

HOW TO MAKE NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

My experience with New Year Resolutions has taught me some lessons which I am sharing with you.

1. Don't leave New Year Resolutions for the last moment to write! If you do, on the last day of the year you may end up hurriedly writing down something not better than a shopping list. Spend some time and energy in writing them. At the same time, if you fail to write them before the New Year starts, don't think that now it is too late. Write in the first week of the year or later. It is better writing late than never.
2. Before writing about the New Year and future, cast a glance at the old year and the past. How was the old year? Did you keep your resolutions? If yes, to what extent? If not, why? Given another chance, how would you plan and live the old year. Have a vision of the future. How would you like to see yourself after one year or thereafter? Base your resolutions on this analysis.
3. Write down what you really want to do, not what is routine, customary, or fashionable. If you have no inner urge to reduce weight or learning guitar, it is no use resolving to do so.
4. Make new year resolutions a vehicle for change. While we are comfortable with status quo, we want to change our life too. Everybody thinks that he or she is in a rut. He or she would have been happier in another job, in different circumstances, in new places. But we fear change. Don't just foolhardily jump into change, but plan for it. Plan for new and exciting things in life. Learn something new—dancing, playing a musical instrument, a new language, tennis, web-designing, or writing poetry. If you have never loved, love. It is an exciting thing. If you are in love, get married. It is intoxicating.
5. Write down specific goals rather than general. Instead of writing, "I will reduce weight," specify how many pounds or kilograms you want to reduce within which period and by what means. So write, during the year I will reduce my weight by 30 pounds. I will aim at reducing 10 pounds every quarter (so that I have some extra time towards the year-end). I will regulate my diet (be specific about diet too), will exercise or play some game, go for morning or evening walk, start yoga, and lead an active life.
6. You should, if possible, make separate resolutions on your official or job life and on your personal life. Your aims for your official life and personal life would be different. In many cases the resolutions for official life may be very simple—do your work efficiently and hang on there! It is in your personal life that you would be seeing paramount changes. In your official life you may be a machine operator but in your personal life you may be striving hard for becoming a writer. These resolutions are geared to some such scenario. Very few lucky persons may be doing the same thing for their profession or occupation as their passion in life. For them also these resolutions would be appropriate.
7. Break down bigger whole year aims to smaller quarterly and monthly aims. In fact, each week write down the aim for that week also. Of course, also keep a daily to-do list (to be written at the start of the day or one day in advance). Revise the monthly and quarterly targets in the light of progress made and

aims abandoned and new aims added. In fact, write down a continually evolving list of to-do for the year. Whatever you want to do in the year, just add to this list and do when the right time comes.

8. Use positive power! Most of our resolutions fail because they are about negatives rather than positives. We want to reduce weight or quit smoking, or drinking. But all these are negatives. We will surely be defeated fighting against them. Instead, if we decide to start playing tennis, it would be a positive thing. Little by little we will get interested in it. We will get addicted to it. We will not be able to stay at home when it is play time, whether it is at 5 a.m. or 5 p.m. We will have to go when our partner calls us. If we are overweight, we will jog, eat less and sensibly. If we get fatigued easily, we will quit smoking and drinking. We would like to be at the top of our tennis team! We will reduce weight, quit smoking and drinking easily (because our game of tennis demands it!).
9. Don't abandon all Resolutions on slight failure! One of the main reasons why diets are abandoned is 'All or Nothing' attitude. If we fail to follow the diet for one day or eat too much one day, we consider that we have failed and abandon the resolution. The same is true of our resolution about quitting smoking or drinking. If your resolutions break down, and they will and should now and then, for example, when you are celebrating something, when you are honeymooning, when you are meeting some deadline, restart the resolutions. Similarly, periodically evaluate the progress, even make changes. A year is a long period; reexamine your life every three months.
10. Don't forget the unwritten premises! When we write our Resolutions we concentrate what we want to achieve in worldly sense. But we fail to mention other important things in life, like: I will be happy, I will love my family, and I will enjoy nature, etc. These unwritten resolutions are more important than the written ones. If we fulfill them and even fail at achieving the written aims, we have still won. If we succeed at both, that is superb!