

# Should we reconsider our resolutions?



## As we begin a new year, we can be tempted to make resolutions.

They can be full of ambition and become grandiose. However, amidst the fervour and excitement, it's important to pause and consider how effective this is for us.

By letting go of our fixation on future goals, we can create space to really consider the things that matter to us.

In a working culture driven by busyness, we can ease our expectations of ourselves and others and live more fulfilling lives.

In our first health and wellbeing update for the year, we'll shed light on why making New Year's resolutions may not be the best approach and understand how we can set better goals for ourselves.

**A journey of self-improvement doesn't just have to be embarked on in January to count.**



## **New year, new resolves**

The action of [setting goals for ourselves](#) is beneficial.

On the one hand, embracing the annual tradition of goal setting allows us to set intentions, increase self-awareness, and create a roadmap for growth.

Take weight loss for example – people can lose weight intentionally for a range of reasons.

While saying you want to lose weight in the coming year sets your intention, it takes more than willpower alone.

It begins with more than just a resolution but with self-understanding and honest reflection.

[All great goals require supporting strategies](#) – e.g. consulting with a doctor, dietician, changing your exercise habits, setting a goal weight to work towards and selecting your support network for accountability.

These strategies help you track your progress which in turn, keeps you motivated and accountable.

However, [research has found](#) up to 80% of resolutions will have been abandoned by February.

What we don't realise there are better ways to set goals for ourselves that give us the best chance of success.

## **Pressure to change**

A journey of self-improvement doesn't just have to be embarked on in January to count.

Setting goals at the start of the calendar year after what can be a busy, sometimes stressful holiday season may not be the best time to start.

Every person's holiday experience – if they get to have one - will be different and so will everyone's goals.

And at this particular time of year, it can be easy to fall into the trap of comparing ourselves to others.

We can further experience unhelpful, sometimes self-inflicted, even societal pressures to find something to change about ourselves.

That can lead us to make goals [about what we think we should do](#), without considering things like work-life interaction.

Norcross and Vangarelli's research also found slips were typically precipitated by a lack of personal control, excessive stress, and negative emotions.

Setting simpler, closer goals, can help prevent us becoming too future orientated and keep us focused on our present progress, rather than perfection.

**Decide and commit to making a change – make the decision to make a change in your life and commit to making it happen.**



## How to set resilient goals

The best way to set goals that motivate you is to set specific and realistic goals.

It begins with re-thinking how you understand resolutions.

Resolutions, as described by [Tony Robbins](#), are your desired outcomes, while your goals are the steps you must take to accomplish your resolutions.

Your goals, like you, need flexibility to succeed.

Things that can cause resolutions to fall flat or fail, most commonly include:

- Procrastination and a loss of motivation.
- Change in life circumstances or priorities.
- No strategy behind the resolution.
- Not tracking progress and celebrating success.
- The goal is too vague, or overly ambitious.
- Maintaining an all-or-nothing mindset and other self-sabotage behaviours.

In addition to flexibility, see achieving each of your goals as part of building a good habit.

Instead of treating each goal as arbitrary, the commitment to the process of your outcome will give you a solid foundation to acknowledge and celebrate your successes as you go.

Both leaders and employees can set good quality goals for themselves, whether it's for the quarter, the calendar year, or the remainder of the financial year.

## Tips for better goal setting

Tony Robbins offers some of his tips for setting better quality goals, instead of resolutions:

- Decide and commit to making a change – make the decision to make a change in your life and commit to making it happen.
- Document what you want – instead of just resolving to change a behaviour, get clear on what you want by documenting it.
- Get clear on the why – determine your motivations for your goal. This will help you find a way to achieve it and manage performance anxiety.
- Find absolute certainty and act – it's okay to have no idea how to achieve your goal at first. However, no goal you set will be achieved without dedication.
- Measure your progress – set SMART goals to help you break down the steps you need to take to achieve your outcome.
- Keep going – even when life circumstances change or you feel you have failed, keep going. Ask yourself what you could miss out on if you don't achieve this goal.
- Celebrate your success – celebrate every little success along the way, big and small. When the little steps becoming more enjoyable it will keep you motivated and in a cycle of success.

## Resources

- [Setting goals for success with a growth mindset](#) – APM
- [6 positive habits to maintain your health and wellbeing](#) – APM
- [Building positive habits tip sheet](#) – Assure