

Reframing New Year's Resolutions

By Tonya Schwab, MA (Clinical Psychology), MFTI, Counsellor

As the ball drops in New York City and many people throughout the world kiss their loved ones at midnight there is often hope and optimism in the air. This moment each year signals a new beginning and is a time filled with possibility and opportunity. It is in these moments that millions of people around the world create a pact with themselves, to make changes in their lives. While in early January these New Year's Resolutions ring as loud as the New Year's bells, by February these pacts with ourselves have often been discarded as yesterday's news.

So, what is the psychology behind New Year's resolutions? Research has shown that during the month of December we tend to overindulge in eating, drinking, spending money and neglecting exercise. Rather than moderate these behaviors, we promise ourselves that after the holiday season is over, we will take control. In the meantime, we give ourselves permission to overindulge without guilt. However, studies have shown that unfortunately only 12% of individuals succeed in long-term change from a New Year's resolution. Perhaps it is the extreme indulgence followed by extreme restriction that forces individuals to throw in the towel, or perhaps we are setting overly ambitious goals for ourselves? Whether you love or loathe the time-honored tradition of New Year's resolutions, you may want to try some of these strategies to help you to be more successful this season.

Self Efficacy: In other words, believe in your capabilities. Individuals with high self-efficacy attribute failure to insufficient effort, while individuals with low self-efficacy attribute failure to deficient ability. Higher self-efficacy generally is correlated with a greater likelihood of achieving one's goals.

Reframing Your Resolutions: The problem with most New Year's resolutions is that they tend to accentuate the negative rather than latch on to the positive. Resolutions tend to focus on getting rid of



our behaviors, instead of trying to accentuate our more positive qualities. If individuals are able to reframe resolutions differently and make it more of a positive experience, it would be easier for people to keep resolutions and psychologically it would make them feel better about themselves.

Behavioral Steps: Initiating a specific plan will increase your chances of success. Instead of saying, "I'm going to lose weight or stop smoking," you could, instead, say, "I'm going to wake up each morning and walk two miles and when I want to smoke I'm going to do jumping jacks." Developing specific steps, coping strategies and self-monitoring tools will help you to succeed.

Remove the 'Should's': Remember that this is the ideal you that you are working toward, not the you that you 'need' to be. Don't beat yourself up, notice any successes as steps toward your ultimate goal.

Reflect on the Hope: As it turns out, most New Year's resolutions are not truly about a behavior change and are instead an expression of hope. Research has shown that as soon as you pledge to make a change, you get a powerful boost in mood. The bigger the resolution, the better you feel, almost immediately creating more hopeful and in control feelings. There is nothing more uplifting and healing than hope, especially when you embrace it as an emotional experience in the present. The pleasure you get from a New Year's resolution may not always need to depend on tomorrow's follow-through. Instead, the whole point of a resolution may be to acknowledge the existence of an ideal self you could slip into – if you ever really wanted to.

Reimagining R2-D2

Interview with Barton Millar and Meredith White by AAS, continued from page 16

How do robots impact our world?

Meredith: Robots are having a HUGE impact on our world. Robots build cars, pilot planes, guide driverless automobiles in California and do hard and dangerous work that humans can't do. Robots are in deep space and on the surface of Mars.

What do your students think about robotics and



became much more time-efficient.

Maria: I've already been through FRC robotics,

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