

How to Make New Year's Resolutions That Matter

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It's that time of year again when we make ourselves promises that we won't keep for more than a month, and won't remember for more than two. We call them New Year's Resolutions. And they pretty much all suck. I know it. You know it. Everybody knows it. Yet we all play the game as if we really believe that this time, it will be different.

But what if it really could be different? What if we really could make resolutions that matter? Considering the type of things we resolve to do, that could significantly change our lives for the better. Here are three tips for making New Year's Resolutions that matter:

Focus on the Imperative

If you examine your past resolutions that didn't quite go the distance, you will probably find that you were resolving to do things that other people thought were important, or that made you feel like you were doing the right thing for social reasons. You might also find that you were resolving to do things that would have been nice to do, but not imperative, not life or death priorities.

But those are the only resolutions that really matter. When there are life and death issues to be dealt with, everything else is background noise. When you are trying to become a better mother by getting off of drugs or alcohol, you don't waste time dropping 10 pounds so you can fit in that little black dress.

Substance abuse among women is on the rise, as is the [search for substance abuse recovery for women](#). Women wear too many hats. And their roles cannot be completely filled by men. Children need and deserve mothers that are sober and in the moment. If you are struggling with addiction issues, you can't treat it as if it were just another problem to be solved eventually. It is not just the most imperative issue you have, but the only issue. When you focus on the imperative, you have a much better chance of success.

Make Smaller Goals You Can Complete

Grandiose goals make us feel good about ourselves. But we almost never follow through with them. That is because they are too big. The reason eating an elephant one bite at a time doesn't work is because no one would ever look at such a meal and take the first bite. What's needed are bite-sized [goals that you can complete](#) and check off the list.

Don't resolve to lose weight. Resolve to lose 5 pounds this month. Don't resolve to improve your diet. Resolve to eat salad for lunch every day this week. Don't resolve to learn to draw. Resolve to sketch 10 minutes a day for two weeks. Don't resolve to try something new. Resolve to try that French restaurant tomorrow night depending on availability. Make goals that you can complete, and you will soon get into the habit of completing goals.

Make Daily Resolutions

If something is really important to you, why would you wait another day to get started, let alone another year? When you make resolutions that matter, you will want to get started right away, if not sooner. Everyday is New Years. Everyday is your birthday. [Start each day with a resolution](#).

Resolve to complete half your chores by lunch (a salad, as I recall). Resolve to apologize immediately after offending someone you care about, rather than letting it simmer. And most important of all, resolve to do today what you failed to do yesterday. Because it is never too late to start again when it is a resolution that matters.