



I'm a Master Coach. So why do I hate New Year's Resolutions?

By Cyndi Wineinger

It is the time of year where we all see ourselves as our "Best Selves".

Isn't that the heart of a New Year's Resolution (NYR)?

NYRs are all about reaching for our potential. The New Year challenges us to fill the gap between the me now and the me even better. In organizational development and training, we call that the "Gap." To be more specific the Knowledge-Ability Gap. That space between **MY knowledge and ability** and the **REQUIRED knowledge and ability** to grow into new opportunity.

In New Year's Resolution language, a resolution is the commitment to fill the gap between the current place, and the mentally established desired place. For example:

Current: 20 pounds overweight. Resolution/Best Self: 20 pounds lighter.
Current: In debt. Resolution/Best Self: debt-free and saving.

Here is the thing. I hate NYRs. As a Master Coach with a lot of beautiful experiences helping people identify and achieve their goals, NYRs regularly break my heart.

If you are thinking that is a horrid thing to say, hang with me for some facts. One study quoted by the *New York Post* stated only 8% of people accomplish their NYR. I also read this week that January 17 is the actual date people give up on their resolutions. I researched the date for validity and found another study claiming January 12 was the day in 2018 people gave up on their NYRs. Truly. These dates are based on extensive algorithmic research of multiple tracking points. Wow, we lasted 7 days longer this year. Are we getting tougher? Let's hope. I was going to quote all the sources here. Then I thought, hmm... common sense.

Let me just ask one question. Where are you on your NYR? Did you even bother to set one?

Let's get back to a positive note here. If I hate NYRs, then why am I such a fan of goal setting? Because there are proven ways to reach our goals. It is all about preparation.



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As a Neurolinguistic Coach (training people to work with their brains), I know that every time we fail, we set up a bad neurological pathway in our brain. When we reinforce losing/not accomplishing what we said we would do, we make failing a regular habit in how we think and behave. Basically, if you touch a hot burner twice and get burned twice, guess what you stop doing? Not getting burned is a great lesson. Training our brain to fail at accomplishing goals, that starts a bad habit of getting used to not accomplishing our goals. Let me share very basic goal-setting and goal-achieving steps:

1. **Why.** Start with the Why. Why do you want this? If you don't really have a great answer to this question, don't start until you do.

2. **What.** Not what is your goal. But What do you get if you achieve your goal? Everything in life has a balance. Right/Wrong. Positive/Negative. Yin/Yang, and good old Karma. Take for instance a person wanting a promotion. Has s/he considered the wins and losses? More money vs. More time away traveling? More authority vs. More risk? More perks vs. more stress? Let's take the universal goal of getting healthy:
 - **Plus side:** feel better, have more energy, live longer, less medical costs, look better, fit in your clothes, be strong, have more mobility.
 - **Minus side:** it takes to time to workout, shop, make healthy meals, pain of muscle strain, no alcohol or snacking to help you chill out after work, changes in socializing (bar vs gym).
 - I've worked with hundreds of people who discovered that the goal they set for themselves was not truly what they wanted. If someone doesn't know what they are aiming for, there is no way to ever get there. Every choice has a cost. It's just that the cost of bad choices seems to hurt more.

3. **How.** What is your plan? Where will you find the time. What will you let go of to get there? Who is going to support you? How will you celebrate when you achieve your goals. What would a true Stretch Goal look like for you? How would you operate differently to walk 360 minutes a week versus the latest recommended 150 minutes? How will you avoid sabotaging yourself?

4. **Win!** It is all about the win. Winning is addictive. It trains the brain to win more. Proven fact. It is also contagious. If you set your goals with the right line up for success and plan for reasonable and real benchmarks to celebrate, you will train your brain. There is so much research on this it blows my neurolinguistic pathways.

This is your year. I can say that with 100% integrity. Why do I know this is your year? Because every year is your year. You are the only one who can control your attitude and discipline. You may not be in control of your circumstance fully, (let's say a plane crashes into your house), but you can control how you adapt and stay focused.