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# Foreword

For thousands of years and in many countries around the world at the end of the calendar year, people have reviewed areas of their lives and their own performances to ascertain sections that need improvement and have drawn up New Year resolutions. It is interesting that globally the end of the year is seen as linked with review and change. Fresh beginnings and improvements for the year to come are something to shoot for.



## ***Sustaining The New Year's Resolutions***

How to prevent resolution slumps and burnouts

# Chapter 1:

## *Resolutions Basics*

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### Synopsis

Resolutions are in fact promises that individuals make to themselves to work to a distinct goal or the reformation of a habit. A key element to a New Year resolution that sets it apart from other resolutions is that they begin in the New Year and they are to last for a year. People plan to commit themselves to work on the resolution for an entire year. The lifestyle changes that people commit to undergoing are generally interpreted as advantageous changes.



## **The Basics**

There are a number of areas that people commonly choose to resolve to improve. Many people consider attempting to improve their health and many more try to focus on specific areas associated with their health such as eating, exercising, stress and altering habits such as smoking or drinking alcohol that they believe are having a negative effect on their health.

At the end of the year people typically review their career paths and jobs and resolve to alter those in some way or to undertake further training and improve their education.

Typically an examination might be made of individual's finances and people they resolve to get out of debt or to spend less, or save more or even earn more.

Whilst throughout the world there will be billions of people resolving to change areas of their lives or facets of their person in some way, sadly statistics reveal that the failure rate for New Year resolutions is as high as 88%.

# Chapter 2:

## *Make Sure Resolutions Are Specific*

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### Synopsis

Statistics show that most people who make New Year resolutions fail to bring about the change that they resolved would happen. In fact 88% of people break their New Year resolutions. Given this negative fact, if a person wants to ensure the success of their resolve then they need to go about the formulations of their resolutions in the right way. Research has shown that there is a 22% higher chance of the resolutions being successful if people engage in goal setting.



## **Get Down To It**

Psychologists believe that rather than having several resolutions we are more likely to keep our resolutions if we make just one and focus on it energetically.

New Year resolutions should be goal focused but for success it is important to choose a specific realistic goal.

Many individuals choose ambiguous goals when making their resolutions such as “lose weight” or “get in shape”. Whilst such resolutions are admirable they are likely to fail as there are no specific goals or objectives attached to them.

Rather than saying “lose weight” it is better to resolve to “lose 10 kg”. The goal is then specific.

Once there is a specific goal it is then possible to plan to achieve the goal. There has to be a plan to tackle the necessary behavioral changes that will bring about success.

We should write down the goal and then make a list of the things that we might have to do to achieve the goal. The small steps or objectives that have to be undertaken to achieve the goal need to be tiny.

It is better to have the objective of losing half a kilo a week to achieve the 10 kg weight loss than having the objective of losing 10kg in two weeks.

Knowing exactly what you are aiming for and how to go about it in small steps it is much more likely that a resolution will be kept and not broken.



# Chapter 3:

## *Have A Mindset For Change*

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### Synopsis

New Year resolutions are difficult to keep. Most resolutions require us to change a form of behavior or circumstance. Particular behaviors have been formed over many years and to bring about change in them will require a lot of patience, time and effort. Changes will not occur overnight but they will occur.

The image shows the year '2012' rendered in a 3D, gold-colored font. The numbers are thick and have a metallic sheen, giving them a three-dimensional appearance. They are centered horizontally and vertically within the page.

## **How You Look At It**

People have a much greater chance of keeping their resolutions if they have a positive mindset and are willing to be persistent. It is a good idea to focus on what the resolution will add to a person's life rather than what it will take away.

For example it is better to have a positive mindset and think about eating more healthy foods rather than thinking about eating less unhealthy food.

Really wanting to bring about a change and focusing on one resolution is going to help an individual to succeed. Once the goal has been clearly formulated it is important to visualize the success and to try to remain thinking positively.

The goal should be written and reproduced and highly visible. It could be in an appointment diary, on the computer desk top, on post it notes on the fridge, and on banners around the room indeed, wherever it can be placed to remind the person of their goal.

Enlisting the help and support of family and friends and joining a group of like inspired persons will improve the chances of success. It is important to bear in mind that the resolution will be broken but that must not be seen as a failure. Instead any lapse should be reviewed as a learning opportunity.

