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## Making New Year Resolutions That Last

By Thulani DeMarsay

As the end of the year approaches, many of us will reflect on what resolutions we want to make for 2010. We will make promises that this is the year to lose weight, join a gym, make a career change, return to school, start a company, stop smoking, go to church, mend a broken relationship or better yet get involved in a new and exciting relationship, and the list continues...

If we are honest with ourselves, many of us would admit that our resolutions do not make it past the first two weeks in January. This is not a judgment but rather an opportunity to examine why this is the case. In a past edition of Psychology Today, life coach and hypnotherapist Ti Caine states that "in order for resolutions to work, they need to be well thought-out and have real meaning". Business Coach John Agno agrees. He suggests that when resolutions are not clear and concise they are often overlooked or completely forgotten.

As a life coach, I have seen my clients place incredible pressure and demands on themselves and then feel guilty when their goals are not achieved within a certain time period. While I wholeheartedly support making promises to improve the quality of our lives, I encourage individuals to make "resolutions" that are grounded in real purpose; otherwise, they will not yield the desired results. Below are a few suggestions for how you can move closer to achieving your resolutions/goals in the coming year.

1. Meditate and reflect on just a couple of areas that you would like to change or improve. Do a bit of self-inquiry and ask how your life might be different if you were to create these changes and what are some of the consequences of not taking action. Are your health, finances, family or job in jeopardy? Quietly wait for the answers and then write them down along with the benefits or outcomes you will gain as a result of your changes. Your benefits will serve as your anchor and source of support throughout the year. In the absence of having clear and concise goals, it is nearly impossible to achieve desired outcomes.
2. Consider the possibility that ingrained habits are very difficult to change – not impossible, but difficult. In order to experience the benefits of our resolutions, we need to commit to participating in activities each day that facilitate the changes we desire. It is also beneficial to



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replace one habit or behavior with another. Without having a replacement, most people will go back to doing what is familiar, despite the consequences.

3. Though I believe in the intrinsic power of determination and perseverance, I cannot overlook the importance of renewing the mind first. Without changing our minds and thoughts, we cannot expect to change our lives.
4. Consider telling close friends and family members about the changes you desire to make and gain their support. Perhaps you can invite them to join you as well. Share your resolutions with people who have a vested interest in your well being and individuals who are supportive. If your resolutions or desired changes are rooted in behaviors that are very hard to change, do not feel embarrassed to seek professional help. Very few people make it alone.

A final thought... Be mindful of the Universal Principal that states for every action there is an opposing reaction. This means that once you make the decision do not be surprised if negative forces or people attempt to dissuade you. Stay focused and committed to manifesting your reality and remember, as Lao-tzu said, a journey of a thousands miles begins with one step. Or in the words of others who have succeeded more recently, keep your eyes on the prize and never give up!

In-Joy,

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