

New Year's Resolutions

At the start of a new year, many people feel motivated to set resolutions. The idea of “starting fresh” may sound good, but for some the thought of setting resolutions may seem intimidating or exhausting and brings with it the possibility of failure. Below are some thoughts on how to change up your approach to this annual ritual.

Set Intentions, Not Resolutions. Be careful and intentional with the words you use when setting a resolution. Avoid words or phrases like “should” or “have to,” consider setting an intention. An intention is an aim – a direction in which you are moving. Setting intentions in this way helps you focus on what you can control. Intentions can help you focus on who you are in the present moment, not the “better person” you wish to be in the future. For example: “Today I intend to act kindly toward my spouse, opening myself to any possibility that will bring joy into her/his life.”

Connect with your why. Before you commit yourself to any task, ask yourself, “Why do I want to accomplish this?” Are you telling yourself that you “have to lose 10 pounds” for some arbitrary reason, or would losing the weight help you to feel healthier, less pain, and more confident? If the way you talk to yourself about what you hope to accomplish is laden with negativity, “shoulds” or “musts”, consider stepping back and reminding yourself why this change is important to you.

Get out of your own way. Sometimes, you are your own worst enemy. Lingering doubts from past, unfulfilled resolutions may convince you that you are not worthy of change. If you’ve tried and failed numerous times to stop a behavior, you know how discouraging this feels. If this is true for you, try journaling. Journaling is a good way to overcome negative thoughts that stand in your way of accomplishing your goals. By recording each successful attempt at change, you create a written account of your successes... a great jumping off point for your next daring attempt at change.

Set intentions that are in-line with your values. If you’re not sure what your values are, you can search for a values list or values clarification exercise on-line. Once discovered, use your top five values to create a personal mission statement, then set your resolutions for the New Year based on your mission statement.



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