Renewing motivation will be helpful too. When it gets hard for an individual to persist with their resolution they should remind themselves of the reason why they are endeavoring to change or improve. They must remind themselves of what they have to gain by achieving their goal.

Individuals with positive mindsets will succeed.



# Chapter 4:

## *Have Necessary Resources In Place*

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### Synopsis

To succeed in keeping a resolution it is absolutely essential that very careful planning is undertaken in advance of the resolution being made. As in all areas of life, if we want to succeed then we must plan for our success.



## **What Do You Need**

Firstly it is essential that there is a clearly defined, specific and realistic goal. Once the goal is known, it has to be broken down into steps or objectives.

The steps need to be tiny and achievable. Recording of all the objectives and the goal should be undertaken. It would be advisable to have a journal ready as well in which a person can record their successes and failures and their obstacles that they have had to overcome.

As well as the plan itself and the journal, there needs to be careful consideration to other resources that might be necessary. One of the most valuable resources a person could have available would be friends or family member who would be willing and able to support the behavior changes that the person is going to attempt to undertake.

So approaches for support need to be made to such people well in advance. Other support personnel could come in the form of club or organization members of like minded people, so it may be necessary to take out membership of a particular organization prior to attempting to institute the resolution.

Certain physical resources and equipment may need to be purchased. Anyone undertaking a physical change may need to invest in special

shoes and clothing not to mention gym membership perhaps. Certain food items might need to be disposed of and replaced by others if individuals are considering weight reduction as a goal.

Likewise individual's quitting smoking will need to enlist the support of their GP and perhaps necessary anti smoking drugs and nicotine gum.

Preparation before New Year's Eve will certainly go a long way to get an individual off on the right track to success.



# Chapter 5:

## *Identify Roadblocks To Change*

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### Synopsis

Many New Year resolutions are the sort that will require an individual to make changes to their behavior. Behavioral change is very difficult and won't happen overnight.



## **What Could Be An Issue**

Behaviors and habits are acquired over a long period of time so changing them and replacing them with different behaviors will be slow. It is crucial that anyone undertaking such a resolution recognizes this.

As well as the changes being slow to make it is inevitable that the resolution will be broken simply because to change behaviors takes a very long time. This must also be understood by anyone making a resolution.

To be successful you should plan how to tackle the behavioral changes that you are going to have to make. You must make a list of the strategies that you intend to employ to achieve it and also note the obstacles that will have to be overcome.

It can't be stressed too much how important a journal is in helping to succeed. A journal can be used to record progress and any setbacks along the way. It should be referred to often as it will enable a person to identify what the obstacles were that made them break or deviate from their resolution. Once that is identified then effort can be made to ensure that circumstances aren't repeated again.

It is important to avoid repeating past failures. If someone has made the same resolution and failed repeatedly it is going to be hard for

them to succeed as their self belief will be low. In this situation the goal should be revised. They should reflect on which strategies had been the most effective and what obstacles prevented them from keeping the resolution. By changing the approach it is more likely that they will see results.

It must be remembered that change is a process. Unhealthy habits take years to develop and it may take longer than you think to change.



# Chapter 6:

## *Don't Be Too Hard On Yourself*

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### Synopsis

The breaking of a resolution should not cause someone to give up their resolution. We have to remember that we are human and to err is human. We will all make mistakes and the breaking of resolutions is almost inevitable as to change human behavior is slow and very difficult. We must keep reminding ourselves that it is normal to break a resolution. It is important that we adopt a different mindset to resolution breaking and see it not as a failure but as a step along the way to achieve our goal.



## Take A Breath

If we break our resolutions we should try to be positive and see it as an opportunity to learn a lesson.

What we should do is reflect very carefully on what it was that caused us to break our resolution and identify the obstacle. Once the obstacle has been identified we should set about ensure that the set of circumstances that allowed us to break our resolve isn't repeated again.

We should remember that the change is slow and we should also reward ourselves for every small step reached along the way to reaching our goal.



# Wrapping Up

When we undertake to make a New Year's resolution we do so with an air of optimism and hope. New Year resolutions by definition are about improvements and changes, all with positive outcomes. It is natural for us all to want the best for ourselves and those around us and to try to bring about the best.

Conversely whilst the resolutions are made all too easily keeping to them is very difficult indeed. Bringing about the changes is difficult and slow and the resolutions are broken. For the vast majority of people the breaking of the resolution is sufficient for them to give up their resolution. This can be demoralizing and the individuals see themselves as having failed.

Do your best and move forward.