

## NEW YEAR RESOLUTION TIME AGAIN!

This is typically the time of year when I look back at what's happened and decide what I would love to do in the New Year. The ritual includes an ambitious plan to lose weight, throw out all those clothes that still don't fit, begin to be more organized, be more positive and spend more time with my kids and all by Jan 31st!! However, I often find it hard to follow through my great ideas when I realise the additional effort, change or work required.

Often, the start of the New Year or the starts of the school year are the two most popular times for such resolutions, because there's a sense of a new beginning. Some research showed that the main reasons resolutions are broken is because "people underestimated the inertia of their chosen role at work and at home, their partner, their friends, their current habits, their current tastes and family responsibilities". The change required from the normal day to day routine of work and home is just too great.

**Ask yourself**, "What's making you want to make those changes?" and "What was stopping you from achieving them BEFORE the New Year?"

So, my resolution for 2005 was to actually achieve the resolutions I really wanted to. I will share with you 4 things that can increase all our chances of succeeding!

### 1. Pick Realistic Goals

This sounds obvious, but I have been one of those that expected to break all those bad habits such as losing weight, calling my mother in law more than twice a year, doing at least 3 exercises classes a week and expected the miraculous change to occur overnight!. A resolution has to be realistic and in some way connect to what you were already doing before. So, if you want to get fitter and already walk to places rather than catch the metro, then extending that walk a bit longer and maybe eventually getting into jogging is not such a big stretch.

Make sure you have a set of goals that inspire you to give your all every day rather than what you ought to do. Keep the goals small and simple. Support yourself by reading up on the things of interest to you which will help you keep your resolution.

### 2. Define Those Goals

Saying you'll lose weight is not enough. Improving an important relationship is a good goal, but you need to work out how you will do it. Is it by talking more often to the person or doing more things with them? You need to write down how specifically you are going to move toward those goals SMARTLY!

- **Specific** – Be precise about what you are going to achieve e.g. I am going to lose 3 pounds in weight in 3 weeks. Banish the word "try"; be positive you will

achieve your goal. No more, I will TRY to spend more time with my children this year; " I WILL spend more time with my children this year

- **Measurable** – Quantify your objectives; small but specific tasks to accomplish which you believe will help the goal
- **Achievable** – Are you attempting too much? Can you really become a Salsa dancing champion after 10 lessons!
- **Realistic** – Do you have the resource to make the objective happen? (have you thrown out all the tempting foods in your cupboard? Planned out all your healthy meals! )
- **Timed** – State when you will achieve the goal (within a month? By February 2005?)

### **3. Have a Plan and Write it Down**

No goal is attainable without deciding what and when you're going to make the small changes needed to reach that goal. Sheer willpower is not enough. When you are planning what you need to do think about, where do you see the potential issues that might make creating the change a challenge? How can you avoid or minimise these issues? Who or what can help and support me?

The goal and the steps you will take to reach each goal need to be written down. Some research done at Harvard proved that you are 7 times more likely to achieve your goal if it is written down.

Don't give up if things don't work. A mistake is evidence of you trying something! Stay flexible and adapt things as needed to be successful in achieving your goals.

### **4. Enlist Additional Help or Support**

Some people will find they just can't quit smoking on their own, or lose weight without belonging to a slimming club. So think about whose help would be useful – a professional, a family member, a friend, or some type of support group? If it's going to help you keep your resolution it's a good thing to do.

#### **And remember...**

Not every New Year's resolution was meant to be kept. My "hot date" with George Clooney may just get carried over again to 2006! Good luck in 2005...You can do it!

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