yearly goal if you miss a monthly one.

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Welcome back!

In the last few Inner Circles we've been ramping up our progress to reach the yearly goal by the December 31st deadline. The time is now.

Today, we're wrapping up the year with one final tactic and one final word of insight. **This time, we're talking about the power of rewards and why you don't have to fail your yearly goal if you miss a monthly one.**

In this Inner Circle, you'll find out whether I hit my 30-minute goal or not, how rewards help you maintain motivation for long periods of time, and why you shouldn't worry about small failures on your way towards a bigger goal. More specifically, you'll learn...

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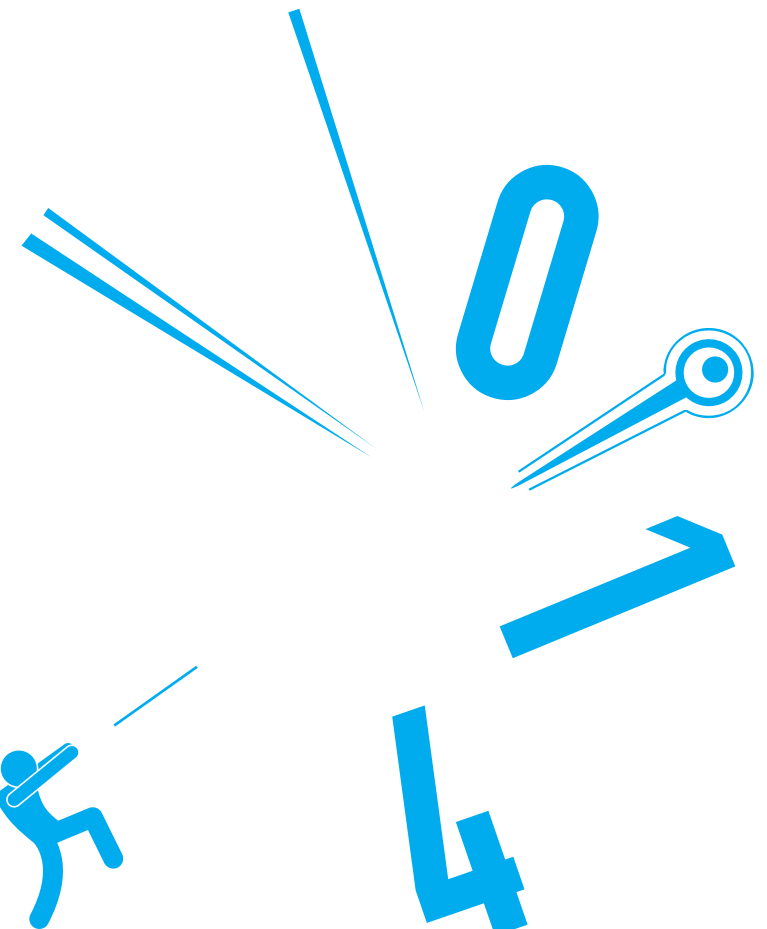
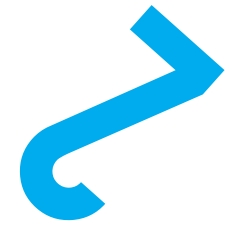
**How Rewards Build Habits
and Maintain Motivation**

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**How I Used Rewards When
I Hit My Goals**

