

“Just Say No” to New Year’s Resolutions

By Tim C. Lee

We all have been asked or have asked someone, “What is your New Year’s Resolution?” The majority of the time it is asked in a singular format versus plural, as if a person can not have more than one resolution.

The same question is asked more frequently during the last couple of weeks in December through the first few weeks in January, as if the mood for talking about it fades away after the first month of the year.

Years ago, I was guilty of the same thing. I would think of only one resolution and tirelessly focus on trying to accomplish that specific resolution up until the end of January. Ironically, I just never seemed to conquer it. In fact, if you were to ask me later in the year, “What was my New Year’s Resolution,” I, like many others, probably could not even remember. Therefore, it proves that the entire “resolution” concept is more about “show and tell” and “tradition” than actually achieving.

For years, studies showed that the Top 10 New Year’s Resolutions were, 1) Lose weight, 2) Become more organized, 3) Spend less and save more, 4) Enjoy life to the fullest, 5) Stay fit and healthy, 6) Learn something exciting, 7) Quit smoking, 8) Help others reach their dreams, 9) Fall in love, and 10) Spend more time with family.

When I did further research to determine the rate of people who are successful in achieving their resolution, the number was unbelievable. The success rate was only 8 percent, and amazingly, this percentage has been consistent for years.

I decided years ago that I was tired of following the ritual of coming up with one resolution, forgetting it within a few months,

and never achieving what I initially said I was going to accomplish. So I decided to come up with my own ritual.



Every year, starting December 1st through December 31st, I create a New Year’s Goals List that I want to accomplish for the upcoming year. I call them goals versus resolutions to make sure that I am not trying to keep up with the normal “show and tell” and “tradition” concept.

I also write my goals down instead of trying to memorize them, because the memory process never works. Writing my goals down makes it more tangible for me and studies show that written goals have a far greater chance in getting accomplished.

Not only do I recommend people write their goals down, but I also suggest that you be realistic when adding items to your list. The last thing you want to do is to create a list of goals that are totally impossible to achieve. Also, keep in mind that “life happens.” So if you do not accomplish all of your goals in a given year, you can always carry it forward to the next.

Another technique that I personally use and recommend is to keep your New Year’s Goals List where you can constantly review it. Some of my suggestions would be to place your list on your refrigerator or in your cellular phone, tablet, purse, and/or wallet.

Trust me, the more you review your list, the likelihood you will be aimed to achieve your goals.

Zig Ziglar said it best, “If you aim at nothing, you will hit it every time.”

The last thing I recommend that you do in regards to your New Year’s Goals List is to find yourself an “Accountability Partner.” This person can be a family member, friend, significant other, spouse, etc. Give this person a copy of your New Year’s Goals List and tell them to hold you accountable in achieving the goals listed. On average, they should follow-up with you every 30 to 60 days to check on the status of you accomplishing your goals. Make sure you choose someone who will be direct and honest with you, and tell you what you need

to hear versus what you want to hear.

I have used this method for several years and my success rate in completing my goals has grown to over 50 percent. A lot better than the traditional New Year’s Resolution concept; which is 8 percent.

Some might think that it is a waste of time to write down their goals. Others might say that they do not have the time to write them down. A few could even argue that they have too many goals to write down.

My response to all of these critics is quite simple. “If you think creating a New Year’s Goal List is a waste of time, you do not have the time, or you have too many goals to write down...then when are you going to have the time to accomplish your goals?”

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