

5 ways to make your 2017 resolution work in 2018



You want to be on time. You want to eat better. You swear you'll exercise. That's what you said at the end of 2016 too.

What if you could really, truly tackle last year's resolution for 2018?

When plotting goals, the more targeted the better, says Alok Trivedi, author of "Chasing Success: Lessons in Aligned Performance" and founder of Chicago-based Aligned Performance Institute, where he coaches on performance.

Think of things that can be measured. Make a plan to check in every quarter. But personally? He's not too into people making resolutions.

"They set up fantasies, and they don't set up real strategies," he said. To fix that fantasy problem, we talked to experts on how to lay down a plan for success.

Ask yourself what's important to you. "You've got to look at your previous resolutions and ask yourself, 'Is this really a high value to me?'" instructs Trivedi. Take a peek at your week, and see where you spend your time and energy. That's what you care about. It might be your children, for example. Consider how weight loss might affect your children. Would you be able to play with them more? Would the kids worry about your health less? Use that as motivation to achieve your goal, he said.

Lose the shame. One of the first things to do, said St. George, Utah-based Dr. Bradley Nelson, who works with people on topics like depression and unresolved anger, is to check in with yourself emotionally. Often, people fail at goals because of what he calls self-sabotage. Ask yourself, "What needs to be released in order for me to accomplish this goal?" or, "Do I deserve to achieve my goal?" Nelson, who penned "The Emotion Code," said we can be too hard on ourselves when we don't achieve goals, so begin with positivity. "Set goals that stretch you, but not so far you might snap," he said. Find and release that emotional baggage.

Set realistic and specific goals. You're not going to be on time to everything the very first week you try. If you set an unrealistic expectation, the minute that you fail, you may give up. Immediately changing every item in your diet might be unrealistic. Shifting diet and exercise involves everything from groceries to finding a gym. Ken Dolan-Del Vecchio, a Boston author on habits and health, suggests putting a number with the goal. Make your resolutions specific and measurable: "I will take a walk that lasts at least 20 minutes two days each week" or "I will put at least \$25 into my savings account after every paycheck," instead of "I will exercise more" or "I will save more." Write them down, and put them in your purse or wallet.

Bring in friends. Bring in people who love you, and encourage them to bug you and check in on your progress. Dolan-Del Vecchio says to choose with care — ask people who respect you and aren't judgmental or prone to gossip. If you have misgivings, don't ask that person. And go ahead, post on social media. Dr. Indra Cidambi, who works with recovering addicts as founder of Middlesex, NJ.-based Center for Network Therapy, said she tells clients that sharing goals and progress increases a chance of success. It might feel as if you're advertising that you're vulnerable, she said, but it helps to increase support. "This definitely takes courage," she said.

Accept imperfection. Jaime Brenkus might help people lose weight and become fit, but he's not saying to never indulge. "Knowing that you can have a piece of decadent cake and still see results is empowering and sets you up for long-term success," said the Cleveland fitness expert. "A stumble is not a tumble." And don't create an all-or-nothing proposition. Even if things don't pan out as planned, adds Trivedi, "you say that's a great learning experience."

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