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Are Your New Year's Resolutions Starting to Fade? It's Not Too Late to Reset

By Christal Peterson
UCF Forum columnist
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It's that time of year again, when we all crack open our New Year's resolutions vault, sift through the rubble of past goals and evaluate what we would like to see ourselves accomplish this year.

I always look forward to this time of year because for me when I was growing up I was taught to believe that once the ball drops and the clock strikes midnight, that it was like pressing the restart button on a video game. The previous year never existed, so who cares if I did not accomplish one thing on that list I made from last year. I can definitely regroup, try again and succeed this year.

Maybe I will learn a new language, or maybe I'll stop being a couch potato and actually renew that gym membership, maybe I'll finally find love, or maybe I will just start saying "yes" to the opportunities that take me outside of my comfort zone.

Whatever it is, sometime we sit down and come up with a list so long that even Santa Claus would be proud of us. And we don't just stop there. Next we make sure to post it in places like our phones or walls, where it can be seen as a constant reminder of what we have promised will be accomplished when the 365 days are over.

But during those first few weeks of a new year when many of us may be starting to have a hard time working on our resolutions, something seems to always happen.

Our work/school load starts to increase and overwhelm the motivation we once had. It is no wonder that researchers say only 8 percent of people actually see their New Year's resolutions all the way through.

But if that's the case with you, it's not too late to reset your course. Now is the time to do that before things are completely dropped.

Part of the problem is that we as humans want instant results. We live in a time when the hottest inventions and devices coming into the market are designed to cut waiting time in half. We have become so prone and used to having results as soon as possible

that it somehow trickles into our personal and professional life that we expect the same to happen there.

The importance of the journey is now clouded and all we are really worried about is how good it is going to feel or how life will suddenly change for the better once we reach a certain goal.

New Year's resolutions should be looked at as a placeholder for growth, not just as a task list that we check off once completed and never to return to or reflect upon.

So how can we adjust our direction before it's too late?

Since I was little I have always had my head stuck in a book, but as I got older and had more obligations I have drifted away from a passion that was once an escape route. So one of my resolutions is being intentional on reading more.

I just came across an article that helped me take a different approach to accomplish my resolutions and hopefully these tips can help you better evaluate and dissect what yours are and how you can stay intentional on seeing them through.

First, I looked at my prior 12 months and had a review session by asking myself these simple questions which I encourage you to do:

- If I could describe the previous 12 months, in one word or a sentence, what would that be?
- What was a highlight of the year and why?
- What challenges did I face both in my personal and professional life?
- Who and/or what was I most grateful for?
- And especially this one: What was the biggest takeaway or lesson that I learned from the previous 12 months? Not only that but how is it going to help me grow moving forward?

Next ask yourself: "Who do I want to be by the end of the year? That's a pretty vague question because you can want to be a lot of things: a better friend, spouse, parent, coworker, leader, etc. But hopefully the review of the past 12 months will serve as a guide where you would like to see yourself improve by the end of this year.

Because every action taken from that point on isn't something you just simply do, it's a part of who you are.

Often it's not that we can't reach our resolutions because they are hard, it's usually because we just jump into them blindly without actually charting out an action plan. Setting a goal and then listing out relevant projects that correlate with that goal are the key ingredients to success.

Things happen and often when they do, you have to take a step back, re-evaluate the situation, and adjust your action plans.

And be sure to celebrate your successes along the way, not just your end-goal successes.

We often become so focused on what's at the end of the tunnel that we don't ever take a step back to see how far we have come—you may be closer than you think.

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