3

**Why You Don't Have To Fail
Your Overall Goal if You Miss
a Monthly One**

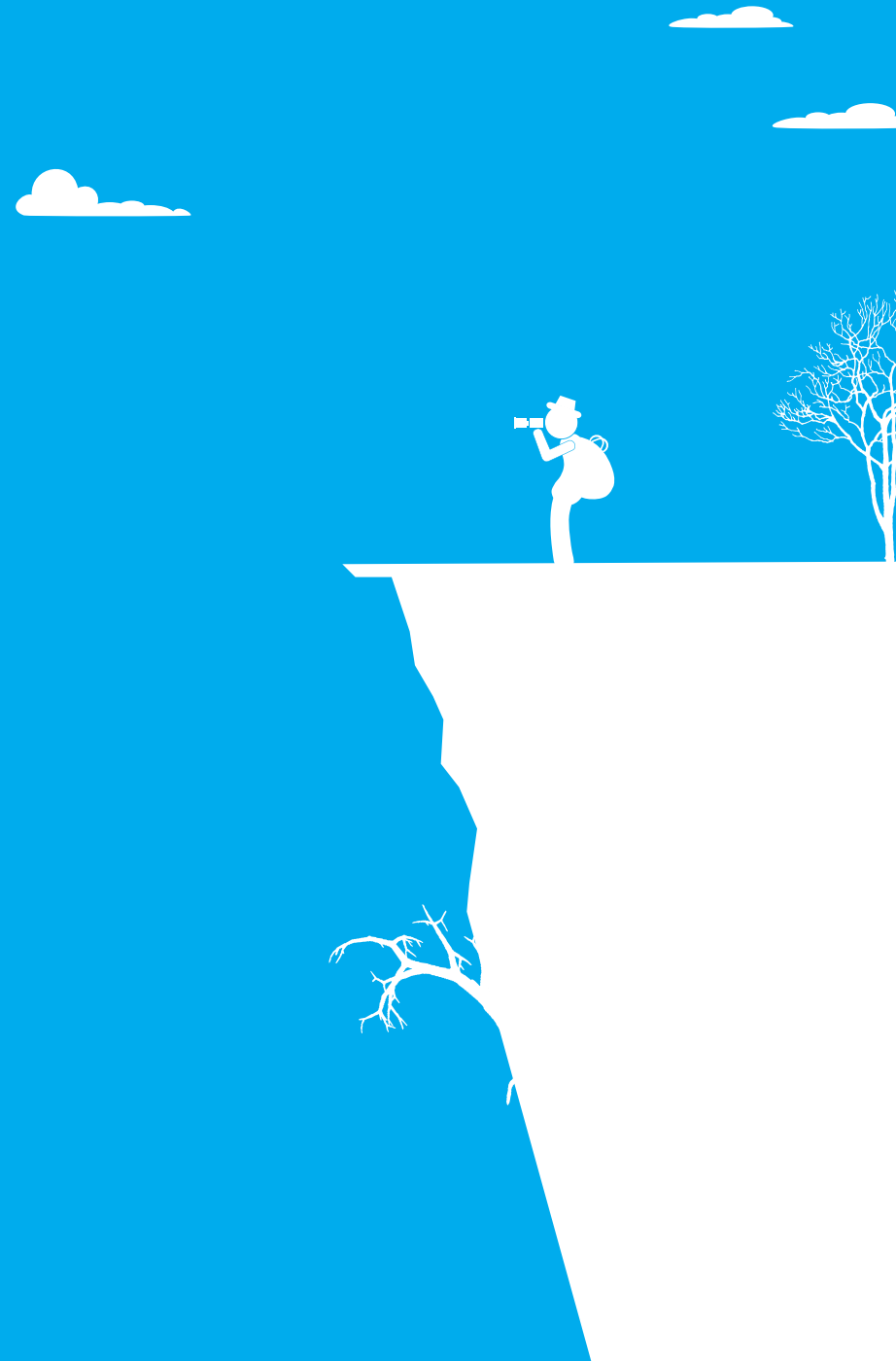


This is it, dear Inner Circle Member.

WE'VE REACHED THE FINAL DAY OF THE YEAR.

