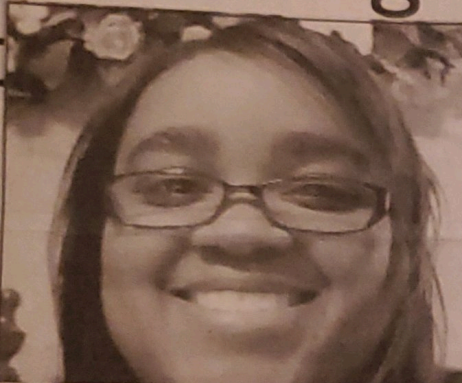


# Making New Year's resolutions



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Joining a gym, quitting bad habits, ending or beginning relationships, and resolving to start various healthy routines are some of the top New Year's resolutions. My personal favorite used to be deciding what I will no longer spend my money on for the entire year. The main issue with these declarations is some people can't get their decisions to stick longer than February before they are back where they started.

Perhaps the issue is the eagerness to engage in a tradition rather than actually creating and following a plan that will yield expected results.

Forbes.com recently gave eight reasons why resolutions don't stick. I am inclined to consider their truthfulness as some of these issues affect me.

Number one: procrastination. Essentially, putting something off until tomorrow is a staple of the college experience. Pointing to a future day on a calendar rather than being proactive does not work for the majority of us. And New Year's Day is less likely going to be a day to start or stop something because it is not as significant as other observances, i.e. birthdays, anniversaries.

Reason two: forgetting why you made the resolution. Forbes states if you don't know why the goal is important, then you are less likely to stay motivated. It is easy to fall into this category if a decision is being made when a clock strikes midnight on one of the most eventful days of the year. In order to make a resolution stick, pre-planning is necessary.

Three: failure due to not planning for setbacks. This is especially true when making certain resolutions like losing weight or spending less time watching television. Everyone makes mistakes and it is unwise to assume that a plan is failsafe. It is best to

accept the reality of the situation, put your goal in writing, and keep it in a place where it is visible at all times.

Four: lacking a strong network. There is nothing like family and close friends who are willing to help push you toward your goals and help you stay on the right track. And while these may not be people who are with you every step of the way, they are positive reinforcements in times of weakness. No one can make it to the finish line by themselves.

Five: taking on too much too fast. Making numerous life altering decisions on one day may seem like an exciting and spontaneous decision at the time. But if you stop and think about it, its risky, overwhelming, and unrealistic. Even something simple like deciding to read more books takes a lot more consideration than one day.

Six: no accountability partnerships. Accountability is a major component for goal setting. Any good plan is a plan worth sharing with others who are enthusiastic and possibly in pursuit of the same thing. Involving others will ensure a healthy challenge when you are tempted to slip back into old habits.

Seven: it was not an important goal from the beginning. New Year's is

probably not the time to promise to paint an unused room or rearrange all the kitchen cabinets. Certain goals may be best left at the bottom of a to-do list if they are not productive or lack an immediate benefit.

Finally, eight: fear of success. This may sound strange, but I can personally attest that this fear is real. Graduating from college, finding a lucrative career, and starting a business are always easy to imagine, but sometimes discouraging to put into action. The fact that hard work and dedication might actually pay off, to me, seems like an open door to another unexpected stage of life.

Regardless of reasons for breaking New Year's resolutions, it is easy to see that a quick decision about lifestyle or habit changes can be unsuccessful. A 24-hour period is hardly enough time to consider all the angles.

While I am not discouraging others from making these declarations, I have simply resolved not to participate in this tradition. To me, making New Year's resolutions is about the same as talking about the weather: it's convenient conversation that breaks silence when you've run out of things to say.