

10 tips for Resolutions Without Guilt –Moxie

January is a huge milestone for many people. They are ready to lose weight, get healthy, focus anew on their relationships, and build their businesses. And so, we begin the year with our New Year Resolutions and Good Intentions. However, 90% of New Year's Resolutions fail by the end of February because people set goals without actually figuring out the steps it will take to achieve them. Today you have a chance to let go of the guilt. We just observed the Chinese New Year. Use this day to celebrate your progress and set new goals.

A resolution is a promise you make to yourself, but a goal entails making a plan. Sometimes goals are things that make you stretch, and sometimes goals are things you already know how to do, but you need a lot of structure in order to truly get them done. To recite the alphabet, you can't go from A-Z and skip all the letters in between.

- 1) **Begin by celebrating what you have already done:** If you committed to sending out five resumes a week, but have only sent three a week so far, don't call yourself a failure. Instead, recognize that you have already started the process for change.
- 2) **Choose a small number of doable goals and write them down:** If they are not in writing, then they are only wishes. Stay away from grandiose goals, like climbing Mt. Everest. Instead create a doable goal. Work up to walking 10,000 steps/day, adding five pounds to a backpack each week, until you get strong enough and create enough endurance to climb Mt. Everest.
- 3) **Ask yourself: is there one thing in my life that if I did it differently on a consistent basis would make the greatest positive difference in my life?** Small changes can create a "ripple effect" of widening into another small change, followed by another, and lead to other related changes. Next thing you know, you've generated a truly large change.
- 4) **Generate larger changes by using SMART goals** (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-Specific.) (For further explanation, see <http://www.postandcourier.com/news/2010/jul/23/establish-smart-goals/>)
- 5) **Once you have determined your SMART goals, begin listing the steps you need to take to meet them.** For instance, if you want a new job by June 1st, you need to create or revise a resume, begin reviewing jobs available, start networking on and off line, and create an application process for yourself.
- 6) **Next, create an accountability (discipline) structure:** examples include hiring a coach, joining a job support group, having a partner or buddy who

will regularly ask, "What you have done toward your goal?" Pay attention to external deadlines to increase your motivation.

- 7) **Get support from other people:** Tell family and friends, "This is the year this project is going to get done, and unfortunately, that means I will have to say no to doing other things with you from time to time." Business people sometimes call this "Switch Costs" meaning "I gain something with a new action but I also lose something else." Make sure you don't focus on your goal to the exclusion of all else, or the goal will quickly lose its appeal.
- 8) **Use powerful positive statements:** Instead of "I'm a procrastinator" substitute "I work steadily toward my goals."
- 9) **Keep the vision in mind:** Visualize yourself at your new job, with a window to the outside world, and remind yourself of how you will feel when you get it.
- 10) **Reward yourself at each step,** instead of beating yourself up. Some people view achieving the goals or resolutions as a test you either pass or fail. It's not good to *should* on yourself. These are your goals, and no one else's. Even if you don't meet the goal this time, it doesn't have to go away forever. That's like falling down and deciding that because you fell, you can never walk again.

All this sets you up to be successful, because it allows you to become more realistic about what is really attainable, *and* what you really want to do. By calling your resolutions plans, you have already acknowledged they can change. It's not too late to rededicate yourself to those New Year's Resolutions. You have ten more months to fulfill those goals.

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