

5 Helpful Tips for the New You

As 2018 begins, many of us start to think and plan of New Year's resolutions that encourage us to improve our lives in some way or another. These resolutions range from making a habit change, exercise routines, career opportunities, or to bring a greater focus to the areas that matter the most to us. Whatever a person's goal may be when ringing in a new year, implementation can be a shortcoming for many. We have the best intentions with our resolutions, but if do not prepare, set obtainable objectives, and stay accountable, the likelihood of success is slim. So, to get started on designing the New You, below are 5 helpful tips for establishing your new goals:

- 1) **Keep Your Resolution Realistic and Healthy:** We often dream of grand and glamorous goals that we would like to reach. Though imagining such immense goals is heart-warming, it can also be difficult to meet such high expectations. Alternatively, it is important to evaluate whether the overall goal is realistic and healthy. By asking ourselves the question, "Is my resolution realistic and healthy?", we can begin to examine short-term markers that reflect this answer.

For example, someone may seek to lose 50 pounds. They may be capable of losing such weight, but to expect to lose it in a couple months would be neither healthy nor realistic. Instead, a person could work to lose 50 pounds over the course of six months or more. This time change would be more realistic and healthy. Also, noting that a person could work with their medical provider or a personal trainer to help set their goal under these conditions.

- 2) **Write It Down:** Once you have decided that your resolution is healthy and realistic, a powerful tool to obtain this goal is to write it down. Writing out your goal is helpful for many reasons. First, various psychological studies suggest that the human brain processes the spoken word and the written word in different parts of the brain, as well as requiring different neurological pathways to process each mode of information (Rapp, Fischer-Baum, Miozzo, 2015). By writing out the goal, it forces the brain to process the information differently, thus, encouraging us to analyze the goal from another neurological perspective. Consequently, writing down the goal allows it to become more realistic than simply allowing the goal to spin in the universe of our internal thinking. Furthermore, writing out the goal sets a framework to easily create a list of measurable objectives we will take to achieve the overall goal.

To continue our previous example, to lose 50 pounds, someone may write down the objectives to go to the gym three times a week, create a food journal to track their food intake, and to increase their daily water intake by drinking a half an ounce of water for every pound they weigh. Inevitably, by writing down your goal and measurable objectives, you gain a greater ownership of your goal and a better understanding of the steps that will need to take place to obtain this goal.

- 3) **Words of Motivation:** Upon writing out your goal with its objectives, think of one word or a short phrase that reminds you of your goal. This word may be motivational in its definition or it may be a word that reminds you of why you set your goal. For example, the individual trying to lose 50 pounds may use the phrase, "Keep going," or the word, "persistence" as a reminder of their goal. Once someone has established their phrase or word reminder, they can move onto making multiple copies of this word/phrase and distribute it among various areas in their life; someone may place their word reminder on a piece of paper and hang it on their bedroom mirror and on their refrigerator door. Another may place their phrase as the background on their cell phone. Others may even make a goal board in which they take pictures, words, and phrases and place them together on a sign or large piece of paper as a reminder of their overall goal. Either way, a person could mix and match these suggestions and implement them as visual reminders of their resolution.
- 4) **Accountability Partner:** After determining your goal, writing it down, and developing visual reminders, now it's time to share your goal. When examining long-term goals and accountability, studies have shown that sharing your resolution with others increases a person's probability of success by 55% over the course of six months and after (Norcross & Vangarelli, 1988). In addition, the American Society of Training and Development, now known

as The Association of Talent Development (ATD), reports that telling someone your goal and committing to that person as an accountability partner, a person increases their chances of achieving their goal by 65%. Furthermore, the probability of success increases to 95% if you set a regular time to meet with this person and review your goals (ATD, 2017). At the bottom line, find and share your goal with a trusted friend, coworker, family member or coach. Tell them of your goal, why you chose that goal, and your measurable objectives along the way. By doing so, this can help you stay on track and accountable with your resolution.

- 5) **Stay Consistent, but Flexible:** As you move forward with your resolution, it is imperative to follow your defined goal and measurable objectives to the best of your ability. However, do not feel defeated if you go off track a bit. Life can become complicated and unpredictable. Just as we learn to ride the waves of life in other aspects of our world, our New Year's resolution is no different.

If a quarterback overthrows a pass, do they simply give up and walk off the field for the rest of the football game? No, they go back into the huddle, regroup, reviews the next play, and mentally prepares on how they are going to improve for the next pass. If you find yourself falling short of your resolution, do the same as the quarterback.

First, don't give up. Completely quitting is not an option. Next, reach out to your accountability partner and go in for the 'huddle'. Be reminded of why you started your goal in the first place and feel encouraged by their positive motivation. Then, remind yourself of the 'next play' by going back through your written goal and measurable objectives. This, too, will help you get back on track. Finally, prepare yourself mentally for the upcoming obstacles by remembering your motivational word or phrase. Feel the strength and encouragement from these words to inspire you to keep working hard and fighting for your goal.

So challenge yourself and set a new goal for 2018. Pick an area in your life that needs your attention and use these 5 tips to help you along the way. Make the commitment to work towards a goal that speaks to your heart and remember, true success is not given; it's earned.

References

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