

Making Life Better

Changing Your Mind About Resolutions

By Dr. Lori LaCivita

(NAPSA)—For many people, the start of a new year is a time to reflect on where they are, what they've accomplished—and what they still need to do. While nearly half of Americans make New Year's resolutions, only 8 percent report being successful in achieving their goals, according to a study by The University of Scranton. There is hope, however, for those who want to turn their good intentions into something they can be proud of, anytime of the year.

Resolving to Succeed

The reality is, change takes time and can be difficult. There are advantages to thinking differently about goal-setting. For example, goals are not meant to be set only on January 1. Instead, make goal-setting a year-round initiative and include weekly, monthly and annual goals as part of the plan.

While explicitly writing down your goals can increase your chances for success tenfold, it's not an automatic result. Instead, reconsider your approach to goal-setting and keep in mind that perfection isn't realistic—strive for progress and improvement.

Tips for Successful Goals

Focus your efforts. Determine the outcome you want to achieve and focus your efforts toward that result. Some people come up with 10 goals and become so overwhelmed, they don't achieve any of them. Concentrate your energy and your goals can come into focus.

Think small. Avoid such grandiose goals as losing 50 pounds. Instead, make short-term goals that lead to long-term goals, such as losing five pounds in three months. If you aim for something small and achievable that encourages you to reach your ultimate goal, the journey will be more manageable and therefore more successful.



You're more likely to attain your goals and go on to others if you go after a few, small, achievable ones at a time.

Be specific. The more distinct you make your goals, the clearer your path toward achieving them. When writing down goals, include a timeline and how you plan to measure progress. Define what the goal means to you and how it will benefit you.

Take care of yourself. Stop all-or-nothing thinking. Remember, it's better to do something than to do nothing. When you make any life change, whether it's going back to school or starting a new job, you need to make sure you're practicing self-care at the same time.

Stay motivated. It's not how many times you get knocked down but how many times you get up. Failure is temporary, so don't beat yourself up. Instead, celebrate milestones of your progress along the way as you reach your goals.

Learn More

For further facts and tips, go to www.WaldenU.edu/resolutions.

• *Dr. LaCivita, industrial and organizational psychologist and director of industrial and organizational psychology programs at Walden University, specializes in helping individuals and organizations unlock their potential, develop a clear vision and establish a path to sustainability.*