

The Gazette

How to stick to your resolutions

With a little planning, these tips can help you avoid pitfalls in new year

By RHONDA RABOW, Freelance January 5, 2010

This is the time of year when many of us make our New Year's resolutions. Unfortunately, by the second or third week of the year, even our most sincere intentions seem to fall by the wayside like so many years before. Why can't we keep these resolutions?

In my experience, one of the most common reasons is that there is not enough planning to avoid the pitfalls that sabotage our greatest efforts.

I hope the list below will help you to make 2010 a year when you will successfully meet all your goals.

1. Make it a realistic goal. Planning to lose one or two pounds a week might not be exciting, but it is more likely to succeed than starving yourself to lose 30 pounds in three weeks, and then gaining it all back.
2. Make sure the goal is meaningful for you. Don't try to lose weight for your partner, friends or parent. You have to want to do it for yourself.
3. Focus on short-term goals. Plan to exercise three times a week for a month, then it will become a habit.
4. Create a plan to succeed and write it down. Research shows goals that are written down have a 90 per cent greater chance of success than those that are merely discussed.
5. Wire yourself for success. If you are planning to lose weight, start by eliminating fatty snacks and sweets from your cupboards and fridge. Take a diet list with you when buying groceries.
6. Your thoughts create your reality. The average person thinks up to 80,000 thoughts per day, 87 per cent of them are usually negative and most of them are the same thoughts you had yesterday. Become aware of these thoughts, know they are just your habit of thought, not necessarily true. Negative and self-critical thoughts can sabotage your determination to follow through on your goal.
7. Create a back-up plan to deal with slips and setbacks. Mistakes can be opportunities for learning. If you slip, ask yourself what kept you from achieving your goal and then try to make corrections.
8. Find a buddy; someone who has the same or similar goals. He or she can be your coach and you can be his or hers. It is often easier to stay motivated when you have a friend monitoring your progress and supporting you, than when on your own.
9. Be persistent! It does pay off. It's not about how many times you tried to quit smoking. It is about keeping on trying until you succeed. This is the real measure of success.

10. Don't wait to be in the mood or motivated to get started. Make a plan and stick to it, and the motivation will follow. Once you initiate even the smallest of actions, you will create a momentum and it will be easier to continue. For example, if you start with a 10-minute walk today, and increase it five minutes every day, you will reach 30 minutes without feeling it is impossible to accomplish.

Rhonda Rabow, is a psychotherapist in Montreal. For more information, email her at RERabow@aol.com or visit her website at www.helphelpmerhonda.ca

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