

# Different Decembers

By John Niland



What is your experience of December? In the space of just two days, I heard some very different "takes" on this last month of the year.

Paul is a professional in his early forties. For him, December is a mad dash to finish assignments that must be completed before end-of-year. Xmas shopping gets delegated to his spouse, pre-Xmas social events just add to Paul's workload. His focus: getting through it all.

For Brian on the other hand, the year's work is already done. Brian believes that December (and January) are winter months where it's important to rest, even to "doze" a little. His profession requires lots of creativity and Brian finds that it's impossible to be creative all the time. Over the years, he has learned that his mind is like a field: it has to be rested in the winter months if it's going to yield a good crop in the year ahead.

My own experience of December differs from both Paul's and Brian's. I love the whole pre-Xmas preparation; the tree went up at the weekend and now the whole apartment smells of fir. The planning for 2015 is already done; which means I can now enjoy the socialising that goes with the end of the year. It's a great chance to reconnect with family and friends.

The more I think about it, I'm convinced that whatever our experience of mid-winter, we are surely the *author* of that experience. Yes, the season and the marketplace plays its role but, consciously or unconsciously, we choose the extent of their influence. I know of one business-owner who, though working frantically through the rest of the year, always takes a total break around Xmas and New Year. His rationale was "It's the one time of year when I'm missing nothing, as any of my real buyers will be on holiday, too".

Paul would probably not agree. He too is choosing his experience of Xmas, though he would refer to his marketplace as the "cause", just as Brian is referring to the season and I am referring to opportunities to reconnect with people. In our own way, each of are choosing our experience of December, just as we will choose our experience of the year ahead.

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## About the Author

John Niland is best-known as a conference speaker on doing higher value work and creating more opportunity via better conversations. His passion is energising people: boosting growth through higher energy levels, that in turn leads to better dialogue and business growth.

Since 2000, John has been coaching others to achieve success, with a particular passion for supporting professionals "who wish to contribute rather than just to win, and hence do higher value work via better conversations with clients and colleagues".

In parallel, John is one of the co-founders of the European Forum of Independent Professionals, following twelve years of coaching >550 professionals to create more value in their work. Author of *The Courage to Ask* (together with Kate Daly), *Hidden Value* and *100 Tips to Find Time*.

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