



New Year or Mid-Year Resolutions...Moving From Good Ideas to Great Progress

<i>Resolutions Can Fail Without...</i>	<i>What Can Help You Succeed</i>	<i>Tips and Examples (These should be tailored to the specific desires of the “resolver”)</i>
A clear picture about what the “resolver” wants and (more importantly) the benefits of that goal.	Be specific, vivid, and proactive in defining your goal...and be sure to attach it to the benefits you hope to achieve. Remember that a resolution is an expression of will or intent...neither of these things are enough to make change happen!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Instead of saying “I want to lose weight,” say “I want to improve my health and lose body fat in order to feel more fit, feel better about myself, have more energy, and look more attractive. ▪ Instead of saying “I want to get my finances under control,” say “I want have clear debt-repayment and investment strategies this year so that I’ll feel more confident about my economic situation, less stressed about money, and more able to do what I truly want to do.” ▪ Instead of saying “I want to be less stressed,” say “I want to reduce stress by making choices with my time and energy that will help me feel fulfilled, centered, and peaceful rather than stretched too thin all the time.” ▪ Instead of saying “I want to quit smoking,” say “I want to be healthier, live longer, and feel better because I choose to be a non-smoker.”
A specific plan associated with the goal...the “how to get there from here.”	Be sure to attach the “how to get there from here” to it...you don’t lose weight by joining a gym, and you don’t quit smoking simply because you’ve made a pledge. You do it by committing yourself to specific action steps that take you towards your goal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “I’ll improve my health and lose body fat by walking at least twice weekly and committing to a healthy weight management program for at least 6 months...or...I’ll work with a personal trainer for at least 3 months.” ▪ “I’ll build a sound financial plan by reading and following the strategies in a step-by-step book to do just that...or...I’ll meet with a financial planner within 1 month, have a debt reduction.” plan in place within 3 months, and check back on my progress in 6 and 9 months. ▪ “I’ll reduce my stress by reviewing my priorities, keeping those at the front of my “to do list,” and waiting 1 day before committing myself to an unplanned request...or...I’ll build self-care time into every week, take a course on stress-management or life-design, and scale back on one commitment I have now that I find unfulfilling.” ▪ “I’ll become smoke-free by talking with my physician about medications that might help, setting a specific date to quit, and selecting a healthy or nurturing habit to replace it...or...I’ll work with a friend who also wants to quit and get the additional information and support I need through my health plan.”
Using information or key resources that improve the potential for success.	Use all of the information and resources available to you to meet your goal. As in any case...knowledge is power!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Search for books, articles, websites, or other documents on your topic. ▪ Seek professional assistance for your particular goal...physicians, educators, personal coaches, financial planners, counselors, personal trainers, nutritionists...the options are endless! ▪ Talk to others who have successfully made the change you want to make—they’ve been where you are and can share their best tips.
A clearly identified, sound support system.	Build a personal support system of people who know about your goal and will help you get there.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enlist the help of your partner, friends, family, colleagues, or others who will help keep you moving forward when you don’t feel you can or when your resolve is waning. ▪ Don’t forget about some of the less “traditional” sources of support...members of classes, organizations, churches, or other groups who can lend an encouraging word.
A periodic review and refinement of strategies and progress.	Set dates to chart your progress and evaluate your strategies. Sometimes it can change your course just enough to ensure success!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Look at your “action plan” and identify some key benchmarks and timelines that will help you monitor your progress. It’s your own personal form of Continuous Quality Improvement! ▪ Don’t be afraid to try something different if what you’re doing isn’t working. Remember...the definition of insanity is “doing the same thing over and over while expecting different results.” ▪ Celebrate progress as you go; don’t wait until you’ve achieved the whole goal to acknowledge that you’re succeeding. Success builds success, and celebrations motivate additional action...so don’t neglect it!