

Don't fade like a firework: how to make your New Year's resolution a success.

'New year, new me'. A phrase many people tell themselves on January 1. The start of a new year often symbolises a fresh slate in people's minds, an opportunity to make a change in their lives with the hopes of achieving happiness, fulfilment or contentment. Dr Karen Stanley discusses the psychology behind New Year's resolutions as we approach the middle of January 2026. Whether it be in love, finances or health, the start of each year is when millions of people make New Year's resolutions, but how many are successful? "They say that 80 to 90 per cent of resolutions fail by February," Central West counsellor and psychotherapist Karen Stanley said.

If you've always struggled to keep your new year's resolutions up for more than a few days, you might not be setting the right goals. Here's how to make and maintain a new year's resolution that is specific to you.

Dr Karen Stanley



"New Year, psychologically, is a reset because the brain loves a fresh start and I think as humans we really crave meaning and self-improvement.

"If you're going to start something new and you want to make it a habit, you've got to build it into your day and make it part of your routine ... because you have to build the new pathway in your brain."

Tips for success

According to research from Finder, an information service and comparison site, 71 per cent of Australians have set a New Year's resolution for 2026.

With the top three being to improve fitness, eat healthier and lose weight.

So, how can you make sure you don't fall into the quitting category and instead, make a New Year's resolution you can follow through the new year.

According to Dr Stanley, it's simply by being SMART and making your goals specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely.

"Sometimes people don't make a proper plan and don't get all the resources they need and so they fail," she said.

"When you make a goal, you need to think about the space that you need. You've only got 24 hours in a day, and you may actually have to let something go.

"So, if you want to start exercising and you're really busy already, how are you going to make that space?"

Planning is key

Properly analysing your day and what you spend your time on, and the reworking things, if need be, can really help set a solid foundation for achieving your resolution.

Another piece of advice from Dr Stanley, who, in addition to being a counsellor and psychotherapist also has a PhD in Health Education, is to make sure your resolution is part of your identity.

If it's something you are passionate about and something that really resonates with you, then the motivation to accomplish your resolution will remain strong.



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