



Let's talk about.....

Why New Year's Resolutions Don't Work

A New Year's resolution is something that goes in one Year and out the other.

Anonymous

"New Year's Resolutions often don't work because they are based on external desires that haven't been clearly connected to our true internal needs. When our external desires and our internal needs unconsciously conflict, there is chaos – and a natural lack of follow through," states Nicole Winkler-Schaefer of Black Sheep Coaching.

Winkler-Schaefer continues, "We must be clear about our intentions. From there, we can determine what are truly the best actions for us – and have a better chance of following through."

The truth is that most New Year's resolutions rarely last longer than a week and it isn't because we don't really mean these promises we make to ourselves. The reason is that once made, we don't follow through on our mandates. Say, for example, that you have decided to give up smoking. First of all, just telling YOURSELF you are going to stop a habit you have had for several years is not strong enough to force you to change. You need to get at the source of WHY you smoke and address that as well.

There are several tools that help you stick to your resolve and one of them is the very essence of the success of Alcoholics Anonymous: support. If you tell all your friends that you are giving up smoking and ask them to help you by checking in with you and offering substitutes to a cigarette when they are with you, you have a slightly better chance of sticking to your resolution. Will power alone is simply not enough. In fact The University of Hertfordshire studied 2,000 people who made a two-week resolution and discovered that most of them gave up within six days.

Psychologists suggest visualizing your life when you have overcome the habit you are trying to erase. If you force yourself to understand why you want to give up a behavior, be it over-eating, procrastinating, drinking, or laziness, then you will be more motivated to succeed for a longer period of time.

One of the biggest problems with New Year's Resolutions is that we make too many of them all at once. If you tackle yourself destructive habits one at a time, you will have a better chance of conquering them. The most important strategy is not to give up. Forgive yourself for your lapses and start again.

Ask yourself, “Are my resolutions what I think I should do or what I really want to do? Your first step is to be honest with yourself and figure out what you REALLY want to have happen. That will be a realistic long term goal. If you invest a little money in the resolution, you will stick to it longer as well. For example, if you have decided you need more exercise, buy a membership at a local gym. That will help you keep your promise to yourself.

On the other hand, perhaps it is better not to bother with making resolutions in the first place. You are what you are, after all, and when the pain of a bad habit finally overwhelms you, you will be frustrated enough to tackle it. The motivation will be there and you won’t hesitate to use the tools psychologists give you to conquer it because you will be desperate.

To resolve or not resolve? These are individual questions but often they can be solved by talking about them with others to see what they do about restarting their engines for the New Year.

On Tuesday evening, January 17 at A GRAPE IN THE FOG we are coming together to talk about why our New Year’s Resolutions fail. There will be a kick-off speaker to get the conversations going and then we will split up into groups to discuss the purpose, the challenge and the satisfactions of making valid resolutions to kick off 2012. You can enjoy a glass of wine to grease the wheels of conversation. It promises to be a stimulating evening you won’t want to miss.

LET’S TALK ABOUT ... Why New Year’s Resolutions Don’t Work, is the first in an intoxicating Salon Series of WINE AND CONVERSATION every third Tuesday of the month at 8 pm. These evenings will be an opportunity to share your ideas with your friends, and make new friends who will give you fresh insight into the validity of your beliefs. Future topics will include How To Be Happy, What Has Happened To Communication, Is The Doctor Always Right; What Is a Realistic Healthy Life Style, How To Live Within Your Means, Are Taxes Necessary , Anger Management and many other topics that our participants will suggest to us. The evenings will be tailored to what interests you. What can be better than that?

Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed
is more important than any other.
Abraham Lincoln