



STICKING TO YOUR RESOLUTION

BY ALEXA STANLEY AND GRACE BUECKENDORF

Staff Reporter and Features Editor

The change of calendar year breathes new air into the motivation of many with the promise of a fresh start. But it can be hard to keep to your resolutions strong throughout the year. Here are some tips and tricks to make sure you keep your resolutions.

Be specific. It's easy to feel excited and empowered by the promise of new beginnings that the New Year often brings. During that moment you practically see a better you, and find it simple to make a resolution for yourself like getting into shape or to stop biting your nails. However, many students make the mistake of making their goals too broad. Make your resolutions specific so it is clear exactly what you are trying to accomplish. For example, a resolution that is too broad would be "trying to be more active this year." A better resolution would be to "go to the Recreation Center for at least 30 minutes three times a week."

Take it one step at a time. One tactic is to approach your goal slowly. Although you might have the drive to take larger steps, you might get overwhelmed when school or work picks up, causing you to abandon your resolution. Make sure to outline exactly how you want to accomplish your goal. For example, rather than taking on the goal of "getting better grades," recognize that such a lofty goal requires a multitude of steps. Start by outlining how often and how long you want to study on a regular basis. Then, outline how long you want to study for tests. Realize each day, each week and each quiz is a step toward your goal, and focus on each hurdle as it comes. All those small victories can help motivate you when it feels too cold to exercise or easier to fall back into bad habits.

Be flexible. To keep yourself from becoming overwhelmed, set the bar low for yourself. Give yourself some flexibility. Making changes is difficult, and keeping your goal within arm's reach is important and keeps you realistic. Reward yourself for achieving even the smallest goal, because all victories are important.

Don't be too ambitious. Another good tip is to make only one goal. That way you can focus on your resolution and have a better chance at success. Another thing to remember is to stay motivated. Write down your goal or make a collage with inspirational pictures and words. Look at these when you feel uninspired or lethargic.

Find strength in numbers. Finding someone with the same goal can be essential for your motivation. If you're looking to lose weight, an exercise partner can keep you from skipping a day. In fact, the more people you have supporting you, the better. If you have a strong support system, it can serve as a great fail-safe.

Be persistent. Changing your routine or breaking bad habits is all about good self-control. If you are truly devoted to your resolution you will have an easier time fending off bad impulses, so choose a goal you really are intent on achieving. Practice your self-control every day to help make your resolution a habit. Be persistent enough to make a permanent change. Making a resolution is a great way to improve your self-control and your life.

Forgive yourself. Most importantly, don't give up. Even if you fall off the wagon, you always can get back on. Be resilient and keep trying. Failing to go to the gym one day does not completely ruin your resolution. If you beat yourself up for your mistakes, you can lower your confidence and might even make it harder to achieve other goals. However, trying to start a resolution you have failed before might make it hard to achieve results. Try looking at your goal in a different way and approach it differently than you did before. Ask friends and family to gain a new perspective and truly gain a fresh outlook.

And remember, New Year's resolutions are great, but you can make a change anytime. Even if you have to start over or don't finish, it's still a step further than you were before. Be determined and positive and you certainly can start the year off with a great new you.