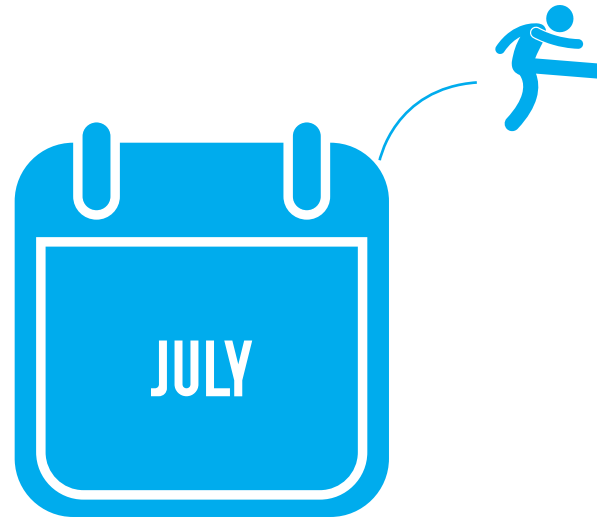
At the beginning of the year, I set my New Year's resolution, or yearly goal, to be 30 minutes of Italian conversation. Not a vague goal like "Speak Italian." Similarly, I asked you to set your own goal for the year. A small, realistic, measurable goal with a deadline.

Then we broke that big yearly goal down into smaller monthly goals. The point was to have those monthly goals build into the big yearly goal by December 31st.





My goal for January 31st was to hit 3 minutes of Italian conversation.



By July, I was around 20 minutes.



And on December 14th, I hit my 30 minute goal. That's right. I hit my goal!

At the beginning of the year, 30 minutes, although arguably realistic, still seemed like a tough goal. Especially when I was hovering around the 3- to 5-minute mark. But once I started hitting 15, 17, and 20 minutes, and once I only focused on my monthly goals...

...that's when I realized how doable and realistic it was.
And in hindsight, it really was.

So, you're probably wondering...how did I hit that final goal?

Well, to be honest, I didn't prepare. I actually thought I had 2 more weeks to study but my Italian teacher notified me that she would be on vacation for the last 2 weeks of the year. So, December 14th would be the last lesson of the year.



Did I review all the tips and lesson material from this past year? Nope. I took a 5 day break and avoided Italian. Kind of like how marathon runners avoid running before the big day. They do it to get their muscles relaxed and ready to run the longest distance possible. So, that was the approach I took. I stopped studying. I took a leap of faith in the knowledge I accumulated over the year.

And this worked amazingly. Because I hadn't put my Italian to use in a week, I was excited to use it again. During the lesson, my teacher commented "you're so talkative."

"The teacher had to stop me because the lesson had already ended."

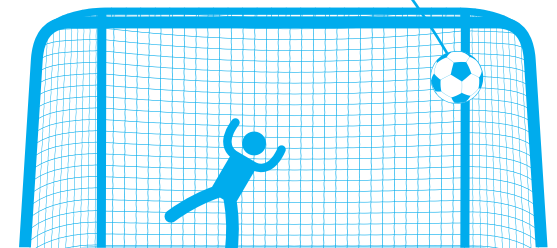
And what happened was that I had so much to talk about, that we actually went over the 30-minute mark. The teacher had to stop me because the lesson had already ended.

Sure, I made minor mistakes, but it was nothing that I couldn't fix. Verb conjugations. Tenses. If I thought I'd made a mistake, I'd ask her in Italian to see if it was correct.

"Sure, I made minor mistakes, but it was nothing that I couldn't fix."

With my goal reached, there's one final tactic I want to teach you. It's one I've been using this past year, but seeing how you're approaching your goals, it's very timely.

It's the power of rewards. Let's get into the first point of the Inner Circle.





How Rewards Build Habits and Maintain Motivation

REWARDS ARE GREAT. WE ALL LOVE THEM.

But they're also very powerful tools for forming habits
and getting motivated. How?

Well, in order for me to keep going, I needed to turn my
studies into a habit. And I needed
to stay motivated.

In order to form a habit, you need 3 things:

- 1 A cue (a signal that starts your routine)
- 2 A routine (the actual task, or language learning)
- 3 And a reward (anything you enjoy)

The reward is the most important part. It helps your brain remember the cue-routine-reward loop for the future. Otherwise, you study once or twice, think “that was tough,” get no satisfying reward to encourage you to do it again, and quickly quit.

This is where the reward is tied into motivation. If the task is arduous, with no reward at the end, few people will feel motivated to keep going. Think of the typical learner that spends 30 minutes on a textbook. They don’t plan a reward. Their brain and eyes feel sore afterwards.

