

Don't let the New Year gift pass you by

Margaret Beaton 04 February 2012

In the southern hemisphere, summer brings a unique opportunity every year.

First comes Christmas when our work life is (almost) forgotten as families reunite, share food and gifts, and we anticipate a New Year and a fresh start. Then comes January, now almost gone, with quiet roads and empty offices, gifting us the opportunity to reflect, largely unencumbered by work concerns, about how we want to live our lives.

Small wonder that most New Year resolutions are about giving more to those areas of life we've neglected – our health, our family, the people we mentor, our spiritual self.

But giving more to some areas means letting go in others; the time available doesn't change.

In the earlier stages of our life-career we plan and manage our advancement through professional training, career coaching, leadership development and the like to enable us to progress to positions of greater authority and responsibility. That is, to 'step up'.

But few of us in the latter years of our life-career plan and manage our 'letting go'. In large measure this is the result of a reluctance or inability to visualise the 'next chapter' and to put in the time and effort required to craft this fresh map of our life. Many of us don't know where to start.

I have worked with countless executives at all stages of their careers, I've seen time and again the unrealised potential and disappointment associated with failure to take charge and plan the 'stepping up' career phase, and the pain and confusion of holding on to long.

It's not enough to wistfully contemplate 'letting go' each January, as if it's something that's either never going to happen, or can be left to chance.

So, to all new and aspiring leaders what is your plan to 'step up' and to all those beyond mid-life what is your plan to reinvent yourself and 'let go'?

This post was written by Dr [Margaret Beaton](#), a director of [Beaton Executive Coaching](#) and [Beaton Research + Consulting](#). You can also find Margaret on [LinkedIn](#).