



Tips to keep your new year's resolutions

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A STUDY many years ago by John Norcross, a psychology professor at the University of Scranton in the US, proved that 77% of people who made new year's resolutions maintained their pledges for a week, but by the end of the two-year study that success ratio had dropped to 19%.

The exact statistic may have changed slightly now, but there are still very high numbers of people who set lofty goals on January 1 to quit smoking, lose weight and generally be a better person, but find themselves puffing on a cigarette, eating a full slab of chocolate and bitching about their co-workers just a week later.

I know why and it all comes down to setting the right goals.

So many people don't achieve their new year's resolutions and I think it's because their goals weren't really right for them in the first place.

You have to set them in line with the things you really value or you'll fall off the wagon within weeks – or even days. In my programme we talk about highest values and that's what you need to use as the basis of your yearly goals.

I believe if you make a resolution that's not aligned with your true values, you have almost no hope of achieving it.

For example, if you want to exercise more but health isn't one of your real priorities, your chances of success are low.

On the other hand, if being a good parent is one of your highest values, a resolution to spend more time with your kids has a much better chance of success.

So how do we work out what our highest values are?

I believe the answers are all around us: what we fill our spaces with; what we spend our leisure time doing; what energises us; what we spend our money on; what we think about; and where we are most effective.

I have even devised a free online test to help people work it out.

Often our values arise from our conscious or unconscious voids.

What you perceive as most missing in your life often becomes what you perceive as most important.

The more important a value is, the higher it will be on your hierarchy of values and the more discipline and order you will have around it.

The less important a value is, the lower it will be on your hierarchy of values and the less discipline and more disorder you will have associated with it.

This is why so many resolutions fail but people don't necessarily realise it, because they aren't aware of their values.

Here are my tips for keeping your resolutions this year:

Before setting this year's resolutions, evaluate which ones you kept last year and which ones you didn't and really think about why.

Your life demonstrates your true highest values or priorities. And if the newly desired action is truly all that important, you would probably already be doing it. Your daily actions speak louder than your words and wishes.

It is wiser to set resolutions that are truly demonstrated to be of high value and do them in an incremental manner and build more lasting momentum.

Build greater expectations as you begin to demonstrate and achieve them.

Piggy banks become biggy banks.

Work out your true highest values (priorities) by completing a value determining exercise and set your 2016 resolutions accordingly.

Unless you set resolutions or goals that are congruent with your highest values, you are likely to become self-defeated.

If you are having trouble determining them, use my free online tool.

Only set goals that are truly important or you will erode your self-worth and discourage yourself from wanting to set goals – www.drdemartini.com/value_determination/determine_your_values

When your “why” is big enough your “hows” will eventually take care of themselves.

So stack up enough feeling-oriented reasons for doing what you say you want to do before attempting to do them.

Repeatedly ask yourself: how specifically could doing this particularly newly desired action (goal) help me fulfil or enhance what is also and already demonstrated to be highly important to me?

By linking whatever you would love to begin doing to whatever you have a long-term track record of already doing, you increase its probability of doing them together through association.

If you are failing to keep a resolution, analyse what you have decided to do instead.

Every decision and action you take is based on what you feel at that moment will give you more advantage than disadvantage, more reward than risk.

So if you are doing something other than what you intended, there must be more advantages consciously or unconsciously for doing that instead, or you would not have chosen it.

Make sure there are more advantages in doing what you claim you would love to do than any alternative.

● *Demartini is a leading authority in human behaviour and leadership development. He is the author of 10 self-development books, translated into 29 languages.*