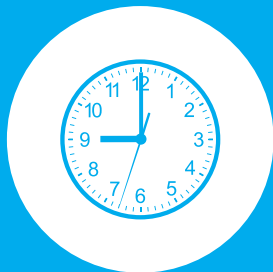
They want nothing to do with the task again. Yes, there’s motivation to learn

language but there’s no reward that they can enjoy sooner.

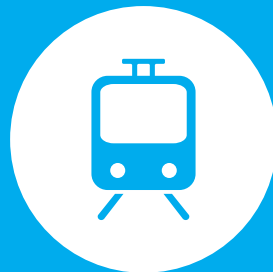
However, if they set up a cue-routine-reward system, or make 9PM their starting time (the cue), start learning (routine), and reward themselves with something nice, like a coffee or a nap, they’re more likely to keep going.

In my case, 9PM was my cue for my weeknight self-study with ItalianPod101. Morning commutes were my cues to learn with the App. Friday nights were for Skype sessions. And Saturdays were for my in-person tutor.

But what did I do for rewards? Let’s get into the next point.



WEEK NIGHTS



MORNING COMMUTE



SKYPE FRIDAYS



TUTOR SATURDAYS



How I Used Rewards When I Hit My Goals

I DID THE REWARDS PART A BIT DIFFERENTLY.

I only rewarded myself if I hit my monthly goals.
This motivated me to hit as many of my monthly goals as possible.

So for the last few months where I reached my goal, I'd go
to a very expensive cappuccino place the
day after I succeeded.

Expensive cappuccino – is that rewarding? Absolutely. Well, to me at least, but to each their own. You should decide your own rewards.

For hitting my yearly goal, I rewarded myself with Italian designer jeans. But I'm not telling you to go out and get something expensive. I got them (*no, not because they're Italian and I'm learning Italian!*) because they remind me of a goal I accomplished.

And if someone ever comments on them, I'll have a story for them. *"Oh these? These were a small gift to myself after I reached 30 minutes of Italian conversation."* This serves as a good memory and positive reinforcement for future goals.

Oh these?
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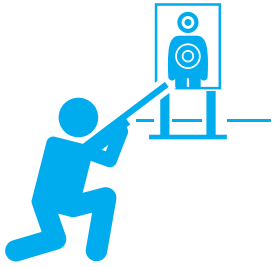




Why You Don't Have To Fail Your Overall Goal if You Miss a Monthly One

IF YOU CHECK BACK OVER THE PAST YEAR, I MISSED 3 OUT OF THE 12 MONTHLY GOALS.
I missed August, September, and October.

Had I been taking an actual Italian school course, my teacher would have failed me long ago. However, missing a monthly goal doesn't mean you need to fail your big picture goal. Why?



It may mean your initial monthly goal was too ambitious. You should scale it down and aim lower.



As long as you keep going and stay motivated, you'll keep progressing. I might've missed a few months, but I never stopped.



As long as you're progressing, you're not failing. If I promised an increase to 25 from 20 minutes, but only hit 22, I'm still on my way up. I just need more time.

This is exactly why adjusting routines has been a recurring theme this past year. If a language learning goal seems too hard or unrealistic, aim lower. Remember, learning language is a marathon, not a race. You'll get there soon enough.

Most learners feel like they've failed when they miss a goal. But that's just a label they – and no one else – decided to stamp on the dream so they can justify shutting it down and feeling bad about it.

Just don't stop learning.

Now, you tell me – do you use rewards to keep yourself going? What kind of reward would work for you?

And did you reach your yearly goal?

Let me know! If not, don't be too quick to call it a failure...it may be just a few more months away.

Be sure to leave a comment or send me an email at:

inner.circle@innovativelanguage.com

Thank you for taking the challenge of learning a language this year and for joining the Inner Circle. See you in the New Year!

To your fluency,

Peter Galante

Founder, InnovativeLanguage.com

Thank you for taking the challenge of learning a language this year.

SEE YOU IN THE NEW YEAR!

