Optical Engineering

Happy New Year

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SPIE

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A good New Year's resolution is one that goes in one year and out the other! There are a number of New Year's resolutions that are easy to keep. For example, watch more television, read less, gain weight, stop exercising, do less laundry and use more deodorant, drink more, and use "password" as a password [jokes4us.com]. Another New Year's wish (author unknown) is, "God, please grant me the senility to forget the people I don't like, the good fortune to run into those I do like, and the vision to tell the difference." There is also the progression of resolutions [ahajokes.com]:

2008: I will get my weight down below 180.

2009: I will watch my calories until I get below 190.

2010: I will follow my new diet religiously until I get below 200.

2011: I will try to develop a realistic attitude about my weight.

2012: I will work out 5 days a week.

2013: I will work out 3 days a week.

2014: I will try to drive past a gym at least once a week.

For those of you who have been reading my editorials for more than a year, you know that I am one of those people that do a good deal of reflection and intentional planning for the future. This year I realize that my attitude about life is changing, and certain ideals now are not as important as they used to be. I have always tried to list a set of New Year's resolutions related to important aspects of my life. Am I a good father? Am I good engineer? Am I a good son, a friend, a Christian, a brother? Am I a good editor, a Good Samaritan when needed? Do I make my girlfriend happy to be around me? A new one for this year is "am I a good businessman?" And, one that is increasing in importance each year for me is, "Have I made a difference in other's lives this past year?"

So, the last few years, I have shared some of my New Year's resolutions with you all just as a thought process. The resolutions are actions or paths that respond to or enhance my self-evaluation associated with some of the above questions. Some of you have shared your resolutions with me and I have really enjoyed hearing those that make sense (not the typical lose weight, save more money, etc.). However, this year I have three young engineering students working for me. Let's call them Leath, TJ, and Rick. They are a joy to work with, they are full of ambition and creativity, and they are currently developing their technical competence. Challenging them and mentoring them is a treat for me. So, these New Year's resolution suggestions and considerations are for them, given that I would do them if I could go back and be in their shoes. Also, since I am not their father, they might actually consider these.

1. Treat others as you would like to be treated.
2. Effort is great, but results are better (especially true in technology development)
3. Even if daily progress is small, it adds up quickly over time (ensure you make daily progress)
4. Present your progress or results coherently (develop good writing and briefing skills)
5. Manage your time in a way that maximizes your progress (don't spend much time on low-importance issues/topics)

So, while these are not New Year's resolutions, these are some pointers that will help young scientists and engineers develop some good resolutions. I hope these are useful to Leath, TJ, and Rick. I do plan to make a few resolutions myself and will use these pointers. Last year, I developed a few religious resolutions, as well as family, financial, career, and health resolutions. As usual, I was around 70% or so successful. I think making resolutions brings some actions to the front of your mind and you are more likely to do something worthwhile and with intent.

I may even throw in a few resolutions I can keep, like don't date any of the Baywatch cast, don't jump off a cliff just because everyone else did, break at least one traffic law, and don't believe politicians.

Happy New Year everyone!

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Editor