

Wendy Riemann: Keeping resolutions for 2018

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Happy New Year! How are those resolutions coming? The [New York Times reported last week](#) that by January 8, some 25 percent of resolutions will already fall to the wayside.

Personally, I love writing resolutions. Call it making resolutions, goal-setting, life planning, whatever, but the new year offers everyone a chance to hit the reset button and refocus or renew habits, priorities, and life. Let's face it, sometimes we need a forced opportunity to change something.

Plenty of people despise writing resolutions or say, "my resolution is to not do resolutions" (by the way, that is my loud groan being heard). Is their life perfect? Are they too busy? Are they simply content as is? Do they lack a starting point or resent a forced start? Are they afraid of change? Are they writing resolutions that are too big or vague that make follow-through challenging?

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Here are three writing resolution tips that help me as I strategize for the new year.

First, attitude is everything so make resolutions positive. If we focus on the negative aspects of making a change, like I can no longer have sugary cereal for breakfast and I love my Frosted Flakes, we miss out on the positive that comes with that change – like eating fruit and yogurt for breakfast will make me feel fuller, be healthier, and give me more energy. And perhaps I could enjoy my Frosted Flakes for an afternoon snack. Save the sacrifice for Lent.

Second, keep resolutions specific and realistic. Most of us want to eat healthier or get more exercise – resolving to do that will likely do little. Neither will completely giving up dessert or pledging to hit the gym everyday (hello, 25 percent wayside on January 8). Instead resolve something doable and clearly defined. Maybe it is only allowing yourself something sweet after lunch, or consuming everything before 8 p.m. Maybe it is committing to three workouts each week and keeping a log. If you miss a workout, Sunday begins a new week and offers another fresh start to achieving the goal. Focus more on the small victories because those grow into larger achievements.

For example, my building is not the easiest for residents to recycle – especially residents with dogs who like anything that smells like food. This bothered me and years ago, I resolved that I would recycle all my plastic bottles and created my own system. Years later, it still works, and I have added in other items. Had I simply said that I was going to recycle everything, the task would have likely been too broad and I would have given up. By planning a target goal, I was able to be successful and build on it.

Finally, be kind to yourself. Celebrate when you have achieved a milestone. Maybe that is recognizing that you have a “G” written on your calendar three times a week for an entire month straight – WAHOO – I bet you are looking and feeling better too. Pat yourself on the back. If you fall off the wagon, acknowledge it and try again – don’t quit.

It is not too late – get in on the resolution fun! Try something like: floss four nights a week. Put your phone out of reach during meals with others. Read a new book each month. Call your parents once a week instead of texting them. Drink 24 ounces of water before reaching for a soda. Make coffee at home and invest the money saved at the end of the year. Bring lunch to work every Monday. Refrain from honking when someone cuts you off. The options are unlimited.

When committed, even the smallest resolutions can give you a BIG sense of accomplishment. So. What will your resolution be? Email me – I can hold you accountable. That is, when I’m not flossing, reading, or drinking my water!

— *Riemann is president of 1492 Communications, a consulting firm. Like 1492 Communications on Facebook to learn more.*