

New year, new you?

Don't pack up your resolutions with the Christmas decorations

by Robert Sanders
Community contributor

Since the ancient Babylonians we have been making and breaking new year resolutions. The symbolic transition from old year to new seems a natural time to make the kind of decisions and promises that we feel will make a significant difference to our lives. But when statistics suggest that as few as 8% of us keep our resolutions how can we improve our chance of success?

There are so many things you may want to change: losing weight; keeping fit; giving up alcohol; saving; finding another career. The list is endless and familiar. But one of the most common reasons for not achieving your resolution is that you did not set the right goal in the first place.

First, is the challenge too big? It is better to set yourself a reasonable task that really can be achieved in a year. If you succeed there will be more incentive to challenge yourself with a new resolution in the future. Perhaps your saving goal could start with just £5 a week put in a savings account, instead of £100 a month?

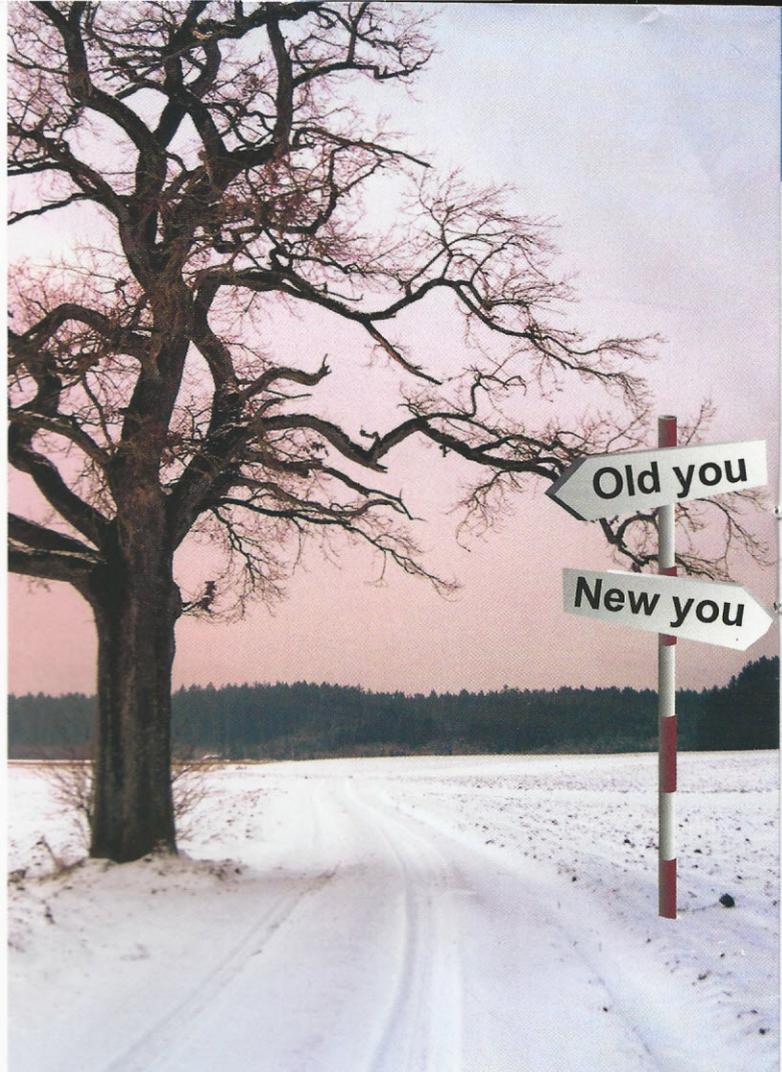
'Making the right resolution and keeping it for just one year could dramatically improve your life'

Be specific when you make your resolution. If you are losing weight, how much weight will you lose? How quickly? How exactly will you achieve it? The clearer you are about what you want to achieve and how, the more likely you are to be able to measure your progress and keep your perspective.

Think it through carefully, consider the things that could happen to sabotage achieving the resolution and have a few tricks up your sleeve to prevent that from happening.

Make sure your resolution is within what Stephen Covey in *The Seven Habits of Highly Successful People* calls 'your circle of influence'. Finding that new job could be a wonderful release for you, but although you can work really hard on your interview technique, undergo training and even flirt with the managing director, you are not in control of the final outcome. Perhaps a better description of your resolution might be 'practise my interview technique and improve my networking'.

Making the right resolution and keeping it for just one



Figures suggest only 8% of us stick to our new year's resolutions
Image courtesy of Robert Sanders

year, could dramatically improve your life. One decision is all it takes, along with some 'will-power'. Of course that is the tricky bit. It is all very well to decide to do something noble and meaningful, but sticking to a diet of salad and sawdust is not that easy to sustain when others around you are roasting hogs, fattening calves and stuffing marrows.

One way to deal with 'will' is to give yourself a really strong 'want'. Make the dream of achieving your resolution so exciting and desirable that you simply must do it.

Take some time right now to create a really bright, compelling picture in your mind. Imagine yourself a year from now. Be there, in the future, looking at what you will see when your goal has been achieved. Perhaps you are admiring your trim body in the mirror, or reading your healthy bank statement. Perhaps you are working on a key project in a new job. Whatever it is, see the things you will see, hear the sounds and voices you will hear, and feel all the feelings you will feel. Then, look back from that future towards now and remember all the things you achieved and the challenges you overcame to get where you are in your picture. Now as you look forward to the future you can already know what it feels like to achieve your dreams. There are many more tools and techniques available to help you commit to your resolutions from websites, to video tutorials and even apps. So go for it!

Robert Sanders lives and works in Haywards Heath. He is a master practitioner in neuro-linguistic programming, hypnotherapy and coaching and author of Making your New Year resolution work for you (available on Amazon Kindle). For more details visit robertsanders.me.uk or call 07877 074 053.