Making Your New Year's Resolutions Count

Once you have decided on a New Year's resolution, it is your job to actually implement the change into your life. While this is the most challenging part of the process, there are some things you can do to help make your resolution a reality.

Put it in writing. Writing down your goal on a piece of paper can often increase its significance. Once written down, your idea is no longer just a wish floating about in your head; it has more permanence, and you will view it as having greater value and importance.

Develop a plan for reaching your goal. It will be hard to achieve your goal if you do not develop a plan of action. Take time to write down the steps you are going to take to implement the change you want to make in your life. For example, if your resolution is to exercise more, write down exactly how you will do it.

Use notes to remind yourself of your resolution. Many people find it useful to leave notes to themselves in places they commonly look to reinforce the change they want to make. Reinforcing your resolution with small, subtle reminders will help keep your goal always within sight.

Be realistic. Do not make a resolution that is unrealistic in scope or that will cause you to experience an undue amount of difficulty, problems or pain. So instead of saying, "My resolution is to run a four-minute mile," try joining a running club and jogging four times a week.

Plan for the entire year. Many popular resolutions (like to lose weight, exercise more and get out of debt) will not be achieved in a few days or weeks. They need to be planned accordingly.

Allow yourself to make mistakes. Do not be too rigid in the application of your resolution. Nobody is perfect, so you have to accept that stumbles will happen in the implementation of any meaningful resolution.

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