

Do New Year's Resolutions Actually Help Anyone?

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Growing up, my siblings and I made many New Year's resolutions at the closing of each year. Some of them I was fairly successful at keeping. Others I did not. Many I frankly do not recall.

I picked up this habit again in recent years, only to realize that the change I was trying to make, or the character trait I was seeking to address, kept presenting to me over... and over... and over again with little-to-no progress. UGH!! How frustrating.

The thing I desired was to develop more patience. I saw this as a way of becoming more purposeful; a spiritual practice and discipline in order to be more centered and calm. I had hoped that I might also lower my blood pressure in the process. NOPE.

I have found myself with multiple opportunities to put my commitment to patience into practice – often several times each. Oy! But in the end, I wasn't less calm as a result of my attempts, I was even more frustrated. I now had awareness about my feelings of annoyance within a given scenario, but I was not achieving the zen I had hoped for. In the end, it did not work out well for me.

Why not, I wondered, was I failing at my task? A quick Google search revealed that, "only eight percent of people actually keep their New Year's resolutions." Additionally, there are many reasons people can't stick to their resolutions, "from setting too many of them to getting derailed by small failures." Lastly, the Internet reminded me that, "regardless of what resolution you commit to, the goal is to improve life in the coming year."

I concur.

So now is the moment of truth - how can I make this work for me? What will be my path moving forward? If simple goals are easiest, then a simple goal it will be! Therefore in 2018 I resolve to live my life with more hope than fear. I commit to this despite the attacks by some elected officials on my (and other marginalized groups) civil rights. Despite the challenges of the moment we're in, I believe the scales of justice will find balance once again.

As my paternal grandmother would often remind me, “baby, this too will pass.” Experience has taught me, she was right. So as I step out of one year into the next, I will hold her words as a salve on my tender soul. I invite you to do likewise.

Wishing you and those you love, the happiest, healthiest New Year.

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