



New Rules, New Results: A Makeover for the New Year's Resolution

By Joelle K. Jay, Ph.D.

If you're one of the many who join the crowd at the gym at the start of every new year, swearing, *"This year will be different!"*

Or if you're a serial dieter who resolves every year to lose weight

Or if already by January 18th you haven't yet set a New Year's Resolution (or forgotten the one you did set)

Take heart. This message is for you. We're doubling down on the New Year's Resolution with new rules, for new results.

That's important, because you're important. You have an intuitive draw to do something good for yourself, improve your life in some way, and lift your spirits with wins that make you happier, healthier or better, and you deserve that.

So don't ditch your New Year's Resolution. Dig it out, and let's go after your success.

Reviving the New Year's Resolution

It's become trendy in recent years to trash the New Year's Resolution idea. Right along the traditional January posts about New Year, New You come the flood of unhelpful posts telling you all the reasons resolutions "don't work." Let's reset. In this article, we're going to talk about *why* some people don't succeed with their resolutions and *why* YOU will.

The reasons resolutions fail can be summed up in a few points:

- They're made swiftly and perhaps thoughtlessly
- They're too big
- They're too vague
- There's no plan
- There's no track record

And so, there are few wins.





In other words, the resolutions people make off the cuff to finally *do something* – anything – are made out of desperation instead of commitment. Like seeds scattered on concrete, there's nothing to root them into place.

But plenty of people *do* succeed with their resolutions, and you will, too, if you follow a few simple guidelines.

1. Think it through. New Year's Resolutions start with New Year's Reflection. You may hit on the right resolution immediately, or you may need to search for the right one, but either way, let's really think this through.

What about your life or your results do you want to change?

Why is that important to you?

What will you look like when you achieve it?

How will you feel?

What will others notice?

And on a scale of 1 to 10...how committed are you to achieving this result?

If thinking about your resolution in this way gets you excited about it, you're on the right track! If you don't even get through the questions, or if you land on anything less than an 8 or 9 on that scale of 1 to 10...keep looking. More questions:

If that first resolution wasn't quite it...what's another way to look at it?

What's the Big Goal you really do want to meet, or the Big Change you really do want to make?

What are you excited about?

What's motivating you?

What's worth the effort?

Interviewing yourself in this way, pen in hand, does take time and effort. It's your initial investment – an investment that will pay off because it means you're really “in,” right from the start.

2. Think small. One of the reasons nay-sayers distrust New Year's Resolutions is because they've seen them fail, fail, and fail again, and that *is* destructive. Every time you fail to meet your New Year's Resolution, you reinforce to yourself, “I failed again.”



What we want with a New Year's Resolution is to find the *wins!* This is the perfect time to practice succeeding day by day, one win after another, without fail.

With that in mind, is there *one small piece* of that new life goal you thought through that would be light, fun, easy, and just a little bit thrilling to completely master?

Look for the thing that makes you smile. Now you're on track.

3. Be specific. Once you have the right idea – the resolution you *care about*, are *invested in*, and are *excited to do*, make it as specific as possible.

Maybe you started out swearing to “be less stressed.” More specific might be to take your dog to the dog park once a week, or schedule a relaxing vacation, or buy yourself a 10-pack of massages.

Maybe you started out wanting to “get fit.” More specific would be to go to one yoga class and see how you like it, or commit to one fun bike ride somewhere fabulous, or to find a friend who wants to learn tennis.

You'll know you're specific enough if you can think of an action you can take right now to get started.

4. Plan ahead. Of all the elements that make a New Year's Resolution successful, perhaps the most important is *a plan*. “Going to the gym everyday” may sound like a plan, but unless you build in the structures to be successful, it's not quite enough. What time will you go? What will get in the way? What are all the details that need to be in place to ensure you show up?

5. Celebrate your wins! We're looking for wins here, and the way to track your wins is to keep score. When you think of your resolution, can you identify how exactly you'll count your successes?

What will your scoreboard look like? Marbles in a jar? A chart posted on the fridge? Hash marks on a bulletin board? It doesn't have to be fancy, but it should be visible, even prominent, so your scoreboard serves as a visual cue – a reminder that today's a new day for another win.

As an executive coach, I have seen resolutions come and go, and I've also seen the results. When you invest in yourself and give yourself the opportunity to truly succeed – not with empty promises or crossed fingers, but by prioritizing yourself and what you want for your life, you really *do* get to see those successes you hold in your heart. This year, give yourself the opportunity to be who you really want to be, achieve what you want to achieve...and lead the life you want to live.

At the Leadership Research Institute, we are committed to helping leaders transform their



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businesses and their lives. If you are interested in setting resolutions that will lead to success this year, [reach out to us](#). If you're interested in more resources from Joelle to help inspire and encourage you in the new year, [sign up](#) for her Words To Live By newsletter.



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