

7 Secrets for Making Your New Year's Resolutions Stick.



It's that time of year again. Out with the old, in with the new. That time when we resolve to start doing things, stop doing things, and do things differently. If you are like many others, you start out strong but somewhere in the first few months, you've gotten off track and your resolution has faded into the woodwork. You're not alone. According to the Journal of Clinical Psychology:

- 75% are still working on their resolution(s) after the first week
- 71% maintain their resolve after 2 weeks
- 64% are still with it after a month
- 46% continue past 6 months

But don't let those statistics deter you! Further research by psychologist Dr. John Norcross of the University of Scranton shows that **those who make resolutions are 10 times more likely to successfully change their behavior than those who don't.**

So, how can you be one of the few who are successful in reaching your goals?

1. **Don't make too many resolutions.** Many people become overwhelmed by trying to make too many changes at once. If you want to make more than one resolution, prioritize them and work on just one at a time. New Years isn't the only time to set goals. Set one now. Once you are well on your way to creating new habits in that area, begin to work on the next one.
2. **Make your resolution clear.** Many people resolve to lose weight or to get in shape. It's hard to track progress and to see what specific efforts are working or not working without specific, measurable outcomes and milestones. Set measurable goals and then define the actions you will take to reach them. If you miss one milestone, you'll know you have to do something differently to reach it, you don't have to abandon the whole effort.
3. **Make resolutions your own.** You will be much more likely to succeed at the change you are trying to make if they are for you and not 'shoulds' imposed by someone else. Be sure they are things that are meaningful to you and for which you can really see and embrace the value.
4. **Visualize success.** Create a vivid mental picture of yourself as a result of your successfully making the change you resolve to make. What is the outcome or benefit? What does it feel like? What are you doing? Who else is involved? Really experience your success with all of your senses.
5. **Be realistic.** Set realistic time frames for reaching your milestones. Change is a process, not an event. Be patient with yourself, expect and allow for missteps. Just don't be derailed by them. If you fall off the horse, get back on!

6. **Get support.** One of the biggest mistakes people make in reaching their goals is trying to do it alone. Some don't want to 'go public' for fear that if they fail, others will know. Funny thing about that is that trying to do it alone almost surely invites failure. Ask for help, resources, encouragement. People want to help, you just have to ask for it.
7. **Reward yourself.** Reaching your goal and realizing the value you anticipated might be reward enough in the end but to keep yourself motivated when your final goal is comprised of many interim steps, you might do well to build in rewards along the way. Think about what might feel like a treat after you've hit a particular milestone and then allow yourself that reward when you get there. It doesn't have to be fattening or expensive, especially if your resolution is about weight loss or money management. Take a nap, call a friend, rearrange the furniture in your house. Do something that really represents self-congratulations. You've earned it.



Top Ten New Year's Resolutions

1. Lose weight
2. Quit smoking
3. Get in shape
4. Get out of debt
5. Spend more time with family and friends
6. Go back to school/take a course
7. Get organized
8. Do volunteer work
9. Alleviate stress
10. Get a new job

Need more help staying on track? Visit www.newleaftouchstone.com or contact me at cindy@newleaftouchstone.com

Make 2009 your best year ever!!!!