

# Resolutions - Making Changes That Last

The University of Scranton recently published an article on New Year's Resolution statistics in the Journal of Clinical Psychology. According to the article, 45% of people make some sort of New Year's resolution.



## The Top Ten Resolutions for 2014 are:

1. Lose Weight
2. Getting Organized
3. Spend Less, Save More
4. Enjoy Life to the Fullest
5. Staying Fit and Healthy
6. Learn Something Exciting
7. Quit Smoking
8. Help Others Reach Their Dreams
9. Fall in Love
10. Spend More Time with Family



By February, many individuals have already given up on their resolutions. According to the article only 75% of people who make resolutions make it through the first week, 64% make it past one month and only 46% make it past six months.

Keep these things in mind as you set out to change habits or set your goals.

## Make it Specific

A specific goal has a much greater chance of being accomplished than a general goal. To set a specific goal you must answer the six "W" questions:

- \*Who - Who is involved?
- \*What - What do you want to accomplish?
- \*Where - Identify a location.
- \*When - Establish a time frame.
- \*Which - Identify requirements and constraints.
- \*Why - Specific reasons, purpose or benefits of accomplishing the goal.

EXAMPLE: A general goal would be, “Get in shape.” But a specific goal would say, “Join a health club and workout 3 days a week.”

### **Be Realistic**

To be realistic, a goal must represent an objective toward which you are both willing and able to work. Is it something you truly believe in doing, or do you feel like it's something you should be doing? Perhaps it's both.

Sometimes we need to make a change for our health, like quitting smoking or losing weight, but we're not quite ready to do so. It can take several attempts before we're really able to commit to the change in our lives.

Perhaps you would like to set a goal to run a marathon and your normal form of exercise is walking. You can't just go out and run a marathon. You need to set smaller goals to achieve that large goal. Think in terms of a week, a month or a year. Those small goals will keep you moving toward your main objective without being too overwhelming.

### **Write it Down**

Research has suggested that when individuals write their goals down, it significantly increases the chances of achieving it. Once you've identified what you'd like to do, write it down, and post it where you can see it regularly. Having a daily reminder can help you stay motivated.

### **Prepare for Setbacks**

Setbacks happen. But, just because they do, doesn't mean you should give up. Don't criticize yourself if you slip up. Figure out what you need to do to get back on track.

### **Progress Report**

Measure your progress and determine whether you're making the progress you expected. Measuring your progress helps you stay on track, reach your target dates, and experience the exhilaration of achievement which will spur you on to reach your overall objective.

It also gives you a chance to revisit and clarify any steps you need to take to reach your overall objective.

### **Team Up**

Having someone else working with you toward the same goal can help you stay motivated. Find a friend or family member to help celebrate your progress and give you encouragement when you hit a setback.