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Will 2007 be the year you keep your resolutions?

By Marcy Horwitz
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

We've known 2007 was coming for...well, for the last year, haven't we? Once again, New Year's Day is upon us, and we're making our lists and checking them twice. This is the year that we're going to lose the 10 pounds, spend more time with the kids, curb the spending habit – just fill in the blank. Our intentions are noble. Our spirit is strong.

But most of us are going to fall far short of our goals. Miserably.

Why?

Certified Life Coach Doug Hicok says, "Because those are wishes, not real plans."

What's the difference, you might ask? "There's no follow through or accountability built into them," explains Hicok. "There's no serious plan to do something."

To change – to *really* change – requires commitment. If you're serious about making a change for the New Year, says Hicok, think "SMART." Make a plan that's Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timelined.

Set your goal. Do you really want to lose 10 pounds?

Ask yourself what steps you need to take to achieve that goal and write them down. Brett Gauthier, wellness director at the Manchester Family YMCA, even suggests writing a contract. "Have someone else witness it," he advises. Ideally, your witness should be "a loved one who cares about your health as much as you do."

What are your priorities? Do you want to eat less or do you think you should be eating differently? Do you need to join a gym or spend more time there? Either way, schedule yourself – and don't let anything interfere with your commitment to your goal.

Hicok stresses the value of accountability. Make yourself report your progress on a regular basis to a coach or trusted friend, someone who can act as a supportive and non-judgmental sounding board. It will help keep you motivated to stay on course.

So, keep making those resolutions. But this year, give those delicate, newborn resolutions the chance they need to succeed. And remember: no pain, no gain.

"When we try to change, it's tough," says Hicok. "Our brains aren't engineered for



File photo

It can be easier to keep your New Year's resolutions if you tackle them with a friend.

change. You have to do something new hundreds of times before it becomes a habit."

A hundred attempts at not eating a brownie?

It's going to be a long year.

Even if your goal has nothing to do with losing weight, consider these tips for healthy partying from Brett Gauthier at the Manchester YMCA:

- Have a healthy snack (like a glass of juice) before you go to take the edge off your appetite.
- Understand that alcohol frees inhibitions. After a drink or two, you'll cheerfully eat something you normally wouldn't eat. Be aware.
- And while we're on the subject, alcohol is empty calories.
- Don't hang around next to the food table.
- Reduce your portion sizes. Enjoy holiday treats, but take small helpings.

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The simple facts about New Year's resolutions

By Chuck Hansen
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Every year around this time we resolve to change the way we live for the better. And every year, not long after this time, our resolve fails.

Why is it so hard to keep our New Year's resolutions?

To start with, as humans we are worse than the focus-challenged Dory the blue fish in "Finding Nemo": "I will exercise. I will exercise. I will exercise. I will... I will... What was it again? Hmm. Oh well. Maybe I'll eat a bag of potato chips and fall asleep on the couch."

As Samuel Johnson said, "People need to be reminded more often than they need to be instructed."

Tradition challenges us: Why wait until the dead of winter to resolve to exercise? Because it's tradition – even though it is also dark 18 hours a day and cold around the clock. Good



Ellie Morris/Chesterfield Observer

When it comes to New Year's resolutions, Chuck Hansen suggests following Henry David Thoreau's advice: Simplify.

luck with that.

That tradition also leads us to wait until after seven weeks of holiday-fueled binge-eating to