

## New Year's Resolutions & Goals

By Christy Bahan, RDLD Updated January 2019

Statistics show that up to 80% of New Year's Resolutions are given up sometime between mid-January & mid-February. Why? There are many reasons, but here are a few:

1. Having unrealistic/unattainable goals.
2. Attempting something you "should" change vs something you "want" to change.
3. Not believing that you can make a change.
4. Focusing on an outcome over making a plan.
5. Expecting perfection (not having a back-up plan).
6. Hoping that willpower & motivation will get you there instead of commitment & consistency.
7. Lacking accountability & support.
8. Lacking patience: Focusing on a result over the process to get there.
9. Thinking that the changes you need to make are temporary.

Gold's Gym uses the "CLIFF" acronym to describe why people often fail at Resolutions:

**C** – Can't find the time.

**L** – Lacking a game plan to keep you going.

**I** – Ignoring your commitment and falling into old patterns.

**F** – Frustrated with lack of early results.

**F** – Forgetting why you started.

*"A goal without a plan is just a wish."* - Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

How can we move past these challenges to be successful this time?

Tony Robbins states it requires two things: Knowing your **Purpose** & Making a **Plan**.

1. **Purpose:** Think about what **YOU want** to change & **WHY** you want to make a change. Be honest about what is meaningful to you. Ask: are you ready to make a change?

Once you know **WHY** you want to make a change, make a **Plan** that outlines the changes you are willing to make for the long-term. Keep in mind that it is helpful to frame your strategies as positive statements, not negative. (i.e. what you will do, not what you will stop doing)



## 2. Making a Plan:

Create a **SMART** goal:

S – Specific

M – Measurable

A – Attainable

R – Relevant

T – Time-bound

**Specific:** Think Who, What, Where, When. Be Detailed.

Examples:

I will eat at least one vegetable at lunch & dinner 5 days per week.

I will stretch every morning for 10 minutes before my shower.

I will spend 5 minutes each evening expressing gratitude.

**Measurable:** Double-check you stated how much or how many.

Also, how will you track this? Examples:

I will track using an online tracker.

I will track by a check-mark in my calendar.

**Attainable:** Do you have the ability & the tools to follow through with your plan?

Are you truly ready to make a change? (mentally, physically, emotionally)

How will you fit the time commitment into your regular schedule?

Do you have a belief that you can make this change for the long-term?

Tip: Start small!

**Relevant:** This is the WHY you have already identified. What is meaningful to you?

Do you want to feel better? (i.e. decrease pain)

Do you want to keep up with kids/grandkids?

Do you want to decrease medications?

The WHY can help keep you committed when your motivation wanes.

**Time-bound:** This should not be thought of as an endpoint to the process, but a time to reflect upon the process & adjust it if necessary.

*“Your goal should not be the final end product, but instead to create circumstances that make the end product inevitable.” Mark Manson*

For some examples of “New Year’s Resolution Make-overs”, check out the following article:

<https://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/features/new-years-resolution-makeovers#1>

Additional Tips:

- Make yourself **accountable:** Write down your goal & post it where you will see it every day.
- Schedule your strategies in your calendar to help you stay on track.

- Do not strive for perfection: don't allow yourself to fall off track because you didn't follow through one time. Reflect on ways to improve, but do not dwell. Get back to it right away.
- Create a back-up plan: What might come up & how will you handle it to stay on track?
- Set your environment up for success: buy healthy foods; set your workout clothes out the night before.
- Focus on the process: what did you do today in support of your goal? (Instead feeling down that you haven't made it to the result yet.)
- When motivation is low: Remember the Why & look back at how far you have come!
- Gain **support**: Tell others about your goal. Is there something they can do to either help you or maybe not hinder your progress? (i.e. be active with you? Help with kids so that you can cook a healthy meal? Making an agreement to not bring junk food into the house – or at least not eat it in front of you?)
- Consider a non-food Reward: New clothes or wearable technology for tracking.

Final tip: New Year's is not the only time to start fresh; **every new day is full of potential!**

### **References & Recommended Reading:**

- Top 10 Resolutions & 10 tips to follow through with them: <https://www.goskills.com/Soft-Skills/Articles/Top-10-new-years-resolutions>
- Why we don't keep resolutions: <https://www.shape.com/lifestyle/mind-and-body/top-10-reasons-you-dont-stick-your-resolutions>
- CLIFF: <https://philadelphia.cbslocal.com/2016/02/09/new-study-reveals-how-long-new-years-resolutions-usually-last/>
- <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/new-years-resolutions-are-so-last-year/>
- Tony Robbins: <https://www.cnn.com/2018/01/02/tony-robbins-how-to-stick-to-your-new-years-resolutions.html>
- Making Resolutions Stick: <https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2010/12/making-your-resolutions-stick>
- Tips to keep your New Year's resolutions: [http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/documents/tips\\_newyear.pdf](http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/documents/tips_newyear.pdf)
- Making Resolutions Stick: <https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/resolution.aspx>
- New Year's Resolutions: Five Mistakes to Avoid: <https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/health/diet-nutrition/advice/a26450/new-years-resolution-diet-mistakes/>
- Everyday can be a reset: [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/new-years-resolutions-psychology\\_n\\_5862d599e4b0d9a59459654c](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/new-years-resolutions-psychology_n_5862d599e4b0d9a59459654c)
- Weight Loss Resolutions; advice from Dr. Hill: <https://www.wbur.org/commonhealth/2018/12/28/new-year-resolution-lose-weight>
- SMART Goal: <https://www.verywellmind.com/smart-goals-for-lifestyle-change-2224097>
- Beyond SMART Goals: <https://theconversation.com/three-ways-to-achieve-your-new-years-resolutions-by-building-goal-infrastructure-105292>
- Framing goals as positive: <https://www.lemonade.com/blog/breaking-bad-habits/>
- Creating, Starting, Accomplishing your New Year's Resolutions (step-by-step): <https://www.wikihow.com/Accomplish-Your-New-Year%27s-Resolutions>