

BODY & SOUL

your health and wellness handbook

new year, new you

How to make and keep resolutions that really matter

Don't dwell on the failed diet plans of last year, the budget you couldn't stick to or the yoga classes you didn't take. January presents a clean slate of possibility to achieve goals that count. We asked experts to suggest fresh ways we can think about our New Year's resolutions:

Take time to reflect. If you really want to succeed at any of your goals, first carve out some time for inner reflection. "Be still," advises Teresa Kennedy, CEO of Power Living, a business- and life-coaching company. "Pray for direction. Resolutions should fit into your overarching vision for your life." Start by writing down your vision. Jot your notes in a place (such as a journal or notebook) that you'll enjoy referring to throughout the year.

Be honest with yourself. Evaluate what's at the heart of your objectives. "You have to be clear about what you want and why it's so important," says Debra Jackson Gandy, author of *All the Joy You Can Stand* (Three Rivers Press). For example, you may say your goal is to fit into the skinny jeans you haven't been able to wear in this millennium, but what you actually want is to reshape your body and improve your health.

Start small. When you make resolutions, your aim shouldn't be to change everything in your life all at once. Instead focus on one or two big goals, and break them into smaller, more attainable ones. Don't overwhelm yourself with unrealistic targets that will be difficult to achieve. "This can lead to a lack of commitment and early failure," Kennedy says.

Plan a course of action. Plotting out the details of how you will accomplish your goals creates a better chance that you'll follow through. Give yourself deadlines and set milestones so that you can monitor your progress and keep yourself motivated. Gandy suggests visualizing what you want to achieve.

Don't give up. "It takes persistence to succeed," Kennedy says. "Don't beat yourself up if you slip. Simply start again." Be patient with yourself as you strive to change. Tap into your support network of friends and family to help you stay on track.

Resolve to go for it! There is no time like the present to start the journey to becoming your best self. Resolutions can be kept long after January 1. With reflection, patience and persistence, the possibilities are limitless. —ZULAIKA JUMARALI >



Reflect on what you really want out of life.