



What's in a name?

A friend recently asked “Angling for more what?” upon learning the name of this column.

After recovering from the surprise of the question, I realized that I hadn't given particularly deep thought to the name. Admittedly, I thought it was catchy and simply liked the sound of it.

Months later, as 2008 was winding down, a post on the popular Ozark Anglers online forum (www.ozarkanglers.com) read as follows:

“I know, I know, this might seem like a silly topic asking about fishing goals, but I'm a goal-oriented guy. So do any of you have something you want to improve on or perhaps fish a body of water you've never been on — maybe buy a boat or tackle? Let's hear what you'd like to see for yourself in 2009. Heck, even getting out of bed ... and getting in some fishing is a goal.”

The flurry of responses to this post made it clear that anglers of all persuasions think about doing more and doing it better. Goals described ranged from the expected “catch more fish” and “do better in tournaments” to more-specific aspirations such as “learn to fish a jerk bait” and “finish the season in the top 10.”

Some guys wanted to learn new recipes for cooking gamefish (I kid you not), and others wanted to involve their families more in their beloved fishy pursuit.

The topic intrigued me and started the wheels turning. I'd been mulling over fishing goals ever since undergoing major surgery late last year. I love tournament fishing and I decided that after losing a kidney to cancer, life is too short not to go all-out.

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I'm talking about goal attainment.

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I have all these hopes and imaginings in the areas of tournament angling, health and fitness, plus finances. I even write them down — carefully. Then, no bang, no boom. Just a fizzle when those desires evaporate into the day-to-day activities of living.

Can I get a witness? My stepmom summed it up best when she said, “Donna Lynn, you make a wonderful first impression. It's living up to it that kills you.”

Thanks, Mom. With that ringing endorsement in my head down through the years and a stellar lack of success in some things near and dear to me, I began to agree.

I have a good life and am very blessed. I have a job I enjoy that's not too shabby in the pay and benefits department; a loving husband, best friend and fine angling partner rolled up in one; a warm home; fuzzy felines to snuggle; a reliable vehicle. You get the picture. I'm comfortable.

I have the good life and yet, I want the great life. I'm not treating the good life like yesterday's news — I just want it ramped up.

I want to be like Texas Ranger in *Talladega Nights: The Legend of Ricky Bobby* — “all jacked up on Mountain Dew!” OK, so I don't want to emulate the world's biggest brat, but I'd like to catch his enthusiasm and fire.

So, it's a new tournament year. A new beginning. A time to set lofty goals, right? What if I dream too big? What will friends, family and fellow anglers think if I fail? The thought of that makes me want to hold it close to the vest — underpromise and, hopefully, overdeliver.

Carrie Perrien Smith, president of the motivational group Soar with Eagles, naturally is big on ambition. “Achievable goals are for sissies,” she says.

Smith also quotes the famous Renaissance painter Michelangelo: “The greater danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short; but in setting our aim too low, and achieving our mark.”

That philosophy sinks my timid plan of underpromise and overdeliver. I don't want my 2009 to be a swing and a miss. When I'm pondering my 2010 goals, I want to look back at this year and know that my bite-to-catch ratio improved in all things important to me — faith, family, fishing and friends.

So, what does Angling for More mean to me?

- More success at tournament fishing
- More knowledge about fishing and tournament competition
- More time on the water with my best friend and fishing buddy (love ya, Champ)
- More kindness shown toward others
- More self-respect and confidence

And last but far from least ...

- More thanks to Him from whom all blessings flow.

Hey, if I don't hook every bite, I'll keep on wetting a line. That once-in-a-lifetime trophy may be just a cast away.

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The charm of fishing is that it is the pursuit of what is elusive but attainable, a perpetual series of occasions for hope.

— John Buchan, 1915